Networks of Centres of Excellence

Letter of Intent (LOI) Guide
2017 International Knowledge Translation Platforms (NCE-IKTP)
Initiative Competition

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 Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, and Health Canada.

Canadä

Context

The goal of the NCE-IKTP initiative is to support international collaborations between networks, centres, consortia and their partners to accelerate knowledge translation in areas of mutual strategic interest. For the purposes of the NCE-IKTP initiative competition, knowledge translation comprises all activities that create socio-economic impact through the transformation or application of evidence-based knowledge and/or technologies generated from research.

Guidelines for Completing a Letter of Intent (LOI)

This guide must be used in conjunction with the *2017 NCE-IKTP Initiative Competition Guide*.

The LOI provides information on the network's proposed Platform in relation to the goals and objectives of the NCE-IKTP initiative. It will be used in the screening process to determine which applicants will be invited to submit a full application. Proposals will be evaluated according to the five NCE-IKTP initiative criteria, as well as the goals and objectives of the NCE-IKTP initiative.

The LOI should be submitted on behalf of the network by an academic researcher (i.e., "the lead applicant") who is eligible to receive funding from one of the three federal granting agencies, and by the proposed host institution.

The LOI must be developed in collaboration with relevant stakeholders. Applications must clearly indicate how the proposed platform will address the problem(s), challenge(s) or opportunity(ies) identified, through concerted efforts with partners in Canada and abroad.

Applications must define the performance framework (indicators and metrics) for the implementation of the proposed platform.

Should multiple LOIs be submitted addressing similar challenges with the same international community(ies), the NCE Standing Selection Committee *may* suggest that those applicants submit a single joint full application.

Deadline

The deadline for the electronic submission of the LOI for the 2017 NCE-IKTP initiative competition is **May 2, 2016.** LOIs must be received by the NCE Secretariat by 4:00 p.m. EDT.

Applications must be submitted to the NCE on-line electronic application system (https://excellence.nce-rce.gc.ca) as a single, searchable PDF file. (Instructions for creating a searchable PDF are included in Appendix B.)

Applicants must also provide the NCE Secretariat with one unbound original copy by May 9, 2016, containing the original signatures. The unbound copy must be identical to the electronic submission. Inclusion of additional material in the unbound copy will result in the rejection of the application from the competition.

Mailing Address

Networks of Centres of Excellence
2017 NCE-IKTP Initiative Competition
16th Floor, mailroom
350 Albert Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 1H5

General Presentation

Print must be in black ink, of letter quality (minimum standard), with no more than six lines per inch. The type size for fonts measured in points (pts) must be no smaller than 12 pts. If measured in characters per inch (cpi), it must be 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. Include the title of the proposed network at the top of every page (in the header) and number the pages consecutively.

Graphs and illustrations may be included but 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.**

What to Include in the LOI

The LOI is composed of five different elements that must be merged into one final PDF document: (1) the Host Institution covering letter, (2) the LOI Summary Information Form, (3) tables for budget and partner information, (4) the free-form section, and (5) the letters of support from partnering organizations. The merged PDF document should be laid out as follows:

1. Host Institution Covering Letter (maximum 2 pages)

A letter, signed by the Lead Applicant and the President or CEO (or delegate) of the institution that proposes to host the network administrative centre (i.e., the Host Institution), must be included. This letter should outline the nature of anticipated support from the proposed Host Institution.

The signatures on the letter should match the signatures on Section A of the LOI Summary Information Form.

Please review Appendix A for the meaning of signatures.

2. LOI Summary Information Form (fillable PDF form)

The LOI Summary Information Form is available on the [NCE-IKTP initiative competition web site](.).

Complete and sign the LOI Summary Information Form for the 2017 NCE-IKTP initiative competition. The following information must be provided:

- **Lead Applicant**: name, personal identification number (PIN) of one of the three federal granting agencies (if available), the preferred language of correspondence and the percentage of the total salaried time committed to the network's platform activities by the Lead Applicant
- **Network Title:** name and acronym of the proposed network (in both official languages) as it will be used for publication and communication purposes
- **Keywords:** up to ten keywords related to the proposed network
- **Signatures:** of the Lead Applicant and President or CEO (or delegate) of the proposed Host Institution. Also include the mailing address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address for the proposed Lead Applicant.

3. Tables for Budget and Partner Information– *using the following sections as a guide, please complete the accompanying spreadsheets*

Table 1: Anticipated Expenditures

Using the categories indicated in the spreadsheet, provide an overview of the expenditures of NCE funds and of non-NCE funds for the operation of the administrative centre and the proposed activities of the platform.

On a separate page, provide a brief explanation or narrative of the anticipated expenses (maximum 1 page)

Please note: eligible expenses include costs related to platform activities (such as: knowledge mobilization, commercialization, communication activities, networking, development of tools, etc.) and the associated administration of the network. NCE-IKTP initiative funds may **not** be used to fund research or research costs.

Networks must adhere to the regulations and administrative policies found in the Tri-agency *Use of Grant Fund*s document and the *NCE Program Guide*. In general, networks follow the regulations for the granting agency under which its related research area falls.

Table 2: Anticipated non-NCE Funding

Provide the anticipated cash and in-kind contributions from the five primary contributing stakeholders. The value of these contributions should match what is indicated in the corresponding Letter of Support.

Table 3: Anticipated Partners

Provide a list of the names and affiliations of the individuals representing the collaborating and partner organizations that have agreed to participate in and contribute to the network's proposed platform. These would include, among others:

- research networks and centres
- consortia
- non-governmental organizations
- companies, industries, and private institutions
- hospitals
- not-for-profit associations
- provincial, federal or municipal government institutions

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

A. Vision for the Platform (Maximum ½ page)

Outline the overall goal and vision of the proposed platform. These must align with the objectives of the NCE-IKTP initiative.

Research is not an eligible activity under the NCE-IKTP initiative; do not include research goals, objectives or vision.

B. Expected Impacts and Added Value (Maximum 1 page)

Describe the expected impacts and added value of the proposed NCE-IKTP network. Provide examples of how the proposed platform will improve access to global knowledge, thereby benefitting Canadian and international stakeholders. Define how the knowledge translation and/or technology adoption will be assisted through the relationship-building provided by the network via the platform. Describe how Canada's profile on the global stage will be raised through this initiative.

Where there are overlaps with existing networks or initiatives in Canada or abroad, including those that are part of the NCE suite of programs, explain the added value provided by the proposed platform.

C. Model for Collaboration (Maximum 1 page)

Describe how the proposed platform will strengthen, expand and intensify meaningful international collaborations to achieve the stated objectives. Outline the strategy that will be utilized to build links and ensure shared benefits between national and international institutions.

D. Strategic Plan (Maximum 2 pages)

Provide an overview of the strategic plan for how the NCE-IKTP network will achieve impact. The strategic plan should reflect the goals and objectives for the platform, and provide metrics to measure the success of the planned activities. Provide a description of the process(es) that will be used to identify internationally-important knowledge gaps and to engage and build collaborations. Describe the process for adapting to new opportunities and unexpected challenges.

E. Proposed Team (Maximum 2 pages)

A network must demonstrate that it has the key individuals to establish, expand and intensify relationships with partners internationally to create strong fruitful collaborations. Provide brief biographies of five key participants, summarizing their relevant accomplishments and roles in the proposed platform. Describe how these individuals will drive the Strategic Plan and undertake the Platform activities in the NCE-IKTP network.

F. Management and Governance (Maximum 1 page for text and 1 page for organizational chart)

Provide an overview of the network's management and governance structure, including the administrative and operational structures, with regards to co-ordination of activities, setting deadlines and deliverables, monitoring the network's progress towards its strategic goals, and allocation of resources, specifically as it relates to the proposed platform.

In the instance that an industry-led not-for-profit corporation is proposed as the Host Institution for the network, describe the policies, procedures and controls that will be in place to ensure sound financial control.

Provide an organizational chart that illustrates the governance and management structure of the network.

5. Letters of Support (Up to 5 letters, maximum 1 page per letter)

Letters of Support from the primary **non-academic contributing stakeholders** listed in the LOI Form must be included. Up to five letters may be included. Letters should:
- come from a senior executive with influence over a budget;

- indicate the level, duration, and nature (cash and/or in-kind) of anticipated support for the proposed platform;
- describe potential involvement and added-value of the proposed platform to the stakeholder's current and future activities;
- indicate current and past associations with individuals participating in the proposed platform activities;
- not be template formatted by the applicant; and
- be dated and signed no earlier than January 2016.

Contact

For more information, please contact the NCE Secretariat at:

Rick Schwartzburg
Senior Program Manager
Email: rick.schwartzburg@nce-rce.gc.ca
Telephone: 613-943-7616

or

Robert Courchaine
Program Officer
Email: robert.courchaine@nce-rce.gc.ca
Telephone: 613-996-9825

Networks of Centre of Excellence
NCE-IKTP Initiative Competition
16th Floor, mailroom
350 Albert Street
Ottawa ON K1A 1H5

On-line Resources

NCE website

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

Information Regarding the Meaning of Signatures

Electronic Approval (NSERC)
CIHR - Meaning of Signatures on Applications

Information Regarding In-kind Eligibility

Guidelines for Organizations Participating in Research Partnerships

In-kind Eligibility Table (CIHR)

Tri-Agency Use of Grant Funds

Use of Grant Funds

Tri-Agency Responsible Conduct of Research

Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct Of Research

Privacy Act

Privacy Act

Environmental Review Policy for Networks Receiving NCE Funds

NSERC's Guidelines on Environmental Review and Assessment

Other Useful Resources

For more information on the NCE Program, the use of NCE funds, and other relevant NCE program information, consult the NCE Program Guide.

For more information on Management and Governance, see the NCE Resource Manual on Best Practices for Governance and Operations.

Checklist

Each LOI **must not exceed** 23 pages including the Application Form, and each section must be submitted in the following order. The maximum number of pages permitted for each section is indicated below.

☐ Host Institution Covering Letter (2 pages)

☐ LOI Summary Application Form (2 pages)

Spreadsheets
☐ Tables for Budget and Partner Information

  o Table 1: Anticipated Expenditures (explanation on separate page) (2 pages)

  o Table 2: Anticipated non-NCE Funding (1 page)

  o Table 3: Anticipated Partners (1-2 pages)

Free Form
☐ Vision for the Platform (1/2 page)

☐ Expected Impacts and Added Value (1 page)

☐ Model for Collaboration (1 page)

☐ Strategic Plan (2 pages)

☐ Proposed Team (2 pages)

☐ Management and Governance (1 page for text and 1 page for organizational chart)

☐ Letters of Support (1 page per letter, max. 5 letters)

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.

For academic participants:
By accepting to participate in the Network, 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, refer to the Consent to Disclosure of Personal Information Policy - Frequently Asked Questions.

Appendix B
Guidelines for merging PDF documents

Adobe Pro is required in order to merge PDF documents, which is available for download online on Adobe's website. Once Adobe Pro has been downloaded, various PDF documents can be merged into a single document.

The Application Form is a protected document, so you will need to follow the steps below in order to merge various PDF documents into one cohesive, *searchable* document.

1) Preferred method:
   a. Open the completed LOI Form
   b. Select **"file"** then **"print"**
   c. When the print options opens select **"adobe PDF"** as your printer then click on **"print"**
   d. This will not print the document. It will let you save it as another version
   e. Once you have saved it, you will be able to merge the LOI Form with the other files
   f. In order to merge various files, go to the last page of your newly formatted Form, and click the "Add Page from Another Document" icon in the toolbar; browse to the next PDF document that you want to add, double-click it and choose 'after' – the document will automatically be added.
   g. Repeat step F with your subsequent PDF documents until you have one final merged document.

If you do not have the option to merge (which can happen depending on the software you are using, although it is fairly rare), you will have to complete the above steps then use one of the PDF merging websites below:

   http://www.primopdf.com/ (recommended – free and easy to use)
   http://foxyutils.com/mergepdf/
   http://www.pdfmerge.com/

2) Alternate method:
   From the LOI Form
   a. Click File
   b. Click Create
   c. Click 'Combine files into a Single PDF'
   d. Click 'PDF portfolio' in the upper right
   e. Use the 'Add Files' button to select all PDFs that you want to merge together (including selecting the document you are currently using as the first one you select)