

## NETWORK OF CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

### 2005 Targeted Competition for New NCE on Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and other Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSE)

#### Questions and Answers

**1. How much money is allocated for the new BSE/TSE network?**

The total annual funding for 7 years, starting in 2005-2006, is \$5,000,000.

**2. How many networks will be funded in this Targeted Competition?**

Only one

**3. How will the adjudication be done?**

The NCE Steering Committee will appoint a Peer Review Committee responsible for the evaluation of the LOIs and full application. This Committee will be composed of international-calibre experts with broad expertise representing the domains of the three granting agencies. Committee recommendations will be provided to the NCE Steering Committee. The Peer Review Committee will:

- Review Letters of Intent according to the five published NCE program criteria;
- Recommend groups to receive invitations to submit Full Applications;
- Review Full Applications according to the five published NCE program criteria;
- Recommend new NCE BSE/TSE network for funding and funding levels;
- Provide a confidential report to each group that submitted a Full Application;
- Provide an overview of the competition for the public.

**4. For any of the research priorities, do all examples indicated in the description of a specific research area need to be included? Do any of the examples need to be included?**

This new NCE would promote the development of a proposal that is consistent with the overall thrusts of the research areas shown in [Annex A](#), but will have the ability to modify the research scope as necessary to reflect research opportunities and constraints that become apparent during the proposal development process.

When a group is developing a proposal, they should ensure that:

- the overall goal of a proposed network is related to the research areas;
- that the proposed research program is coherent, well integrated and is developed with all the relevant stakeholders (private and public sectors, university); and
- it directly addresses the five NCE Selection Criteria.

**5. How will the new network be evaluated compared to the existing networks or any ongoing similar initiatives?**

In the LOI, under the section 'Socio-economic context', groups will have to position their proposed networks with similar work conducted elsewhere in Canada and abroad, and the value added of the network approach. We expect that potential groups will clearly define the relationship between what they proposed and what currently exists in the same / similar field in Canada and how they will build on existing Canadian initiatives and what benefits they will bring to Canada.

**6. What resources are made available to help applicants identify potential collaborators?**

An information workshop was organized on December 16 and 17, 2004, in Winnipeg. The following link [http://www.nce-rce.gc.ca/comp/BSE/bse-liste\\_e.pdf](http://www.nce-rce.gc.ca/comp/BSE/bse-liste_e.pdf) provides a list of individuals who attend the information session on the competition for new NCEs and/or expressed an interest to communicate with other potential applicants working in similar or complementary areas. Feel free to contact them for further discussion. The areas of research interest are indicated in the language chosen by the participants.

Of course, there are the usual routes to find people e.g., scientific societies, CAURA, the Industry Canada 'Strategis' site (<http://strategis.ic.gc.ca>), etc.

**7. Are international partnerships encouraged?**

Yes, international partnerships are strongly encouraged and it is expected that proposals would make reference to other major international activities in the research areas projected and describe how they intend to link with them. Naturally, the international collaborators bring their own resources to the collaboration since NCE funds can only flow to eligible Canadian institutions.

**8. Can a researcher figure on several Letters of Intent (LOI)?**

There are no limits in this regard. However, do keep in mind that it makes a stronger LOI when all key participants are viewed as truly excellent, committed and experts in research fields that are well integrated in the proposed network. The NCE Selection Committee may question the 'real' commitment of a researcher involved in many LOIs or existing networks.

**9. Should the commitments of the user sector be already confirmed when submitting the Letter of Intent?**

No. We do not require letters of support at the LOI stage. What is required at the Letter of Intent stage is a reasonable estimate of the funds expected from the user sector partners with whom you have established contact. You should describe in the text, the actual state of your networking and partnership efforts.

**10. What percentage of the budget must be secured from the private sector?**

There is no preset minimum contribution expected in terms of cash or in kind support from either industry, government or other sources. However, you must remember that this is a partnership program and we expect contributions from non-NCE sources. The Peer Review Committee and Selection Committee will evaluate each proposal in the context of the potential support available in its field of activity.

**11. Is it possible to add participants to the network between the LOI stage and the full application stage?**

Yes. We do not expect the network to have all its participants at the LOI stage. We do however expect to see already on board the key academics (Program Leader, Theme Leaders), and some key partners (private or public), along with an indication of how you plan on recruiting the relevant expertise/players.

If invited to submit a full application, this will be announced to the research community and interested parties may well be contacting you to come on board. In such cases you will have to be selective.

A complete list of the participants and partners will have to be in place in time for the submission of the full proposal. After the application deadline, it is possible to bring on new partners. Please note that the only additional materials accepted after the deadline up to the date of the Peer Review Committee meeting are updated budgets and letters of support.

**12. Is it possible that successful LOIs be asked to come together to submit one full proposal?**

Yes, it is possible, and we would encourage collaboration among researchers from the community since there is only one NCE to be funded. If an LOI is selected to prepare a Full Application, a comment may be sent to the applicant that may indicate the existence of an overlapping proposal and suggesting joining efforts. However, if an LOI is clearly lacking an essential component that can be complemented by another LOI, the ability of the applicant to pull together the essential elements/expertise from a successful network approach may be questioned.

In the application process, the reviewers may suggest collaboration among different groups of researchers in the community and encourage them to join efforts and submit one single proposal.