



Guidelines for Pilot Project Proposals – 2004

Office of Learning Technologies, Community Learning Networks

These materials are available in multiple formats (audiocassette, Braille, computer diskette and large print) in English and French. To obtain a copy of these formats or for TTY service call 1-819-953-0300.

Carefully review these guidelines and the document titled “How to Prepare your Application Package: Point-by-Point” prior to writing your proposal. A glossary of terms is provided in the annex to these guidelines.

INTRODUCTION

The Office of Learning Technologies (OLT) promotes innovative lifelong learning opportunities for Canadians. Under the Community Learning Networks (CLN) initiative, OLT is inviting proposals for pilot projects that research and test the use of learning technologies to enhance the skills of individuals affected by the shift to a knowledge-based economy.

Projects must have outcomes that are applicable at a national level. The targeted learners must be groups of Canadians that share challenges (for example, the difficulty persons with a disability face in finding and keeping employment) or a knowledge base (for example, workers in an occupation affected by decline in a resource base).

The focus of the projects must be on developing essential skills through the use of technology, for employment and other daily activities, providing a foundation for continued learning and enhancing learners' ability to adapt to workplace change. In other words, projects must research, develop and test innovative and sustainable approaches that help adult learners to find and keep employment in the knowledge-based economy.

A. WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY LEARNING NETWORKS (CLN) INITIATIVE?

The Office of Learning Technologies' Community Learning Networks (CLN) initiative supports pilot projects that demonstrate innovative and sustainable uses of existing network technologies to upgrade skills and knowledge in Canadian communities.

Community Learning Networks:

- Use technology as a tool to support and enable learning, skills development and networking;
- Have a thorough understanding of skills and learning opportunities and needs gained through the creation of a community-based inventory of learning assets and gaps;
- Demonstrate strong community participation through partnerships with the public, university/college, voluntary and/or private sectors;
- Promote individual and community development.

B. WHAT ARE THE CLN OBJECTIVES?

CLN projects must:

- **Research and test innovative approaches** that help adult learners to find and keep employment in the knowledge-based economy, and
- **Increase the use and effective adoption of technology** supported learning for the workplace.

Projects should also:

- **Stimulate the exchange** of knowledge and the enhancement of individual capabilities through peer-to-peer learning or a community of practice (CoP); and/or
- **Increase knowledge** about creative and interactive uses of learning technologies; and/or
- **Promote the inclusion** of individuals and groups facing barriers to participation in the knowledge-based economy; and/or
- **Support lifelong learning** using information and communication technologies (ICT).

C. THE 2004 CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The 2004 Call for Proposals gives priority to projects that involve:

- Workers affected by the shift to a knowledge-based economy (for example, older workers);
- The unemployed or underemployed;
- New immigrants;
- Persons with disabilities;
- Women;
- Aboriginals.

Proposals that address the needs of other at-risk groups and adult learners will be considered, subject to the availability of funds and the overall quality of applications.

D. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

To be eligible, applicants must be not-for-profit national organizations/associations with a mandate in the area of socio-economic development and/or learning.

Applicants must possess both the organizational capabilities and partnerships that will ensure long-term project sustainability. Applicants must also demonstrate their experience (directly or through their partners) in working with OLT's communities of interest (disadvantaged workers, the unemployed, new immigrants, persons with disabilities, women and Aboriginals), and at least one of the following areas:

- Supporting employment-related programs or services in the labour market;
- Using technology to develop or deliver community of practice based learning opportunities;
- Enhancing the socio-economic conditions of their communities on an inclusive and sustainable basis;
- Increasing their clients' participation in the knowledge-based economy (KBE).

E. WHAT IS A PARTNER?

Partners are organizations or individuals who share the costs of the project through cash or in-kind contributions, enhance diversity, broaden expertise, maximize the potential impact of the project across groups of learners and enhance its capacity to address sector-wide learning needs.

Individuals or organizations that receive compensation for services related to the project cannot be considered to be partners.

Partnerships benefit all involved. Organizations that enter into partnerships have reported a number of advantages:

- Partner organizations are empowered, often enjoying increased influence and credibility and advancing their own organizational goals;
- Creative solutions with holistic approaches to change and transition frequently emerge from the differing perspectives which partnerships offer;
- Partnerships allow members to eliminate duplication or overlap of activities, making effective use of limited resources; and
- Communities of practice grow stronger, with improved relationships between diverse groups as partnerships expand.

Partners may include organizations that represent the unemployed, disadvantaged workers or those who need more opportunities to acquire skills to participate fully in the knowledge-based economy, community and volunteer organizations, libraries, school boards, community colleges, universities, provincial, territorial and municipal governments, Aboriginal band, tribal councils or First Nations, labour or professional associations, federal government departments or agencies, co-operatives, sector councils or private companies.

F. WHAT FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?

The Office of Learning Technologies is a contribution program. Contributions are conditional transfer payments for a specific purpose and are subject to accountability review and audit.

Financial support is provided on a cost-shared basis. OLT provides up to 60% of total project costs and the sponsoring organization (applicant) and its partners must contribute at least 40% of the direct project costs, in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. Total funding from all

levels of government, including OLT, must not exceed 75% of eligible resources for the project, either as cash or on an in-kind basis.

The maximum amount of funding assistance for CLN projects under this Call is \$600,000 over a period no longer than three years. OLT will also provide an additional amount to cover expenses related to project evaluation and financial audit (10% for each). Both must be conducted annually by an external firm contracted using a documented competitive process involving at least three (3) bids. OLT funding cannot exceed \$250,000 in any given year.

While projects may be approved for up to three years, funding is subject to year-to-year budget considerations of HRSDC and to appropriation of funds by Parliament. In addition, funding is subject to satisfactory review by OLT of the project's progress in meeting its goals and of the project's annual external evaluation report and external financial audit.

G. WHAT DOES A PROJECT INVOLVE?

A project is composed of sequential steps: the initial research, developmental work and the pilot implementation and testing phase.

The initial phase should be completed in four to six months. The objectives during this period are to consolidate partnerships, to map community learning assets, to refine the skills and learning action plan, develop a marketing plan aimed at potential learners and to develop a comprehensive evaluation plan.

The community learning asset mapping is an important beginning step in the development process. Identifying assets highlights the current resources available for the project, making it easier to see possible connections and to use and build on existing resources. Asset mapping enables communities of learners to identify individuals, organizations and institutions (for example: community colleges, libraries, informal learning networks) that can be engaged as partners or resources for the project. A guide is available on our Web site to help you collect, record and analyse information on learning assets in your community:

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/asp/gateway.asp?hr=en/hip/lld/olt/Resources/toolkit/mapping/mapping_guidebook.shtml&hs=lxt.

The pilot phase, of up to 30 months, is for the testing and implementation of your community skills and learning action plan. It also involves continued marketing of your project, building and consolidating partnerships to ensure long-term sustainability, disseminating the results of your project and conducting an ongoing comprehensive evaluation and utilizing the results to modify the plan as necessary.

Main Activities for Three-year Pilot Projects	
Initial Phase (maximum 6 months)	Pilot Phase – Implementation and Testing (maximum 30 months)
Partnership building	Implement/test learning action plan
Asset mapping	Marketing
Action planning	Evaluation
Evaluation planning	Develop sustainability
Reporting	Dissemination
	Reporting

H. WHAT COSTS ARE ELIGIBLE?

Costs normally eligible for funding under the CLN initiative include:

- Direct salaries and mandatory employment-related costs (MERC) for each person employed on the project;
- Fees for consultants who provide expertise not available within the applicant’s or partners’ organizations (please note that the project coordinator cannot be a consultant);
- Professional fees and associated costs for project evaluation and financial audit services;
- Materials and supplies directly related to the project, such as photocopying, telephone, postage and equipment rental;
- Costs associated with marketing and dissemination, such as printing and translation;
- Travel within Canada that is directly related to project activities.

Costs **ineligible** for funding under the CLN initiative include:

- Purchase or maintenance of technological infrastructure, such as computers and related equipment, technological support or Internet access;

- The creation of stand-alone Web sites, portals or databases outside the context of a community learning network;
- Development and testing of commercial software products;
- Developing and/or delivering accredited primary, secondary or post-secondary curricula;
- Functioning solely as a vehicle for the delivery of formal distance education;
- Regular, ongoing operational activities of an organization;
- Capital improvements, such as the construction or renovation of buildings;
- Capital asset purchases, such as the purchase of office furnishings;
- Administrative overhead not directly related to the administration of the project;
- International travel.

I. WHAT IS THE DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS?

The deadline for submission of pilot project proposals is August 31, 2004.

J. WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO FOLLOW WHEN APPLYING FOR FUNDING?

When applying for funding, first consider the mission of your organization.

- Is the proposed project clearly linked to both the goals of your organization and to CLN objectives?
- How do the CLN objectives complement your organization's objectives?
- Will the project address verified needs without duplicating existing activities?

All the forms needed to complete your application package are available on our Web site at: www.hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca (Key word – OLT). We are available to help you with the application process. If you require explanations or assistance, visit our Web site which contains a number of applicant resources, or contact us directly:

Telephone: (819) 953-0300

OR

Email: olt-bta@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca

K. WHAT IS THE REVIEW PROCESS?

OLT will screen your application package to ensure that it meets the eligibility criteria and that all required materials have been submitted.

Applications that are missing key information will not be accepted. You will not be contacted to provide missing information or to make changes to your proposal. Following receipt of an application package, a letter of acknowledgement will be mailed to the contact person identified on the application form. Applicants whose proposals do not meet eligibility criteria or mandatory requirements will be notified within 30 working days after the closing date. The Office of Learning Technologies reserves the right to limit the number of projects from any one applicant, affiliated network or community.

Eligible proposals are assessed and recommendations are made based on the criteria in Section L. The review committee is composed of government and non-government experts, in consultation with local or regional HRSDC officials. Provincial/territorial and other federal officials will be consulted where appropriate. Applicants will be advised of funding decisions by December 31, 2004.

L. HOW ARE CLN PROPOSALS ASSESSED?

Proposals are assessed on their fulfillment of the following criteria:

- Relevancy to the CLN objectives;
- Employs technology-mediated learning as a tool for socio-economic development;
- Quality of project methodology;
- Demonstrates the applicant's capacity to complete the project;
- Documents partnerships and cost-sharing arrangements;
- Indicates that the technological infrastructure is already in place or under development;
- Does not duplicate activities that are already taking place in the community of learners
- Adds to the existing knowledge base in the community of practice about the effective use of learning technologies;
- Contains measures to market the project and disseminate its results;

- Contains a complete, credible budget that is relevant to the proposed activities;
- Identifies measurable impacts on the targeted learners.

M. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A PROJECT IS APPROVED?

When a project is approved, the applicant will be contacted by an OLT project officer to negotiate a contribution agreement. At that time, any concerns that may have been raised during the application review and approval process will be discussed with the applicant and changes may be negotiated. The contribution agreement, signed by the sponsor organization and the appropriate government authority, identifies the conditions of the contribution and the obligations of all signatories. Specifically, the document requires sponsors to account for the use of the funds and to update OLT on their progress.

Potential applicants must be able to enter into agreements with the Government of Canada under the terms of the applicable laws of the province or territory in which they operate. Those located in the province of Quebec may need to take into account the provisions of Chapter M-30 of the Revised Statutes of Quebec.

On-site activity monitoring will occur. Project expenditures will be reimbursed provided that the sponsor submits the following documentation:

- Quarterly financial claims, in accordance with the required reporting format, describing the use of OLT funds;
- Quarterly progress reports, in accordance with the required reporting format, providing an update on the results achieved, issues, and upcoming activities;
- Annual financial audit reports (please note that audit results must be submitted to OLT and the sponsor simultaneously);
- Annual evaluation reports;
- A final report (maximum 25 pages), including a two-page bilingual executive summary, providing an overview of project activities, accomplishments in relation to the initial objectives, outcomes in the targeted population, etc.

Supporting documentation for claims and contributions from other sources may be required by OLT at any time as part of the regular monitoring of the project. Reporting documentation templates will be provided at the beginning of the project

N. HOW AND WHERE TO SUBMIT YOUR PILOT PROJECT PROPOSAL

All forms needed to complete an application are available on our Web site at:

www.hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca (Key word – OLT).

Refer to Section 8: Checklist, in the Pilot Project Funding Application, to confirm that your application is complete. **Your application package must contain:**

- **Three (3) completed paper copies of the application form, including completed partnership forms, with original signatures; and**
- **Three (3) copies each of your financial statement and annual report; and**
- **One (1) electronic copy of the completed application form on CD-ROM or diskette.**

Applications missing any of the above items will not be considered. Please do not bind the paper copies or use cerlox bindings or duo-tangs. The electronic version of the completed application form must be submitted as one file, in Microsoft Word format, on either diskette or CD-ROM. **Applications must be sent by mail only.** OLT assumes no responsibility for submissions that are misdirected or delayed.

Send your documents to:

**Office of Learning Technologies
Community Learning Networks
Place du Portage
140 Portage Street
Phase IV
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0J9**

For more information please contact us at:

**Telephone: 1-819-953-0300
Or
E-mail: olt-bta@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca**

O. ANNEX – GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following list of definitions clarifies terms that the Office of Learning Technologies (OLT) uses. Understanding these terms will save time in completing the application and prevent potential confusion.

Action Plan

The action plan contains the chronological steps that you will complete to meet your project **objectives**.

Best practices

Best practices are the actions, approaches, and methods that are most successful or have proven most successful in the past in achieving or contributing to the objective of helping adult learners develop new knowledge or improve skills using learning technologies.

Community learning asset mapping

Community mapping is a type of inventory that starts by identifying and locating what already exists. It looks for opportunities to use and build on existing resources and is an important step in projects that work for community transformation.

Community learning networks (CLN)

A community is a group of people that share important characteristics, such as a knowledge base, interests or common issues, speak the same language or live in the same geographic region. Learning refers to improving individual skills and knowledge in an interactive and informal way, rather than in an educational institution with an established curriculum. Some formal learning with links to educational institutions may be included as determined by community-identified needs, interests and priorities. Networks refer both to the technology that connects individuals and groups, and to the patterns of communication and relationships involving multi-point access within a community or communities.

Community of Practice (CoP)

A community of practice is a group whose members regularly engage in sharing and learning, based on their common interests

Consultants

Consultants are individuals or organizations that provide expertise and services. They are not part of your staff but work on a contract basis.

Contributions, cash

Your organization and partner organizations may make cash contributions to cover project costs. For example, your partner may pay a project worker's salary or a consultant's fee. If actual dollars are paid for the service or resource, it is a cash contribution.

Contributions, in-kind

Expertise, services, facilities, or products are some examples of in-kind contributions. Your **partner** may offer secretarial services, meeting facilities, or access to computers or machines such as photocopiers and faxes. Your partner may also lend staff to work on your project while remaining on their payroll. If no money is exchanged for the service or resource, it is an in-kind contribution.

Deliverables

Deliverables are tangible work products that can be provided to stakeholders. A deliverable may document project activities, such as a quarterly progress report. A deliverable may also result from project activities, such as an inventory of community **learning assets**.

Direct salaries

Direct salaries are the salaries paid to project staff using project funds.

Dissemination plan

A dissemination plan lists continuing activities that inform your community and project stakeholders about the project, its ongoing activities and results.

Essential skills

Essential Skills are the enabling skills people use to perform the tasks required by their occupation and other activities of daily life, provide a foundation to learn other skills and enhance the ability to adapt to workplace change. Essential skills include: oral communication, reading text, writing, numeracy, computer use, working with others, thinking skills, document use and continuous learning.

Evaluation

Evaluation is a process to assist the organization that receives funding and the project in achieving the project goals and objectives. The evaluation process seeks to determine the efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and relevance of the project activities. An evaluation will provide information that is credible and useful, offering concrete lessons learned to help the organization, its partners and funding agencies make decisions on the changes that might be required to make the project successful.

Evaluation framework

The evaluation framework explains how you will organize your evaluation resources, measure benchmarks (such as the status of participants at project beginning), outcomes (how their status changed as a result of your interventions), and assess success. It also indicates how you will identify and work on areas of the project that require improvement. Your proposal must include an evaluation framework.

Evaluation plan

An evaluation plan is a tool for the systematic collection and analysis of information on the actual performance of a project in order to learn from it and improve upon it. The evaluation must be performed by an independent third party individual that is not associated with the project, project staff or project partners.

Gantt chart

A Gantt chart is a popular tool for project planning and management. It uses horizontal lines on a time-scaled bar chart to represent project tasks in terms of start and completion dates, duration and to show the relationships between tasks.

Gap identification/analysis (identifying skills gaps and needs)

Gap identification and analysis is the process by which you identify the skills individuals lack and/or the learning opportunities that would provide these skills. This analysis helps to start visualizing a plan to bridge these gaps.

Goals and objectives

Your goal is the reason you want to undertake the project. It describes your intentions and desired outcomes for the project. Your objectives translate your goal into action. They are the activities and tasks necessary to achieve your goal.

Knowledge base, adding to

The knowledge base is an existing body of knowledge about the use of learning technologies in a particular context, as well as the individual skills in the community of learners. Your proposal must demonstrate how your project will add to the knowledge base in your area of intervention.

Knowledge-based economy (KBE)

An economy directly based on the production, distribution and use of knowledge and information. Technological developments have transformed the majority of wealth-creating work in the economy from resource-based, where labour and capital are the key factors of production, to information and knowledge-based.

Learning assets (community learning assets)

Learning assets are organizations and individuals in your community of practice that can educate, train, and create learning opportunities. Some examples are libraries, schools, colleges, training institutions, retired individuals with expertise in specific areas, and informal learning networks, for example, CLNs located in your area.

Learning, informal and non-formal

Informal learning improves skills and knowledge outside of a structured program. It is often interactive and informal, or on-the-job, training. Non-formal learning is systematic and purposeful learning that does not result in credit or certification. Informal and non-formal learning, as opposed to formal learning, are the kinds of learning that are supported by OLT-funded projects.

Learning technologies

Learning technologies include both the physical, technical structures that house learning content (for example, CD-ROMs and hard drives), and the formats in which learning content is delivered, such as e-mail, on-line tutorials or video-conferencing.

Measurable outcomes

Measurable outcomes are **results** attributed to project activities which can be assessed by metrics. These metrics may be quantitative, such as number of participants successful in gaining employment, or qualitative, such as expressions of increased confidence using computers. Measurable outcomes indicate the extent to which your project's objectives are met and the difference your project has made. Your proposal must include measurable outcomes.

Milestones

Milestones are achievement points at which you can report that you have completed a group of activities or tasks and/or have produced a **deliverable**.

Partners

Partners are organizations or individuals that share the costs of your project through **cash or in-kind contributions**. Partners can be involved in development activities, management, evaluation, and dissemination of results. They can contribute cash, equipment, expertise, facilities, software, and staff time.

Project phases, initial and pilot

The initial phase of your project is the stage when you carry out activities in preparation for implementing the pilot phase. This stage is usually 4 to 6 months. The pilot phase is the

implementation and testing phase of your project, and it can last up to two and a half years. Your major activity in this phase will be to implement your skills and learning action plan.

Project sponsor

The organization that acts as recipient of HRSDC/OLT contribution funding and as administrator of the project. If the proposal is selected for funding, normally the proponent becomes the project sponsor.

Skills

Skills are the technical ability of individuals in science, art, or crafts. Especially important are employability skills, whether certified by a recognized institution or based on experience and informal learning.

Sustainability

Sustainability is the capacity of the project to continue after OLT project funding ends. Project sponsors are expected to safeguard the processes, activities, and accomplishments of CLN projects and ensure that opportunities for learners continue after the pilot phase.

Target community (target learners)

The target community is either a geographic community or a community of interest (people and groups who share the same learning interests and goals) within which your target group falls. If your activities help the target group, the effects will be felt in the larger community.