

Post-Secondary Clean Energy Partnerships

2015 Program Guide



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1. Program Overview

1.1. Purpose

The [Innovative Clean Energy \(ICE\) Fund](#) is offering a new Post-Secondary Clean Energy Partnerships (PSCEP) Program to fund research in **clean energy science and technology projects** undertaken by post-secondary institutions in B.C.

The PSCEP program will support the B.C. Government's energy, economic, environmental and greenhouse gas reduction priorities and advance B.C.'s clean energy sector. Technological advancements as a result of research may lead to the emergence of more start-up companies and the retention of high quality intellectual capital within British Columbia.

The ICE Fund will provide \$1.25 million over the next three years, of which \$500,000 is allocated for fiscal 2015/16. Approval for ICE Fund support from the Ministry of Energy and Mines (the Ministry) is contingent on an institution's successful application for federal research funding from the Natural Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC).

This well established federal research funding agency offers grant programs that build research relationships between post-secondary institutions and Canadian companies to help advance R&D in many sectors and disciplines relating to science and technology.

The ICE Fund's PSCEP Program supports the goals and objectives of the BC Government's *Clean Energy Act*, Climate Action Plan, Energy Plan, Jobs Plan, and the ICE Fund Special Account legislation.

Under the PSCEP Program, the ICE Fund will co-fund the following two NSERC granting programs:

- 1) **Collaborative Research and Development (CRD) Grants Program** - Supports well-defined projects undertaken by B.C. **university** researchers and their B.C.-based private sector partners. Direct project costs will be shared by the industrial partner(s), NSERC and the Ministry. Projects may range from one year to five years in duration, but most awards are for two or three years.

The CRD Grants are intended to give B.C. based companies access to the unique knowledge, expertise and educational resources available at B.C. post-secondary institutions and to train students in essential technical skills required by industry.

CRD projects can be at any point in the research and development (R&D) spectrum. Typically NSERC funds projects in the natural sciences and engineering that is consistent with the university's research, training, and technology transfer mandate.

- 2) **Applied Research and Development (ARD) Grants Program** - Supports well-defined applied research and development projects undertaken by B.C. **college** researchers with their B.C.-based private sector partners. Direct project costs are shared by the company partner(s), NSERC and the Ministry. Projects may range from one year to three years in duration.

ARD Grants are intended to give B.C. based companies access to the unique knowledge, expertise and capabilities available at B.C. colleges and to train students in essential technical skills required by companies. ARD projects can be at any point in the research and development spectrum that is consistent with the college's applied research, training and technology transfer mandate.

Please note: the joint ICE Fund (PSCEP) – NSERC program will only fund research in *clean energy science and technology* projects.

QUICK FACT:

In 2014, NSERC disbursed over \$1 billion in R&D funding nationally, with approximately \$160 million in British Columbia.

1.2. Amount of Incentives

The ICE Fund will provide \$1.25 million over three years as shown in table below.

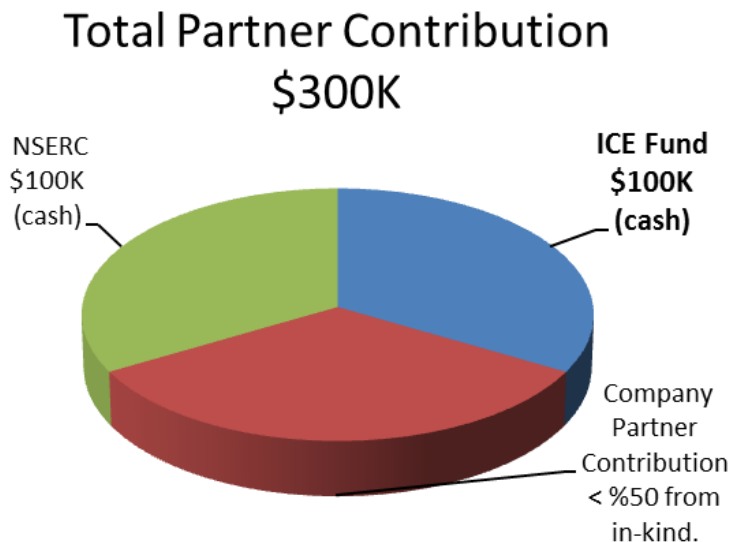
Fiscal 2015/16	Fiscal 2016/17	Fiscal 2017/18
\$500,000	\$500,000	\$250,000

Maximum project costs are not to exceed \$300,000 based on the funding ratio noted below.

The ICE Fund will provide up to **\$100K per research project**. An institution will not receive more than \$200K in provincial funding in any given fiscal period. The ICE Fund and NSERC research funding ratio breakdown is as follows:

- 1/3 of total research project budget provided by NSERC to post-secondary institution
- 1/3 of total research project budget provided by ICE Fund to post-secondary institution**
- 1/3 of total research project budget provided by institution's company partner to post-secondary institution. No more than 50% of this total can come from the company's in-kind/internal expenses.

Example: Research Project Funding Breakdown



QUICK FACT:

The PSCEP contribution will result in a 33% reduction in the financial burden of the applicant's private sector partner contribution.

2 Eligibility

2.1. Eligible Applicants

Project applications will be received from eligible “Proponents”. The Proponent will be the entity that will enter into a funding agreement with the Province if the proposed project is approved by the Ministry and NSERC.

Eligible applicants or proponents are NSERC eligible institutions that are:

- B.C. based Colleges, Universities and Technical Institutes. [See listing of NSERC eligible BC institutions.](#)

Please note, a university and/or a technical institute may be listed under “BC Colleges” as the institution may have received eligibility under the College status, on an exceptional basis. Be sure to check both Universities and College categories.

2.2. Eligible Company Partner

A private sector partner is **mandatory** and must be a B.C.-based company duly registered in British Columbia under the *Business Corporations Act*. B.C. public utilities that operate on a fee-for-service basis (e.g., electricity, waste treatment and public transportation) may be accepted as eligible partners. The private sector partner will participate in the project and contribute to the direct costs of the R&D project.

QUICK FACT:

Private sector partner(s) engaged in R&D may be eligible for Canada Revenue Agency’s Scientific Research & Experimental Development Program, where they can get back approximately 35% of qualified expenditures via tax credit.

Source: [Canada Revenue Agency](#)

2.3. Eligible Research Projects

Research projects applying for joint ICE Fund and NSERC funding and undertaken through eligible post-secondary institutions are required to align with government’s energy and environmental priorities.

As a result, research undertakings should address at least **one** of the following:

- Increase British Columbia’s production of clean or renewable energy;
- Improve the ways energy moves from producers to British Columbia users;
- Improve the ways energy is used in British Columbia’s communities and across all sectors of the provincial economy; and do **one or more** of the following:
 - support the development or adoption of pre-commercial clean energy technologies, or of clean energy technologies not currently used in British Columbia;

- reduce the environmental impact of the use, production, generation, storage, transmission, delivery, provision or conversion of energy;
- demonstrate or promote British Columbia clean energy technologies that have good potential for market demand in other jurisdictions;
- reduce the cost or improve the reliability of clean energy sources or associated technology;
- support energy efficiency or conservation.

Please note, energy efficiency and clean or renewable energy projects are defined in B.C.'s *Clean Energy Act* as:

- A "project that aims to conserve energy or promote energy efficiency"; and
- A "clean or renewable resource means biomass, biogas, geothermal heat, hydro, solar, ocean, wind or any other prescribed resource".

2.4 Ineligible Projects

Projects will be considered ineligible if the:

- applicant does not meet the definitions of an eligible applicant, as per Section 2.1 above;
- eligible company partner has not been identified, as per Section 2.2 above;
- project does not meet the definition of an eligible project, as per Section 2.3 above; or
- project does not otherwise meet the mandatory criteria, as per Section 3 below.

Projects that focus on the application of existing technology, provide routine analysis, collect data without interpreting underlying mechanisms, or provide professional practice or consulting services (contract research) are not eligible.

Similarly, proposals that involve the set-up and operational management of an institute, a formal or informal group of researchers, or that are principally associated with the acquisition and maintenance of scientific equipment will not be considered.

3 Application Process

The ICE Fund – NSERC application process has two phases.

In Phase 1, the applicant will submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) to the ICE Fund.

In Phase 2, upon Ministry approval of the LOI, the applicant will be invited to submit a full application to NSERC's CRD or ARD grant program.

How to Apply

Phase 1 – Ministry’s Letter of Intent

- Step 1:** Read the **PSCEP Program Guide** (this document) to understand the objectives of the Program and how to apply.
- Step 2:** Complete your LOI submission ([download template here](#)) which summarizes your clean energy research proposal, in collaboration with your B.C. private sector partner(s).
- Step 3:** Email your LOI submission to Will.Yeh@gov.bc.ca at the ICE Fund **by 5:00pm Pacific Standard Time on October 14, 2015.**¹ Acknowledgement of Receipt will be provided by the Ministry within 24 hours of submission.
- Step 4:** Ministry staff will review all LOI submissions and determine which proposals meet the ICE Fund requirements by **October 21, 2015.**

MEM Letter of Intent – Screening of Mandatory Criteria

The LOI will be screened to ensure that the following Mandatory Criteria have been completely fulfilled:

- Completed LOI and any documentation in support of the research (if applicable) are submitted to the Ministry **by 5:00pm, Pacific Standard Time, October 14, 2015.**
- Applicants are NSERC eligible B.C. Post-Secondary institutions, as per Section 2.1 above.
- The applicant’s private sector partner is a B.C.-based company and will participate in the project and contribute to the direct costs of the R&D project, as per Section 1.2 above.
- The LOI clearly describes how the **clean energy** research project will help support Government’s energy and environmental priorities, as per Section 2.3 above.

Phase 2 – Full NSERC Application

- Step 5:** If the ICE Fund LOI is approved, the Ministry will invite the applicant to complete and submit an NSERC-CRD or ARD grant application on NSERC forms, directly to the federal agency, as per NSERC application process.
- **NSERC-CRD grants:** Visit website to find out how to apply and [access NSERC-CRD forms](#) or contact Program staff for more information:
 - by phone: 1-613-995-1111 or by e-mail: rpp@nserc-crsng.gc.ca
 - **NSERC-ARD grants:** Visit website to find out how to apply and [access NSERC-ARD forms](#) or contact Program staff for more information:
 - by phone: 1-613-944-5802 or by e-mail: colleges@nserc-crsng.gc.ca

¹ The Ministry may extend the LOI deadline at its discretion. As such, any extension will be posted on the [PSCEP website](#) one week prior to LOI submission closing date.

Step 6: When the NSERC application is submitted, a completed copy **must** also be forwarded to Will.Yeh@gov.bc.ca at the ICE Fund.²

Step 7: NSERC will conduct its normal review of proposals (2-3 month process) and will inform applicants of its funding decision.

Step 8: Proponents whose applications have been approved by NSERC for either an NSERC-CRD or NSERC-ARD funding, must promptly contact Will.Yeh@gov.bc.ca and submit a copy of NSERC's **Notice of Decision** within 2 days of receipt of NSERC approval.

Important:

- Submission and approval of an LOI does not guarantee Ministry funding.
- Ministry funding is contingent on NSERC approval of project applicant funding.
- Funding provided by the Ministry and NSERC will be determined by Program requirements and annual funding resources of both agencies.
- Academic applicants are free to apply to NSERC at any time; however, bypassing the LOI process noted in Section 3 will exclude the Applicant from potential Ministry funding.

4 Approval and Contribution Agreements

Under the Ministry's PSCEP Program, approved MEM-CRD and/or MEM-ARD funding recipients must enter into a Contribution Agreement with the Province by March 15, 2016. The [Contribution Agreement](#) sets out the terms and conditions of the Ministry funding and will confirm both parties' understanding of the research project, the maximum contribution amount to which the proponent is entitled, reporting requirements and the payment terms and conditions.

The Ministry will make payment to the institution - 90% of its 1/3 funding obligation - within 30 days of an executed Contribution Agreement. A 10% holdback will be held until the proponent forwards to the Ministry, a copy of the final research project report approved by NSERC.

Ministry funding recipients are required to adhere to NSERC's reporting requirements, as per their respective Agreement with this federal agency.

Contact Information

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² If the research proposal within the NSERC application is different than what was proposed in the applicant's LOI submission, the Ministry will annul the pre-approval of Ministry funding.