Government of Canada   Gouvernement du Canada

**Networks of Centres
of Excellence**

**Réseaux de centres
d'excellence**

Networks of Centres of Excellence

2015 NCE Network Competition

Full Application Guide

The Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) program is a federal initiative administered jointly through the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) in partnership with Industry Canada and Health Canada.

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2015 NCE Network Competition

Guidelines for Completing a Full Application

This guide is to be used in conjunction with the *2015 NCE Competition Guide*

The full application consists of four individual books:
    Book 1: The Proposal
    Book 2: Letters of Support
    Book 3: CVs
    Book 4: Signature Pages

Deadline

The deadline for the electronic submission is **June 11, 2014**. The application must be received by the NCE Secretariat by 4:30 p.m. Local Time on the deadline date. Applications must be submitted to the NCE on-line electronic application system at https://excellence.nce-rce.gc.ca. The Full Application must be compiled into one searchable PDF version. Books must not be assembled using scanned documents, but must be converted to a searchable PDF from electronic documents. Electronic signatures are accepted.

Book 4 does not need to be included in the electronic version of the application. It must be sent as part of the original, paper copy only.

One original, paper copy of the application, including Book 4 Signatures, must be submitted to the NCE Secretariat by **June 18, 2014**. The unbound copy must be identical to the electronic submission. Inclusion of additional material in the unbound copy will result in the rejection of your application from the competition.

Mailing Address

Networks of Centres of Excellence
2015 NCE Competition
16th Floor, mailroom
350 Albert Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 1H5

General Presentation

Provide the application in black ink at letter quality (minimum standard), with no more than six lines per inch. Ensure that type size for fonts measured in points (pts) is no smaller than 12 pts. If measured in characters per inch (cpi), ensure that type size is no more than 10 cpi. Condensed type is unacceptable.

Use white paper, 8½ x 11 inches (21.5 cm x 28 cm), with margins of 3/4 of an inch (1.905 cm) (minimum) all around. Enter the title of the network at the top of every page and number the pages consecutively.

Graphs and illustrations may be included, but will count as part of the page limits set out below. Either single or double column presentation of text, graphs, or illustrations is acceptable. **Any extra material will be removed.**

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What to Include in a Full Application

BOOK 1: THE PROPOSAL

Covering Letter (2 pages max)

A letter, signed by the applicant and the President or CEO (or delegate) of the institution that proposes to host the network administrative centre must be included. This letter must outline the nature of anticipated support from the proposed Host Institution. Host Institutions play an important role in networks, through both direct support of the administrative centre and by participating in network governance through membership on the Board of Directors.

Application Form Section A1

Complete all sections of the Application Form Section A1 which is available on the NCE website, including an estimate of the proportion of the Centre's research that relates to the mandates of each of the three granting agencies: NSERC, SSHRC, and CIHR. See *On-line Resources* for a direct link.

Executive Summary (1 page max)

Provide a one-page summary describing the network, its proposed research program, and expected impact on the Canadian economy and quality of life. Write for a general audience using plain language as the summary may be used for communication purposes, such as press releases or the NCE website.

Application Form Section A2 - Table of Proposed Network Participants (unlimited pages)

Using the table provided in Section A2 of the application form, please provide an alphabetized list of all proposed Network Participants – Scientific Director, Theme Leaders, Network Investigators (i.e., those for whom signatures are provided in Book 4). Add lines to the form as required.

Network Investigators who receive NCE funds must be eligible to receive research funds from at least one of the three federal granting agencies (i.e., CIHR, NSERC or SSHRC). Network Investigators do not include graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, research associates, etc.

Free Form – using the following sections as headers please complete the free form section of the application respecting the page limits.

> *Network Vision (1 page max)*
>
> Describe the vision of what the network proposes to achieve, including specific goals and objectives. The vision should describe the expected end-results and impacts within the timeframe of the proposed funding cycle, especially with respect to the expected outcomes and impacts on partners and on the user sector for the benefit of Canada and Canadians.
>
> *Strategic Plan (70 pages max)*
>
> The Strategic Plan is limited to seventy (70) pages, to be allocated amongst seven sections. Within the overall limit of 70 pages, the suggested length of sections may be adjusted as needed.

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General Context (5 pages approx.)

Provide a general discussion of the role of the network in the landscape of work being conducted in its area(s) of research, including the following:

- any overlap or reasonable potential for perceived overlap between the network and currently or previously funded initiative(s);
- the qualitative and quantitative differences between the proposed Network and the currently or previously funded initiative(s);
- how the network will complement or build on the activities of the other initiative(s);
- the incremental or added value of the proposed network; and
- why the network is essential in terms of advancing work in its area(s) of research and why individual researchers or research programs would be unable to generate these advances without the network.

Socioeconomic Context (5 pages approx.)

Define the problem(s), challenge(s), or opportunity(ies), and the incremental economic and social benefits to Canada that the network will provide through its multifaceted program, partnerships, and knowledge mobilization activities. Include details on the possible impacts of the network on Canadian public policies.

Furthermore, applicants should demonstrate how knowledge generated by the network will be applied to practical solutions, leading to innovations that produce social and economic benefits for Canadians.

Management of the Network (5 pages approx.)

Discuss the network's key business objectives over the next five years. Give an overview of the network's management, taking into consideration the following points:
- a strong management structure and governance model with clearly defined responsibilities for shaping the strategic plan and direction of the network that is essential to the success of a network;
- a Board of Directors responsible for the approval of the annual financial reports and audits that are required for all incorporated entities;
- the nature and anticipated extent of involvement of the industrial and user-sector in research planning, direction, and management of the network;
- the administrative and operational structures of the network, with regards to co-ordination of activities, setting schedules, monitoring the network's progress towards its strategic goals, and allocation of resources;
- internal communication mechanisms;
- strategies for disseminating network knowledge, successes, and activities to the scientific community, stakeholders, and the general public and;
- if the Network Host is to be an industry-led, incorporated, not-for-profit consortium, present evidence of how the organization has in place the required financial controls, policies, and procedures, as well as a history of funding academic research.

An organizational chart must be provided.

Excellence of the Research Program (35 pages approx.)

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Provide brief biographies of all key individuals (ex: theme leaders) who have agreed to participate in network activities, (200 words max).

Network research programs must be developed in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and must integrate industry, receptor partners, academia, and government priorities as appropriate.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate that the network possesses world-class capacity to address the problem(s), challenge(s), or opportunity(ies) described in the network's research program.

Applicants should develop research approaches that ensure the effective application of research to solve important problems for Canada by having an appropriate balance within the research continuum and promoting interdisciplinary collaboration to generate solutions.

Include in this section a brief review of the current state of knowledge in the field, as well as the scope, focus, and general objectives of the network and how the network will attain those objectives. Discuss the anticipated incremental value of the network relative to other efforts in the area (e.g. provincial Centres of Excellence, CIHR Institutes, other research consortia or initiatives), as well as the collaborations necessary to attain the objectives of the network. Also include the network's plans and strategy with respect to:

- integrating research projects and themes into a coherent research program which generates solutions that will be implemented to produce social and economic benefits for Canadians;
- establishing relationships with research programs conducting similar work elsewhere in Canada and abroad;
- using international collaborations to enhance the overall capacity of the network to focus on Canadian issues;
- contributing to Canada's abilities and reputation for international leadership in the area(s) being addressed by the network; and
- becoming leading-edge in areas critical to Canadian social, economic, technological and wellness development.

The Network's proposed research program should be organized into major themes. Each theme must be assigned an acronym for use in the budget sections of the Application Form.

For each research theme:

- identify the Theme Leader(s), Project Leaders and Network Investigators; discuss their roles in the Network and their ability to contribute to the proposed research;
- describe how the theme fits the Network's overall vision and addresses the problem(s), challenge(s) or opportunity(ies) the Network is intended to address;
- describe how it relates to other theme areas, how it responds to receptor needs, and how it is anticipated to evolve through to Year 5;
- describe, where relevant, how new and emerging social and ethical issues will be addressed, using specific examples where possible;

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- describe the specific objectives, research plan, methods, schedule and milestones by project. Provide as much detail as possible for year 1 of each project. If possible, provide detail out to year 5; and
- explain the process used to select the themes and projects.

Development of Highly Qualified Personnel (5 pages approx.)

Outline the network's strategy to develop highly qualified personnel (HQP) and expose them to the full range of economic, social, and ethical implications of the network's research by involving them in activities from the initial research discovery to its practical application. Moreover, demonstrate how the network will add value to training opportunities already available with innovative mentorship programs. Discuss how the network will enhance HQP capacity in relation to the needs of the receptors.

Include in this section the network's strategy to capitalize on its multidisciplinary, multisectoral, networked environment to develop HQP, as well as its plan for drawing international personnel to the network and Canada.

Networking and Partnerships (5 pages approx.)

Networking is intended to integrate research teams and programs and to promote effective interactions and partnerships with the user-sector outside the academic community. These networking and partnership activities should demonstrably assist the network in addressing the problem(s), challenge(s), or opportunity(ies) for which they are generating solutions.

The proposed network must build on existing relationships with partners and the receptor community. This is essential in order to accelerate the formation and activities of the proposed network.

Provide details on the planning process including the consultations undertaken with partners (academic, private, and/or public) in developing the application. Specifically, include the following:
- identification of key proposed partners in the network with an explanation of the critical capacity that each contributes to ensuring that the network achieves its objectives. Describe the pre-existing relationships that led to the development of the proposal;
- discussion on existing linkages and the network's proposed strategy to build new linkages among industry, receptor partners, academia, and governments across Canada and abroad;
- indication of the anticipated level of non-NCE funding and description of the network's strategy for achieving the projected levels of contribution;
- discussion of the nature and anticipated extent of involvement of the private and user sector in the research;
- incremental value of a multidisciplinary, multisectoral approach to achieving the network's research and business objectives; and
- how the use of resources will be optimized through sharing of equipment, research facilities, databases, and personnel.

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Knowledge and Technology Exchange and Exploitation (10 pages approx.)

NCE networks are expected to generate social and economic benefits by ensuring the rapid flow of ideas and innovations from researchers to receptors. Applicants are expected to demonstrate that the appropriate activities will be undertaken and the appropriate resources allocated to maximize those benefits.

Include in your description the network's plans and strategy with respect to:

- the framework for the network's approach to knowledge and technology exchange and exploitation;
- how the network will create an environment that encourages collaboration between the user-sectors, providing concrete examples, such as the application of research to technology, market development, health systems, or public policy innovations;
- the anticipated impact of addressing the problem(s), challenge(s), or opportunity(ies) identified by the network, over a five-year period, on Canada's productivity, environment, health, and social systems and/or public policy; and
- the management and protection of intellectual property for network research.

Application Form Section B: Budget

Please refer to the NCE Program Guide for details on use of funds and eligible expenses.

Application Form Section B.1: Summary of Anticipated Funding for the Network

Indicate, for Years 1 to 5, the total funding being requested from the NCE Program (line 1) as well as the anticipated cash support (lines 2 to 6). In-kind support (lines 8 to 12) from all of the other sources is listed on a separate page.

Where a commitment of cash or in-kind support is made, a Letter of Support certifying the contributor's commitment to the costs of the Network is required in Book 2.

Provide a short explanation of cash and in-kind contributions on up to two additional pages (i.e., for lines 2 to 6 and 8 to 12).

Application Form Sections B.2: Proposed Expenditures of NCE and Non-NCE Funding for the Network

Using Section B.2, provide the total proposed expenditures of **NCE funding** as well as **non-NCE funding** for each category described below, for Years 1 to 5.

Note that additional, detailed descriptions of expenditures are requested for some categories.

Salaries and Stipends (line 1): For the payment of stipends for students and postdoctoral fellows, follow the regulations of the Granting Agency under whose mandate the research of the Network falls.

Operation of Core Facilities (line 2): If core facilities are to be funded through the proposed Network, provide details on the operating costs of each facility on a separate page (one page per facility). Detail the salary and maintenance costs to be paid by the network. An NCE core facility is a core of highly skilled technical or professional research support staff essential to the research activities of a group.

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Equipment (line 3):   List equipment to be purchased or rented and the cost on separate page(s).   Provide details on operating and maintenance costs for each piece of equipment costing more than $150,000 and specify how these costs will be covered.

Materials and Supplies (line 4):   Provide details for any extraordinary requirements on a separate page.

Computing Costs (line 5): Provide details on a separate page if required.

Travel Expenses (line 6): On a separate page, list anticipated field trips, conferences and travel related to Network research for which funds are requested for each year, excluding both the Network annual meeting and meetings of Network Committees and Board of Directors (see page B.2, line 8).

Administrative Centre (line 7): provide details on a separate page.

Management and Networking (line 8): On a separate page, provide details for each category related to the costs of managing the research that is not included in the Administrative Centre. This includes the cost of attending workshops and committee meetings related to the functioning of the network in cases where it is not part of the budget of the Administrative Centre.

Other Expenditures (line 9): List any other expenditures not included in the above categories. Provide details on a separate page.

Application Form Section B.3 Proposed Expenditures of NCE and Non-NCE Funds by Research Theme: Using one page from Section B.3 per research theme, provide the proposed expenditures of **NCE funds** and **non-NCE funds** for Years 1 to 5.

On separate pages for each theme, also provide:

- Details of the proposed expenditures for the budget categories indicated.
- An indication of the *total* approximate expenditures for each research project described in the proposed Research Program.

Application Form Section B.4: Contributions from Partner Organizations

Using one page from Section B.4 per partner organization, provide details on cash and in-kind contributions.

For each partner organization, also provide a one-page explanation of how the incremental cash and in-kind contributions reported will be distributed in the Network.

A letter from each partner organization confirming each incremental contribution must be included in Book 2.

Application Form Sections B.5: Proposed Expenditures of NCE funds and non-NCE Funds for the Administrative Centre

Using Section B.5, and adding sub-headings where necessary, detail the proposed expenditures of **NCE funding** and **non-NCE funding** associated with operating the

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administrative centre for the Network, including costs for salaries, annual meetings, communications, technology transfer, etc. for Years 1 to 5.

Provide details and justification on the costs associated with operating the administrative centre on separate pages.

References Cited (unlimited pages)

Provide a bibliography of all references cited in previous sections.

Acronyms (unlimited pages)

Provide an alphabetized list of all acronyms used in the application.

BOOK 2: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Letters of support should:

- come from a senior executive with signing authority for the contributions being committed;
- indicate the level, duration, and nature (cash and/or in-kind) of anticipated support for the proposed network;
- describe potential involvement and added-value of the network to the stakeholder's current and future activities;
- indicate current and past associations with individuals participating in the network's activities;
- not be template formatted by the applicant; and
- be original documents, dated and signed no earlier than six months prior to the application deadline.

Sort letters of support by sector (university, industry, provincial, federal, other) and provide a summary table indicating the name of organization, the page number, incremental cash and/or new in-kind contribution to the network.

The signatures of authorized officers of supporting organizations certify that that organization:

- agrees with the content of the application and will provide the committed resources; and
- agrees to the release of the public summary of the award and to the publication of the organization's name as a supporter of the network.

If the Scientific Director or a Network Investigator is also a principal of a collaborating or supporting organization, another senior official must sign on behalf of the organization.

BOOK 3: CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

The applicant is responsible for selecting up to 50 CVs for inclusion in Book 3. Any additional CVs (>50) will be removed. The NCE Secretariat will only accept CVs that conform with a tri-agency (CIHR, NSERC, or SSHRC) CV Presentation Standard.

Book 3: Composition
The CVs should be in alphabetical order by last name of the researcher and each should be separated by a bookmark. There are no page limits for CVs or for Book 3.

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BOOK 4: SIGNATURE PAGES

Use the table provided on the tab titled "Book 4" of the application form to produce signature pages. Download and use one page per organization, unless the number of Network Investigators from an organization is large enough to require additional pages. Electronic signatures are acceptable when needed.

The signature of each Network Investigator is required to confirm their willingness to participate in the network and to acknowledge their agreement that the Scientific Director will administer any NCE award in accordance with the directives of the Board of Directors. Refer to Appendix A for information regarding the meaning of signatures.

Book 4 does not need to be included in the electronic version of the application. It must be sent as part of the original, paper copy only.

Reminders

The deadline for the electronic submission of the FA for the 2015 NCE Network Competition is**, June 11, 2014. FAs must be received by the NCE Secretariat by 4:30 p.m. local time.**

Applications must be submitted to the NCE on-line electronic application system as a single, searchable PDF file at https://excellence.nce-rce.gc.ca.

Applicants must also provide the NCE Secretariat with one unbound original copy by **June 18, 2014**. The unbound copy must be identical to the electronic submission. Inclusion of additional material in the unbound copy will result in the rejection of your application.

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16th floor, mailroom
350 Albert Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 1H5**

Tables, graphs and figures may be included within the page limits noted above. **Any extra material will be removed.**

The *2015 NCE Network Competition Guide*, the *2015 NCE FA Application Form*, and details about the NCE Secretariat can be obtained at www.nce-rce.gc.ca.

For more information, please contact the NCE Program at:

Chris Kelly, Program Officer
Telephone: **(613) 995-3080**
Fax: **(613) 992-7356**
E-mail: **chris.kelly@nce-rce.gc.ca**

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On-line Resources

NCE website

http://www.nce-rce.gc.ca

2015 NCE Competition Guide

http://www.nce-rce.gc.ca/Competitions-Competitions/Current-EnVigueur/NCE-RCE-2015/CompetitionGuide-GuideConcours_eng.asp

2015 NCE LOI Form

http://www.nce-rce.gc.ca/_docs/competitions/NCE-RCE-2015/LOIApplication_eng.pdf

2015 NCE Full Application Form

http://www.nce-rce.gc.ca/_docs/competitions/NCE-RCE-2015/FullApplicationForm-FormulaireDemande_eng.pdf

NCE Network Program Guide

http://www.nce-rce.gc.ca/ReportsPublications-RapportsPublications/NCE-RCE/ProgramGuide-GuideProgramme_eng.asp

Information Regarding In-kind Contribution Eligibility

www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/Policies-Politiques/orgpartners-orgpartenaires_eng.asp

http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/3758.html

Tri-Agency Use of Grant Funds

http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Professors-Professeurs/FinancialAdminGuide-GuideAdminFinancier/FundsUse-UtilisationSubventions_eng.asp

Tri-Agency Responsible Conduct of Research

http://www.rcr.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/framework-cadre/
http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/governance-gouvernance/rcr-crr_eng.asp

Privacy Act

http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/PDF/P-21.pdf

Environmental Review Policy for Networks Receiving NCE Funds

http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/Policies-Politiques/enviroassess-enviroeval_eng.asp

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Checklist

A Full Application consists of four books, prepared as follows. Each book must be fully paginated, with tabs for each section.   Please adhere to the page limits outlined in these guidelines.

Book 1
- ☐ Cover Letter from Host Institution (2 pages)
- ☐ Application Form Section A1
- ☐ Executive Summary (1 page)
- ☐ Application Form Section A2
- ☐ Free Form
    - ☐ Network Vision (1 page)
    - ☐ Strategic Plan (70 pages total)
        - ☐ *General Context (~5 pg.)*
        - ☐ *Socio-economic Context (~ 5 pg.)*
        - ☐ *Management of the Network (~ 5 pg.)*
        - ☐ *Excellence of the Research Program (~ 35 pg.)*
        - ☐ *Development of Highly Qualified Personnel (~ 5 pg.)*
        - ☐ *Networking and Partnerships (~ 5 pg.)*
        - ☐ *Knowledge and Technology Exchange and Exploitation (~ 10 pg.)*
- ☐ Application Form Section B: Budget (use additional form pages as needed, where indicated in the guidelines above)
    - ☐ *Application Form Section B.1: Summary of Anticipated Funding for the Network*
    - ☐ *Application Form Section B.2: Proposed Expenditures of Funding for the Network*
    - ☐ *Application Form Section B.3: Proposed Expenditures by Research Theme*
    - ☐ *Application Form Section B.4: Incremental Contributions from Partner Organizations*
    - ☐ *Application Form Section B.5: Proposed Expenditures of NCE Funds for the Administrative Centre*

- ☐ References Cited (unlimited)
- ☐ Acronyms (unlimited)

Book 2
- ☐ Summary table
- ☐ Letters of Support

Book 3 CVs
- ☐ Up to 50 CVs arranged alphabetically

Book 4 Signature Pages
- ☐ one for each organization (paper copy only)

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Appendix A
What do the electronic or original signatures on the application mean?

For the Lead applicant
By signing and submitting my application, I (the Lead applicant):

- certify that the information provided in my funding applications and related documents is true, complete and accurate and that I have represented myself, my research and my accomplishments in a manner consistent with the norms of the relevant field;
- consent to the sharing between the NCE Secretariat and any academic institution to which I am, or may become, affiliated of any and all information, including personal information, in any way related to the application and to the grant/award;
- understand the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act (including the Use and Disclosure of Personal Information Provided to the NCE Secretariat) as they pertain to grant application information;
- attest that participants listed on the application have agreed to be included;
- certify that I am not currently ineligible to apply for and/or hold funds from Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) or any other research funding organization world-wide for reasons of breach of responsible conduct of research policies such as ethics, integrity or financial management policies;
- certify that I respect and comply with the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Service, as required **only** if I am, or was in the last 12 months, a public servant in the federal government;
- accept the terms and conditions set out in NCE Program Guide and the [Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions](#) between the federal granting agencies and Canadian institutions;
- will inform the NCE Secretariat and institutional officials of changes in eligibility status;
- agree to comply with the policies and guidelines described in the Requirements for Certain Types of Research, including:
  - research involving humans;
  - research requiring human pluripotent stem cells;
  - research requiring the use of animals;
  - research involving controlled information;
  - research involving biohazards;
  - research involving radioactive materials;
  - research activities having potential effects on the environment; and
  - other related policies;
- will inform the NCE Secretariat and institutional officials of any changes in the nature of the research that may have an impact on certification or approvals on the same policies as in the previous bullet; and
- understand that maintaining public trust in the integrity of researchers is fundamental to building a knowledge-based society. By submitting this application or by accepting funding from CIHR, NSERC and/or SSHRC, I affirm that I have read and I agree to respect all the policies of these agencies that are relevant to my research, including the Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research. In cases of a serious breach of agency policy, the agency may publicly disclose my name, the nature of the breach, the institution where I was employed at the time of the breach and the institution where I am currently employed. I accept this as a condition of applying for, or receiving, agency funding and I consent to such disclosure.

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For academic participants:
By accepting to participate in the Centre, I (the academic participant) also agree to the above.

The signatures of the institutional authorities certify that:
- the institution will abide by the roles and responsibilities as set out in the [Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions](#) with the three federal granting agencies;
- the applicant have met, or will meet, the eligibility requirements;
- the institution obtained written approval from other institutions involved in the application process prior to submission; and
- the institution agrees to comply with NSERC's, CHIR's or SSHRC's data protection requirements and has adequate safeguards in place to protect sensitive information entrusted to it by the NCE Secretariat for the purpose of administering applications and awards.

The signatures of authorized officers of other supporting organizations certify that the organization:
- agrees with the content of the application and will provide the committed resources; and
- agrees to the release of the public summary of the award and to the publication of the organization's name as a supporter of the initiative.

For further information, see the Questions and Answers on the Consent to Disclosure of Personal Information at address http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca.