

# Post-Secondary Clean Energy Partnerships

## 2016 Program Guide



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## 1. Program Overview

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### 1.1. Purpose

Launched in 2015, the Post-Secondary Clean Energy (PSCEP) Program supports research in **clean energy science and technology projects** undertaken by post-secondary institutions in B.C. in collaboration with private sector partners.

Funded through the Province's Innovative Clean Energy (ICE) Fund, the PSCEP program supports the B.C. Government's energy, economic, environmental and greenhouse gas reduction priorities to 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.

For the 2016 call, \$250,000 is allocated for research commencing after April 1, 2017 within fiscal year 2017/18. 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 research and development (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 B.C. Government's *Clean Energy Act*, Climate Leadership 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 grants program:

- 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 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

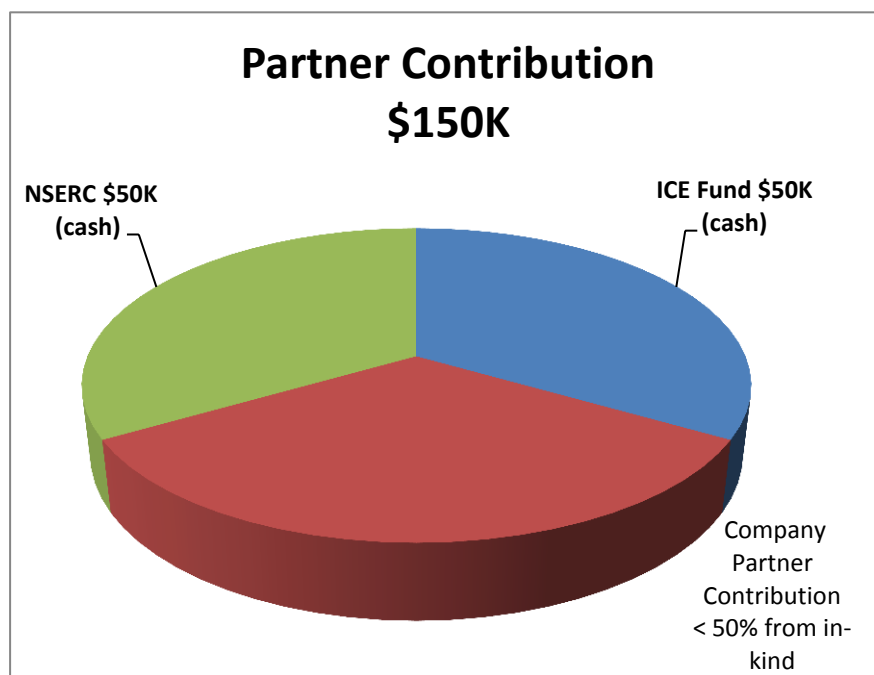
The 2016 PSCEP Program will provide \$250,000 for projects initiated **after** April 1, 2017 for the 2017/18 fiscal year.

The ICE Fund will award **1/3** of total research project cost, up to a maximum of **\$50,000**, whichever is lower. For example, the ICE Fund and NSERC research funding ratio breakdown for a research project costing \$150,000 is as follows:

- a) 1/3 of total research project budget provided by NSERC to post-secondary institution
- b) **1/3 of total research project budget provided by ICE Fund to post-secondary institution<sup>1</sup>**
- c) 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.

NSERC provides funding up to \$500,000 per project. Since the ICE Fund's 1/3 contribution will only award up to a maximum of \$50,000 per research project, the applicant will need to consult with their company partner and NSERC to fulfil any funding requirements for total project costs exceeding \$150,000.

### Example: Research Project Funding Breakdown



<sup>1</sup> Indirect costs related to research charged by the post-secondary institutions (if applicable) will form part of the ICE Fund's 1/3 research budget contribution, up to a maximum of \$50,000. The Ministry has set the maximum rate for indirect cost at **10%**.

## 2 Eligibility

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### 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 post-secondary 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 for your institution’s listing.

### 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 the province’s energy and environmental priorities, as stipulated in the ICE Fund [Special Accounts and Appropriation and Control Act](#).

As such, research undertakings should address at least **one** of the following actions:

- 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

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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 within the specified time frame.

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 within a specified time frame.

### 3.1 How to Apply

#### Phase 1 – Letter of Intent (LOI) Submission

- Step 1:** Read the **2016 PSCEP Program Guide** (this document) to understand the program objectives of the Program and how to apply.
- Step 2:** Complete your LOI submission using the [mandatory template \(DOC\)](#) 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](mailto:Will.Yeh@gov.bc.ca) at the ICE Fund **by 5:00pm Pacific Standard Time on January 20, 2017**. Confirmation will be provided by the Ministry within 24 hours of submission.
- Step 4:** The LOI will be screened to ensure the mandatory criteria have been met. The PSCEP Review Committee will review and evaluate the LOIs according to the evaluation and scoring criteria outlined in Section 4. A decision will be made by **February 1, 2017** and top-scoring applicants will be advised by email to proceed to Phase 2.

#### Phase 2 – Full NSERC Application

- Step 5:** If the ICE Fund LOI is approved, applicants will be invited to complete and submit to NSERC a CRD or ARD grant application on NSERC forms.
- **NSERC-CRD grants:** Visit the 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](mailto:rpp@nserc-crsng.gc.ca)
  - **NSERC-ARD grants:** Visit the 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](mailto:colleges@nserc-crsng.gc.ca)
- Step 6:** NSERC application (Form 101) must be submitted to NSERC **no later than March 31, 2017**.<sup>2</sup> A completed copy must also be emailed to [Will.Yeh@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Will.Yeh@gov.bc.ca) at the ICE Fund.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ministry support for the project will be rescinded effective the following day if the NSERC application is not submitted by the deadline. An extension **may** be considered on a case-by-case basis if the Ministry was informed of the extenuating circumstance **prior** to the deadline.

<sup>3</sup> If the research objective within the NSERC application is different than what was proposed in the applicant's LOI submission, the Ministry may rescind its pre-approval of funding.



**Step 7:** NSERC will conduct its normal review of proposals (3-5 month process) and will inform applicants of its funding decision.

**Step 8:** Applicants whose applications have been approved by NSERC for either an NSERC-CRD or NSERC-ARD grant, must forward a copy of NSERC's '**Notice of Conditional Award**' letter to [Will.Yeh@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Will.Yeh@gov.bc.ca) within seven days of receipt of notification. Subsequently, Ministry staff must also be notified within seven days should the applicant receive a negative funding decision.<sup>4</sup>

**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 can apply to NSERC at any time, but bypassing the LOI process noted in Section 3 will exclude the applicant from potential Ministry funding

## 4 How your LOI submission will be evaluated

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### Mandatory Screening Criteria

The Letter of Intent will be screened by ministry staff to ensure the following mandatory criteria have been met:

- Completed LOI is signed and any documentation in support of the research (if applicable) is submitted to the Ministry **by 5:00pm, Pacific Standard Time, January 20, 2017**.
- The applicant has used the mandatory LOI submissions template and confirmed all conditions have been met as noted in the 'declarations' check boxes.
- 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 2.2 above.
- The LOI clearly describes how the **clean energy** science and technology research project will help support Government's energy and environmental priorities, as per Section 2.3 above.

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<sup>4</sup> Include situations where the applicant is given an opportunity to 'resubmit' due to a negative funding decision.



#### 4.1 LOI Evaluation and Scoring Criteria

The following points are available for responses generated by each LOI question shown below:

LOI Questions	Points
The applicant clearly provided a summary explanation describing the nature of the clean energy science and technology research project.	25
The applicant clearly explained ' <i>why and to whom</i> ' the research is important.	20
The applicant clearly explained the anticipated outcome(s) of the research project.	15
The applicant clearly explained how the academic institution and/or the industry sector in B.C. will benefit.	15
The applicant clearly explained how the research project will support government priorities.	15
The applicant clearly explained how the research project will support additional actions stipulated in the ICE Fund legislation.	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 4.2 Evaluation Process

**Step 1:** Letter of Intent (LOI) submissions will be screened by the ICE Fund Program Manager to determine if mandatory criteria have been met. LOIs that do not meet all of these criteria will not be evaluated further.

**Step 2:** LOIs that have met Step 1 requirements will be evaluated by the PSCEP Review Committee.<sup>5</sup> Evaluators have various degrees of technical and administrative backgrounds and will individually evaluate each LOI submission according to the scoring matrix noted above.

**Step 3:** Upon completion of Step 2, the Program Manager will record the 'average' score from the evaluators to each question. The process will be repeated for each LOI until the average scores from the remaining questions are recorded. Average scores will be added to reach a final 'total' project score (out of 100).

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<sup>5</sup> The Review Committee will be drawn from Ministry staff and associated ministries.

**Step 4:** Top scoring applicants will be contacted in writing to proceed with a full NSERC application before the noted deadline. Ministry funding is contingent on NSERC approval of project applicant funding

## 5 Approval and Contribution Agreements

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NSERC-CRD and/or NSERC-ARD grants are awarded conditionally upon NESERC approval of the IP Agreement between the post-secondary institution and its private sector partner. The agreement must comply with NSERC's Policy on Intellectual Property and received by the agency by the due date referenced on the 'Notice of Conditional Award' letter.

Under the Ministry of Energy and Mines' PSCEP Program, approved award recipients must enter into a contribution agreement with the Province. The [contribution agreement \(PDF\)](#) 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.

Once the IP Agreement has been approved by NSERC, the Ministry will execute a contribution agreement and make payment to the institution for one third of the research budget contribution, up to a maximum of \$50,000, within 30 days of an executed agreement.

### Contact Information

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**Thank you for your interest in the 2016 Post-Secondary Clean Energy Partnerships Program!**