



Government of Canada
Networks of Centres
of Excellence

Gouvernement du Canada
Réseaux de centres
d'excellence

NETWORKS OF CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION (NCE-KM) INITIATIVE

COMPETITION GUIDE

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How to use this Guide

This Competition Guide provides an overview of the NCE Knowledge Mobilization (NCE-KM) Initiative competition, discusses the competition stages and process, identifies evaluation criteria used by the review committees, and outlines the competition timeline. This guide is a stand-alone document containing information relevant to the NCE-KM Initiative competition; it should be used in conjunction with the relevant guides for each stage of the competition.

The [NCE Program Guide](#) contains important background information on the NCE Program (including the NCE-KM Initiative), the use of NCE funds, and other relevant program information. Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult the Guide before submitting an application.

Program Overview

The NCE-KM Initiative was created in 2010 and falls under the NCE suite of programs. Two competitions have been held to date, resulting in the funding of five NCE-KM networks (three in 2011 and two in 2013).

The **goal of the NCE-KM Initiative** is to further the application and mobilization of world-class research to benefit Canada and the Canadian population, in part by supporting networking and collaboration between well-established research teams and knowledge users.

The **objectives of the NCE-KM initiative** are:

- To support networks between knowledge producers and knowledge users from various disciplines, sectors and institutions, including industry, government, not-for-profit organizations and various sources and types of knowledge, for the social, economic, technological, and/or wellness benefit of Canada and the Canadian population;
- To ensure the greatest impact of the application and mobilization of knowledge through strengthening collaborations with knowledge users; and
- To enable collaboration between experts from different disciplines to develop approaches and strategies to maximize the impact of knowledge mobilization efforts.

NCE-KM networks are expected to create social and/or economic benefits through the application of evidence-based knowledge generated from research in combination with other sources and types of knowledge. The NCE-KM initiative supports networks pursuing **knowledge translation** along the entire spectrum: from the range of activities encompassed in knowledge mobilization (creation of activities and tools designed to put knowledge into active service, often through the establishment of new or modification of existing policies, processes and standards) to those encompassed in commercialization (the transformation of knowledge or technology into marketable goods, processes or services). It is neither expected nor necessary for NCE-KM networks to cover this entire range of activities. To be effective, the activities undertaken by the network require the involvement of partners and stakeholders.

Important Terminology^{1,2}

Co-production occurs when knowledge producers, knowledge users, and/or end beneficiaries plan and produce KM outputs together.

**End Beneficiaries* are the individuals, groups, or organizations, whether targeted or not, that benefit directly or indirectly from the network.³

Impact in this program is defined as a change, effect, influence or benefit to society, the economy, the environment, culture or health (wellness), beyond the academic research community. Impacts on research or the advancement of academic knowledge within the higher education sector are excluded from this definition, as are impacts on students, teaching or other activities within the higher education sector.⁴

Impact Pathway (also called Outcomes Pathway) describes how strategies and activities are expected to produce changes in: knowledge, attitude, skills or understanding (short-term outcomes); behaviour, practice or decisions (intermediate outcomes); and state/circumstance/condition (long-term outcomes). Impact pathways include projections relating outcomes to the expected social, economic, environmental, cultural and/or wellness changes (See also *Logic Model*).

Key Individuals include all those who are instrumental to the activities of the network, including members of the network team, individuals from stakeholder communities who will be involved in the design and delivery of KM activities and tools, as well as individuals from knowledge user and end beneficiary communities who are instrumental to the design and implementation of the KM strategy.

Knowledge Mobilization (KM) comprises all activities that enable the transformation or application of evidence-based knowledge and/or technologies generated from research, in order to create social or economic impacts that benefit society.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are measurable values that are used to demonstrate how effectively a network is achieving key objectives. Organizations use KPIs at multiple levels to evaluate their success at reaching targets.

¹ Definitions are provided to enable clear understanding of the requirements and expectations of the NCE-KM initiative. Applicants are not required to use this terminology in their applications; however, the responsibility for ensuring that reviewers understand what is proposed rests with the applicants.

² The terms indicated by an asterisk (*) are either directly from or a modification of the terms and definitions found in the International School on Research Impact Assessment (ISRIA) (2014) *Glossary* Version 2.0.

³ The NCE Secretariat modified the ISRIA definition by replacing “programme” with “network”.

⁴ Modified from King’s College London and Digital Science (2015). *The nature, scale and beneficiaries of research impact: An initial analysis of Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014 impact case studies*. Bristol, United Kingdom: HEFCE.

Knowledge Producers are experts who advance evidence-based knowledge in particular area(s) through research, as well as considering various sources and types of knowledge. This includes, but is not limited to, researchers from the academic, public, not-for-profit and private sectors.

Knowledge Synthesis consists of the aggregation of existing knowledge on a subject. This may be undertaken to inform further studies or for the purposes of dissemination to knowledge users. Knowledge synthesis often informs and precedes KM activities; knowledge synthesis alone is not considered sufficient activity for an NCE-KM network. NCE-KM funds may be used to support knowledge synthesis.

Knowledge Users are the groups or organizations in a position to exploit and apply the evidence-based knowledge, often for the good of end beneficiaries. A knowledge user is typically a non-academic partner or organization that can apply the knowledge, leading to positive change beyond academia (e.g. policy maker that can change or develop new public policy).

**Logic Model* is a diagram with text that illustrates the logical (causal) relationships between the KM activities of the network and the results expected to address the problem to be solved. This then defines the measurements of success (See also *Impact Pathway*).⁵

**Outcome* is the change, effect, influence or benefit resulting from activities and outputs. Short-term outcomes produce changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills or understanding. Intermediate outcomes generate changes in behavior, practice or decisions. Long-term outcomes that produce changes in state/circumstance/condition may lead to broader impact.⁶

**Output* is the product or result of a KM activity. This might include, for example, the number of people engaged and/or affected by an activity or tool, or the number of meetings held and the ways in which the findings of a project are disseminated.⁷

Reach is the spread or breadth of change to, effect on, influence on, or benefit to intended or unintended beneficiaries.⁸

Significance is the intensity of the change to, effect on, influence on or benefit to intended or unintended beneficiaries.⁹

Stakeholders are all individuals, groups, or organizations that have an interest in the outcomes of the NCE-KM network. Stakeholders include, but are not limited to, knowledge producers, knowledge users, end beneficiaries, and policy makers.

⁵ The NCE Secretariat modified the ISRIA definition by adding NCE-KM initiative-specific context.

⁶ The NCE Secretariat modified the ISRIA definition by adding effect and influence as a form of change or benefit.

⁷ The NCE Secretariat modified the ISRIA definition by adding NCE-KM initiative-specific context

⁸ Modified from Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014.

⁹ Modified from Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014.

Competition Stages

There are two stages to the NCE-KM Competition:

1. Letter of Intent (LOI)

The LOI must describe the challenge(s) that the proposed network will address and provide information on the network's vision, objectives, strategic plan, budget, and key participants in management and governance. The LOI must summarize how the proposed network aligns with the NCE-KM initiative criteria, goal and objectives. The LOI stage provides a first opportunity to highlight the proposed network's potential for impact in Canada and internationally.

2. Full Application (FA)

The Full Application requires detailed information on the network's alignment with the NCE-KM Initiative criteria and should clearly describe all aspects of the network's management and governance structure, proposed objectives, and expected outcomes and deliverables. Full Applications will be accepted only from applicants invited to submit a Full Application (FA) by the NCE Steering Committee.

Applicants invited to submit a Full Application may request NCE funds to assist them in preparing their application. Full Application Preparation (FAP) funding of up to \$15,000 is tenable until the completion of the Standing Selection Committee meeting and must be used for application-related expenses, including: communications and workshops; travel (including attending the Standing Selection Committee meeting in Ottawa); and secretarial, clerical and co-ordination services. To request FAP funding, applicants must submit a one-page letter outlining their required budget, including a brief rationale for proposed expenses.

Eligibility

A. Applicant Eligibility

Applications must be submitted by one or more researchers who are eligible to apply for funding under the policies and guidelines of at least one of the three federal granting councils. **All applications must be co-led by a non-academic knowledge user as a co-applicant with an academic researcher.** The inclusion of a non-academic knowledge user as a co-applicant is mandatory and ensures the meaningful involvement of the partner in all aspects of the network, beginning with the conception of the network.

B. Host Institution Eligibility

Organizations eligible to receive NCE-KM funding are:

- Network Host: Eligible Canadian universities and post-secondary institutions with a mandate for research and their affiliated institutions (including hospitals, research institutes and other not-for-profit organizations).
- Private Sector Consortium: A not-for-profit corporation, the majority of whose members consist of for-profit companies, that has defined goals and objectives as well as governance, financial and accounting structures that are completely distinct from those of its component companies and meet the requirements of the [Agreement on the](#)

[Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions](#). In the case of a private sector consortium, the proposed Host must meet the financial, accounting and other requirements set out in the same Agreement.

C. Application Eligibility

NCE–KM networks must involve the significant and meaningful participation of individuals from all relevant sectors and disciplines to fully address the multi-faceted challenges and to fully implement multidimensional solutions. All proposed networks are to demonstrate the principles of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Budget and Duration of Support

The total budget for this competition is currently set at \$4.8M over 4 years (\$1.2M/year). Successful networks will be awarded up to \$400,000 per year for four years with a possible three-year renewal.

The NCE-KM Initiative funds knowledge mobilization activities and related networking activities (networking costs, network administration, etc.). NCE-KM funds may not be used for research-related expenses.

Official Languages Requirement

In compliance with [Part VII of the Official Languages Act](#), the Granting Agencies have established that positives measures to promote the use of both English and French in Canadian society should be taken. As such, successful 2018 KM-NCE Competition Networks will be required to publish their websites in both official languages. The cost of translating the website is an eligible expense and therefore can be included as an expense in the financial section of the application.

Competition Timeline*

Date	Competition Milestone
January 2018	Competition Announcement
April 16, 2018	LOI Submission Deadline
May 2018	Selection Committee Review
June 2018	NCE Management Committee Meeting Invitations for Full Applications
September 4, 2018	Full Application Deadline
October 2018	Selection Committee Review
November 2018	Steering Committee Review
November 2018	Competition results finalized

* Dates subject to change

Review Criteria

Proposals are assessed against the **five NCE-KM Initiative Review Criteria** as well as the relevance to the NCE-KM Initiative goal and objectives. Networks are evaluated against these same criteria on an ongoing basis during the tenure of a grant. All criteria are weighted equally.

Review Criteria:

1. Expected Impacts and Added Value
2. Plan for Knowledge Mobilization
3. Stakeholder Engagement
4. Proposed Network Team
5. Management and Governance

1. Expected Impacts and Added Value

This criterion addresses the question: what will the network achieve?

NCE-KM networks must be driven to address needs and problems of importance to Canada and are therefore expected to be multidisciplinary and multisectoral. NCE-KM networks are expected to benefit end beneficiaries and the Canadian population, by using evidence-based knowledge, as well as considering various sources and types of knowledge, to improve public policy, professional practice, social services, products and processes. Networks are encouraged to expand their reach internationally, as appropriate, where synergies with other stakeholders can amplify the impact of the network in Canada and abroad.

Elements considered include:

- Clear identification of the issue(s) to be addressed and a description of the barriers to be overcome as they relate to (for example): the uptake of evidence-based knowledge; the adoption of technologies; and/or the identification of critical knowledge gaps;
- Demonstration of Canadian and international (if appropriate) knowledge user engagement in identifying and addressing the problem(s), challenge(s), or opportunity(ies) and in co-creating and implementing solutions;
- The quality and appropriateness of the proposed mechanism to overcome the barriers to impact;
- The expected social, economic, environmental, cultural, and/or wellness-related outcomes and impacts of the proposed NCE-KM network and its relevance in relation to knowledge user and end beneficiary communities, as well as Canadian society in general and, where appropriate, the international community;
- The relationship and complementarity of the proposed network activities in relation to similar entities within the NCE program or to similar activities being carried out by other groups in Canada and abroad;
- The expected outcomes with respect to Canada's international visibility; and
- The expected impacts, beyond the period of NCE-KM funding.

2. Plan for Knowledge Mobilization

This criterion addresses the question: how will the network create impact?

A well-defined strategic and operational plan that reflects the network's goals, objectives and desired impacts is critical to the success of the network.

Elements considered include:

- Quality of the network's plan (i.e. proposed activities) to enable the co-production of relevant, useful and accessible activities and tools, with and for stakeholders and beneficiaries;
- Quality of the network's plan (i.e. proposed activities) to ensure access, uptake and implementation by knowledge users and end beneficiaries;
- Quality of the project-specific strategies and indicators to assess the degree to which there has been uptake, application of knowledge, and impact on social, economic, environmental, cultural, and/or wellness-related outcomes;
- An impact pathway or logic model, reflecting the partners' and other stakeholders' expectations, that depicts how co-created KM activities and tools will lead to a chain of outcomes to eventual impacts;
- A Performance Measurement Strategy, reflecting the logic model, that identifies Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and metrics to measure progress from research to impact and considers things like: relevance, usefulness, reach, accessibility, and use (uptake and application) of the network's output;
- The plan for engaging and building capacity among current and future knowledge users, other stakeholders and beneficiaries in Canada and abroad;
- The process for identifying knowledge gaps and needs, and the plan for informing research funders and others of the gaps; and
- The network's approach for adapting and innovating in response to new knowledge or unexpected network outcomes.

3. Stakeholder Engagement

This criterion addresses the question: how will the network actively engage all relevant stakeholders, including those that can contribute to the network's activities and the end beneficiaries

The active engagement of stakeholders and knowledge users in particular is critical for the success of an NCE-KM network.

Elements considered are:

- The inclusion of the most relevant stakeholders from Canada and abroad as committed participants;
- Demonstrated links between national and international academic institutions; research networks, centres, institutions and consortia; federal, provincial and municipal agencies (or equivalent); non-governmental organizations and/or private sector stakeholders;
- The history of network team members' partnerships with complementary groups and organizations, and the plan to build on and extend these partnerships to maximize the development of the proposed KM network;
- The strategy for continued and/or intensified engagement of current stakeholders and the plan to partner with additional stakeholders; and

- The commitment, nature and extent of contributions from the private, public and not-for-profit sectors (both Canadian and international, if applicable) as well as the prospect for increasing commitments as the network progresses.

4. Proposed Network Team

This criterion addresses the question: who is going to drive the knowledge mobilization plan and undertake the activities in the network?

A network must demonstrate that it has identified the key individuals, roles and responsibilities required to mobilize knowledge effectively, including the expertise and diversity, the active involvement of knowledge producers, knowledge users and other relevant experts, stakeholders, and beneficiaries. NCE-KM networks must also demonstrate that these individuals have worked successfully in large, multidisciplinary projects or programs. This section should highlight measures that will be implemented to promote and track equity, diversity and inclusion within the structure of the NCE-KM network and its activities.

Elements considered include:

- The academic and knowledge user co-leadership model of the network as it relates to management, co-ordination and integration of activities;
- The development of an equity, diversity and inclusion commitment statement for the KM-NCE;
- The appropriate expertise, diversity and experience of the proposed team, as evidenced by track record, to execute the network's strategic plan and achieve the stated objectives, namely:
 - Experience in planning, coordinating, and implementing activities with other stakeholders;
 - Experience in co-leading projects or programs;
 - Multidisciplinary and multisectoral expertise;
 - Expertise and experience in engaging partners, creating and maintaining collaborations, strategic partnerships, and/or networks;
 - Experience, diversity and expertise relevant to the planned KM activities and/or tool development, including assessment;
- The time commitments and planned contributions of the leaders.

5. Management and Governance

This criterion addresses the question: what structure and policies will be put in place to oversee the network and ensure its success?

Each network must have an organizational structure appropriate for the management of a complex multidisciplinary and multi-institutional program. A strong governance model with a good management structure is essential to the success of a network. **Note that each successful NCE-KM network must be incorporated federally as a not-for-profit corporation under the *Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act*.**

If an industry-led not-for-profit corporation is proposed as the Host Institution for the network, it must be able to demonstrate that it has in place appropriate and robust policies, procedures and financial controls to administer funding to academic institutions.

Elements considered include:

- The presence of effective leadership with proven expertise in business management functions (such as the administration of similar organizations); knowledge mobilization; partnership building; and evaluation of outputs, outcomes and impacts;
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities for management and staff;
- A defined and robust governance process;
- A board and committee structure, which is representative of Canada's population, to ensure appropriate decisions are made and implemented;
- Developing strategies to increase equity, diversity and inclusion in the network, and tracking the impact of these actions;
- Effective policies and controls to administer funding; sound planning and budgeting mechanisms; and
- Strong internal and external communications strategies.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The NCE programs help build a more advanced, healthy, competitive and prosperous country. The participation of all qualified individuals, inclusive of members of under-represented groups, is essential to mobilize Canada's best research, development and entrepreneurial expertise to create excellent, innovative and impactful results. The NCE Secretariat is committed to principles of equity, diversity and inclusion and deems them central to its programs. Therefore it is expected that all NCE-funded organizations are equally committed to these principles.

Networks must support the inclusion and advancement of women and other under-represented groups as one means to foster excellence. Networks must consider equity, diversity and inclusion in the selection of the management team and members of the governing board and committees.

Full applications will be required to outline the measures that will be implemented to promote and track equity, diversity and inclusion within the structure of the proposed network and its activities.

Review and Decision Process

All applications undergo a comprehensive review by impartial internationally-renowned experts to ensure an equitable process for all applications.

NCE Standing Selection Committee

The NCE Standing Selection Committee (hereafter "Selection Committee") is composed of international-calibre, highly accomplished individuals with broad expertise representing the domains of the three federal granting agencies, across all sectors. All Selection Committee recommendations are made to the NCE Steering Committee. The Selection Committee will:

- Review LOIs according to the five NCE-KM Initiative Review Criteria as well as the NCE-KM Initiative goal and objectives;
- Make recommendations to the NCE Steering Committee regarding which applicants should be invited to submit Full Applications;
- Review Full Applications according to the Review Criteria, goal and objectives; and meet with the Co-Directors (academic and non-academic) and the proposed Chair of the Board of Directors for all submitted Full Applications as part of the review process; and
- Make recommendations to the Steering Committee regarding which applicants should receive funding and at what level.

NCE Steering Committee

Comprised of the Presidents of the three federal granting agencies, the Deputy Ministers of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) and Health Canada and, as an observer, the President and CEO of the Canada Foundation for Innovation, the NCE Steering Committee will:

- Appoint members to the Selection Committee;
- Based on the recommendations of the Selection Committee:
 - Decide which applicants to invite to submit Full Applications;
 - Decide which applicants will receive funding; and
 - Funding levels.

Decisions of the NCE Steering Committee are final. **There is no appeal process.**

Program Administration and Governance

The NCE-KM initiative falls under the Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) program, which is 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 (ISED) and Health Canada. More information on the NCE-KM Initiative can be found [here](#).

As an initiative of the NCE Program, the NCE-KM Initiative builds upon the foundation of successful tri-agency collaboration. Day-to-day administration of the NCE-KM Initiative is provided by the NCE Secretariat, which is governed by a tri-agency steering committee (NCE Steering Committee).

Environmental Review and Assessment

Applicants are required to provide specific information under Appendix A (Environmental Information), if applicable, in the Full Application. Please review the [Guidelines on Environmental Review and Assessment](#) and, if any of the network's proposed activities fall under these Guidelines, please complete and submit the required documentation.

Privacy Act Statement

Information provided to the NCE is collected under the authority of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council Act; the Canadian Institutes of Health Research Act; and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Act.

Contact

For more information, please contact:

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On-line Resources

NCE website

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

NCE Program Guide

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

Information Regarding In-kind 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.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/governance-gouvernance/rcr-crr_eng.asp

Environmental Review and Assessment

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

NCE-KM Competition LOI Guide

NCE-KM Competition LOI Application Form

NCE- KM Competition LOI Excel Tables