



2025

Call for Proposals Guide

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Introduction to the National Cybersecurity Consortium

The National Cybersecurity Consortium (NCC) is a catalyst to build a future where Canadian organizations are global leaders in cybersecurity, so Canadians benefit from the prosperity, growth, and safety that comes from advancing and creating innovative cybersecurity products and services. The NCC is committed to building partnerships among the academic, not-for-profit, and private sectors to further cybersecurity initiatives across Canada.

Summary of the Call 2025 Process

We provide this summary to help guide applicants in how they can structure and develop their applications for Call 2025. The rationale and details of each step, timeline of due dates, and evaluations for major application components are provided in the balance of the guide.

Step 1: Select the category for your application

Note: not all categories are open to all applicants

Choose from:

- Accelerated Project
- New 2025 Project
- Top-up to 2023/2024 Project

Step 2: Select the stream for your application

Choose from:

- Research and Development
 - Spearhead
 - Standard
- Training

- Commercialization

All applicants will prepare a Letter of Intent (LOI) for submission to the NCC's grant application portal, EXCEPT for the Top-Ups to 2023 / 2024 projects.

Constraints on Call 2025

The NCC has been charged by the Government of Canada through the Cyber Security Innovation Network (CSIN) program to mobilize-funds through a series of Calls for Proposals. The NCC has undertaken two successful calls to date and is making a 2025 Call for Proposals using a similar structure to that used in previous calls. The CSIN agreement allows the NCC to operate and spend CSIN funds through to March 31, 2029. Based on the current agreements between the NCC and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) all CSIN funds and any matching requirements must be spent by that date. The NCC is seeking applications that can be completed, including all spending, by March 31, 2029.

To best serve the ecosystem and based on feedback received, the NCC has introduced two new funding Categories in their Call 2025 in addition to the offerings made in previous Calls. Note: each category has specific timelines and requirements but the full suite of offerings is provided here to help guide applicants in preparing submissions appropriate to their goals.

Overall Structure of Call 2025

The NCC is seeking applications in three different **Categories** across all eligible project streams.

Category 1: Accelerated Projects.

- **Goal:** To make impactful progress on highly targeted, larger budget projects intended to be quickly transformative.
- **Funding Max/Timeline:** Up to \$2.5M – fully completed by March 31, 2028
- **Framework:** A targeted initiative that will address a critical need facing cybersecurity/privacy. Matching funds must be fully committed by the completion of

Stage 3 of the application process, and fully spent by March 31, 2028.

Milestones/goals and KPIs with tangible deliverables must be clearly identified. These are intended to be substantial, high value projects. Funding is provided using the reimbursement approach only.

Category 2: New 2025 Projects.

- **Goal:** To maintain the NCC's funding momentum by drawing on community-initiated projects through an open call. Projects may be between one and three years in duration.
- **Funding Max/Timeline:** Based on funding stream and category – see [Grant Amounts and Matching Contributions](#) section below.
- **Framework:** applications may be up to three years in duration but all funds and matching dollars must be spent no later than March 31, 2029. Projects will be evaluated based on the quality of the proposal through a peer-review process.

Category 3: Top-ups to 2023/2024 Projects.

- **Goal:** To increase the impact of projects already vetted and approved by the NCC by allowing them to incorporate nascent insights or cover gaps that emerged through the work to date. Projects with a fully executed agreement by July 3rd 2025 are eligible to request an invitation to apply for this category.
- **Funding Max/Timeline:** Up to \$500,000 in top-up funds, with these funds fully spent within a maximum of a two year period following the end of existing contracts (URAs) but no later than March 31, 2029 – this will require an amendment to existing agreements with URs.

Framework: To provide enhanced support and expertise to expand an ongoing project to increase its potential impact. This enhancement could include covering newly discovered gaps in an existing project to ensure its success, or in the expansion of a promising set of deliverables. A proposal for incremental matching funds must be in place and fully spent within two years of existing agreements, but no later than March 31, 2029. Incremental KPIs and tangible deliverables must be identified and/or a strong rationale for why these top-up funds are required to achieve the originally

anticipated milestones. Budgets must be updated to reflect the inclusion of the new funds and deliverables through an amendment to the existing URA. (See timelines below for additional information.)

Overall Objectives of Call 2025

With funding from the Government of Canada through the [Cyber Security Innovation Network \(CSIN\) program](#), the NCC is mobilizing funds through the 2025 Call for Proposals to support initiatives that:

- Support research and development (R&D) projects with Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) 1-6 to design and implement innovative cybersecurity technologies, advance state-of-the-art products, and conduct research;
- Support commercialization of new technology with TRL 7-9: products and services that address cybersecurity challenges in critical infrastructure protection, human-centric cybersecurity, network security, software security, and privacy protection; and
- Provide opportunities for training, upskilling, and reskilling of students and professionals from various disciplines.

Eligible Project Types

The NCC funds projects under three major streams:

1. Research and Development (R&D);
2. Commercialization; and
3. Training.

1. Research and Development Projects

The NCC will support research and development projects (TRL 1-6) that are focused on the design and implementation of innovative cybersecurity technologies, working to advance the state-of-the-art, or looking to conduct studies within the Canadian cybersecurity ecosystem relating to:

- **Critical Infrastructure Protection** to develop solutions that enable proactive monitoring and real-time detection and mitigation to restore critical infrastructure from damage and interruptions inflicted by cyberattacks.
- **Network Security** to develop tools, techniques, and procedures to safeguard computer networks and hosts from both internal and external exploits.
- **Software Security** to develop tools, methods, and practices to reveal and cure vulnerabilities before software is released to end-users.
- **Human-Centric Cybersecurity** to understand how human factors influence and impact security and privacy requirements to develop new humancentric cybersecurity solutions.
- **Privacy Protection** to develop protective technologies across many different environments that safeguard individuals and data from privacy violations.

Research and Development proposals are not limited to technical or scientific projects but could address non-technical issues of concern to cybersecurity/privacy. These may not sit within a particular TRL but will be considered on their own merit and assessed based on the potential impact of their goals. Research and Development proposals can additionally fall into one of two classes: Spearhead or Standard (for more detail on these classes of projects, see the [Terminology List](#)).

2. Commercialization Projects – Technology, Product or Service

The NCC will look to provide support to assist in the successful commercialization of new Canadian technology (Technology Readiness Levels 7-9), products, and services that address cybersecurity challenges in critical infrastructure protection, human-centric cybersecurity, network security, software security and/or privacy. Commercialization proposals should carefully consider what expenses are eligible for support and clearly articulate how the funds provided by the NCC address a specific commercialization challenge faced by the applicant. The NCC provides funding to catalyze commercialization based on clearly articulated goals that are critical to bringing products/services to market, but should not be seen as an angel investor.

3. Training: Skills and Talent Development Projects

To develop robust and varied opportunities for students or professionals to upskill and reskill across various disciplines, the NCC seeks to provide funding for projects focused on:

- Training HQP – Research Based;
- Training Capacity
 - Undergraduate programs
 - Graduate programs
 - Professional development opportunities;
- Training leading to certification;
- Upskilling;
- Reskilling;
- Cybersecurity Awareness
 - Within organizations
 - Public Awareness; and
- Targeted training to enhance equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) engagement and expertise in cybersecurity and privacy.

Applicants should note that NCC funds should not be allocated to tuition subsidies to reduce costs. The CSIN program explicitly excludes tuition bursaries or scholarships because these are seen to be provided by other programs within federal and provincial governments.

Grant Competition Information

The following Call 2025 specific information will help guide applicants.

Grant Amounts and Matching Contributions

The NCC estimates awarding up to \$22M to support \$60M+ worth of activities in Call 2025. First and foremost, the NCC is committed to funding meritorious and feasible projects that meet the program's objectives, with the anticipated distribution of NCC funds based on the quality of the applications received.

Funding Category 1		Maximum Request of NCC Funding	Required* Matching Contribution+
Accelerated Projects		\$2.5 Million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% for commercialization proposals • 50%¹ for all other project types
Funding Category 2		Maximum Request of NCC Funding	Recommended* Matching Contribution+
New 2025 Projects			
	R&D Standard	\$2 Million	50%
	R&D Spearhead	\$500 000	Matching not required

¹ Spearhead projects are not eligible to apply in this category. Lower cost projects with matching funds should apply in the New Projects category and the NCC reserves the right to move projects into the most appropriate stream.

	Commercialization	\$1 Million	70%
	Training	\$1 Million	50%
Funding Category 3		Maximum Request of NCC Funding	Recommended* Matching Contribution+
Top-Up to 2023/2024 Projects		\$500,000	50%

* Applicants are strongly encouraged to meet or exceed the recommended level of matching contribution for their proposals. Assessment of confirmed matching dollars is a part of the [Evaluation Review Criteria](#). Projects with high merit in other Evaluation Review Criteria may be funded with lower matching contribution ratios at the discretion of the NCC.

+ It is recommended that [matching contributions](#) be comprised of 50% cash as defined below. The relative composition of matching funds (cash versus in-kind) is part of the [Evaluation Review Criteria](#). Projects with high merit in other Evaluation Review Criteria may be funded with lower cash contribution ratios at the discretion of the NCC.

Eligibility

Projects submitted to the NCC for funding may not be submitted for consideration for other funding opportunities.

Refer to the [NCC's Pre-award Guide](#) to review eligible organizations, sources for matching contributions and project expenses.

Grant Competition Timeline – Categories 1 and 2²

Pre-Launch Information sessions	Week of February 17th
Stage 1: Call Launch - LOI Applications open for submission	Monday, February 24, 2025
Q&A Session	Tuesday, March 11, 2025 ³
Stage 1: LOI Deadline	Monday, March 24 th , 2025
Stage 2: Project Proposal Launch (by invitation)	Monday, April 7 th , 2025
Stage 2: Proposal Submission Deadline	Friday, May 9 th , 2025
Stage 2: Results Notification	Thursday, July 3 rd , 2025
Stage 3: Due Diligence Submission Portal Open	Friday, July 4 th , 2025
Stage 3: Due Diligence submission deadline	Tuesday, August 5 th , 2025
Public Announcement of Awarded projects	Wednesday, October 22nd, 2025

Submissions received after the stated deadline or outside of the identified submission channel(s) will not be considered.

[Sign up](#) for our newsletter to stay up to date on NCC funding calls and webinars.

Grant Top-Up Timeline For Category 3⁴

² Adjustments may need to be made to accommodate changing ISED directives, but submission deadlines will not be extended.

³ Subject to change based on availability (monitor the NCC website for updates).

⁴ Adjustments may need to be made to accommodate changing ISED directives, but submission deadlines will not be extended.

Pre-Launch application materials available	Monday June 16, 2025
LOI Applications due	Thursday July 3rd, 2025
Notification and Invitation to Submit Proposal	By July 31, 2025
Proposal Submission Deadline	Wednesday October 1, 2025
Public Announcement of Awarded projects	January 2026

Submissions received after the stated deadline or outside of the identified submission channel(s) will not be considered.

Grant Competition Process

The NCC grant competition process consists of three stages:

- Letter of Intent (LOI);
- Project Proposal; and
- Due Diligence Review Submission.

Stage 1: Letter of Intent (LOI)

An LOI must be submitted to provide an overview of the proposed project, projected project costs, and potential or confirmed sources of matching contributions. The NCC will review the LOIs for eligibility and completeness. LOI submissions that meet the conditions stated above will be invited to Stage 2 to submit a Project Proposal.

Collaboration

The NCC also reviews LOIs to identify opportunities for potential collaborations among applicants and across projects. A primary objective of the NCC is to encourage collaboration among Canadian post-secondary institutions, the private sector, and other partners to accelerate cybersecurity innovation through the development of products, services, and training programs; therefore, collaborative projects where multiple stakeholders are involved is an important consideration. Commercialization and spearhead R&D projects may have a narrower scope.

Note: All eligible Organizations may submit an LOI for consideration. Should the LOI be accepted, the Project Lead will be invited to submit a Project Proposal at which time the Lead Organization will be required to **be a member, in good standing, of the NCC**. For additional information, please refer to the [Membership section](#) or visit our website:

<https://ncc-cnc.ca/membership/>

Stage 2: Project Proposal

Project Proposals will address project specifics to demonstrate merit, feasibility, leverage of funding, and impact to the Canadian cybersecurity ecosystem. We encourage applicants to use the Evaluation Review Criteria noted below to guide their responses.

An external panel of subject matter experts will review submitted Stage 2 Proposals and score them against the Evaluation Review Criteria. Scores will be consolidated and discussed at consensus meetings where the Evaluation Committee will generate a list of Proposals recommended to proceed to Stage 3. Note that the consensus meetings will consider both the quantitative assessment from the Evaluation Committee members and the qualitative aspects raised during the consensus meetings.

All Project Leads and Lead Organizations will receive written notice regarding the outcome of their Proposal from the NCC at the conclusion of Stage 2. Should the project be successful at Stage 2, the NCC will request additional information dependent on the project and type of organization.

Stage 3: Due Diligence Review Submission

The purpose of Stage 3 is to complete due diligence on the Project Proposal by:

- reviewing the submission for any risks and discrepancies; and
- validating supporting documentation.

The NCC and our federal funder reserve the right to withdraw an application under consideration should there be any concerns with the application materials and/or requested information and documentation during this period.

The NCC may request any or all of the following documentation to complete the Stage 3 Due Diligence Review:

- Lead Organization's current cybersecurity structure;
 - [National Security Guidelines for Research Partnerships Risk Assessment](#) including any attestations required to demonstrate conformance;
 - Confirmation of Project costs and funding, including Letters of Commitment;
-

- Key performance indicators and evaluation strategies;
- Cybersecurity plan;
- Intellectual property agreements;
- Project plans supporting EDIA principles;
- Incorporation documents and information on ownership (names and percentage of Ownership);
- Constituting / incorporating documents and list of directors and/or members of the Board;
- Financial statements (current and up to five years previous);
- Supplier quotes;
- Copies of relevant permits and licenses;
- HST rebate information (i.e., rebate rate);
- Other documentation, as required.

The NCC reserves the right to request any or all documentation it may require to complete its assessment. The sufficiency and completeness of any requested documentation will be a factor in the final evaluation of the application, and its assessment is at the sole discretion of the NCC. The NCC may request additional documentation to address feedback received at Stage 2 from the Evaluation Committee.

Award

Project Lead(s) and their Organization(s) will be notified of their Project Proposal funding status. If the project is successful in receiving an NCC grant, the Lead Organization (hereon in referred to as the "Ultimate Recipient" (UR)) and the NCC will enter into an Ultimate Recipient Agreement (URA) with the awarded Ultimate Recipient. The Ultimate Recipient will be required to pay an additional 3.5% incremental membership fee based on the amount of awarded grant funds. For Project Proposals to proceed beyond Stage 3, any Partner Organizations identified are encouraged **to be members in good standing of the NCC**. For additional information, please refer to [Membership section](#) or visit our website: <https://ncc-cnc.ca/membership/>

Evaluation Review Criteria

The following evaluation scorecard will be provided to External Reviewers for scoring and discussion purposes of the Project Proposals in Stage 2. Applicants are encouraged to use these criteria to guide their Project Proposal responses. Depending on the type of proposal, these criteria may carry different weights and will be normalized through the consensus meetings at the end of Stage 2.

Evaluation Scorecard

Merit			
This scoring section focuses on the Merit of the submitted Project Proposal.			
Review the Project Proposal section titled "Project Information" when determining the score in the various Merit sub-categories.			
	Poor (1)	Fair (3)	Excellent (5)
Merit: Project Value This scoring focuses on the significance or value of the project, the known gaps the project will address, and the outcomes the project will achieve.	The proposed project has minimal value, the need/gap described is not significant, nor is the project sufficiently innovative to contribute to the advancement of Canada's cybersecurity ecosystem.	The proposed project has value as it will address a need/gap, and/or is innovative and will contribute to advancing Canada's cybersecurity ecosystem.	The proposed project has significant value as it will address a large need/gap, and/or is highly innovative and will contribute to advancing Canada's cybersecurity ecosystem.
Merit: Depth and Breadth of Canadian Collaboration This scoring focuses on project organizational representation from different	Project's organizational representation is limited geographically, and in terms of the types of organizations included.	Project's organizational representation is moderately captured geographically, and in terms of the types of organizations included.	Project's organizational representation is highly diverse in terms of depth and breadth, both geographically, and in terms of the types of organizations included.

geographical regions of Canada and from various types of organizations			
<p>Feasibility</p> <p>This scoring section focuses on the Feasibility of the submitted Project Proposal.</p> <p>Review the submission in the sections titled “Project Information, Project Plan, Project Realization, and Project Costs” when determining the score in the various Feasibility sub-categories.</p>			
	Poor (1)	Fair (3)	Excellent (5)
<p>Feasibility: Team composition and expertise</p> <p>This scoring focuses on assessing appropriate team expertise and experience.</p>	<p>The project team has insufficient expertise, experience, capacity, and resources needed to complete the proposed work. The individuals involved have no track record or experience in managing an organization and/or taking products to market.</p>	<p>The project team has sufficient expertise, experience, capacity, and resources needed to complete the proposed work. Some key team members are confirmed. There is a basic plan in place to complete the team.</p>	<p>Project has a highly capable team with proven expertise and experience (in commercialization, if applicable), which has the capacity and/or resources needed to successfully complete the proposed work.</p>
<p>Feasibility: Proposed timeline, activities, and milestones</p> <p>This scoring focuses on the appropriateness of</p>	<p>The project submission does not identify a minimal set of key milestones and related indicators of success to project. Suggested time to achieve milestone</p>	<p>The project submission identifies key milestones and related indicators of success to the project in a limited way. Suggested time to achieve milestones and overall project timeline require further clarification to be</p>	<p>The project submission identifies all milestones and related indicators of success to the project. Suggested time to achieve milestones and overall project timeline is feasible. No</p>

the project planning to achieve project completion.	and overall project timeline is not realistic. There are concerns about the successful execution of the project.	feasible to ensure successful execution of project.	concerns with successful execution of project.
<p>Feasibility: Proposed Budget</p> <p>This scoring focuses on the appropriateness of the project costs, matching contributions and budgeting to achieve the project plan and outcomes.</p> <p>Matching contributions reflect the commitment of participating organizations in the project. These leveraged funds will be scored accordingly in the evaluation of the proposed budget.</p>	<p>Proposed project costs are inadequate and not reasonable. Project leveraging is minimal. In the case of non-commercial projects, leveraging is heavily reliant on or solely non-cash contributions.</p> <p>The Project Lead/Partner Organizations have limited means to finance ongoing operations, the identified matching contributions are not appropriate and are heavily dependent on contingent events and/or project success.</p>	<p>Proposed project costs are somewhat adequate and reasonable. Project is sufficiently leveraged and, in the case of non-commercial projects, has leveraged both cash and non-cash contributions.</p> <p>The Project Lead/Partner Organizations have the means to finance ongoing operations with appropriate matching contributions, are not dependent on contingent events and/or project success and would have the resources to fund commercialization.</p>	<p>Proposed project costs are completely adequate and reasonable. Project is extremely well leveraged. In the case of non-commercial projects, has leveraged significant cash contributions.</p> <p>The Project Lead/Partner Organizations have the means to finance ongoing operations with appropriate matching contributions and would not be dependent on contingent events and/or project success in any way, and would have significant financial resources to fund commercialization.</p>
<p>Intellectual Property</p> <p>This scoring focuses on the " <i>Intellectual Property (IP) Plan</i>" section of the submitted Project Proposal.</p>			
	Poor (1)	Fair (3)	Excellent (5)

<p>Intellectual Property (IP)</p> <p>Notes: this feedback section focuses on IP Planning.</p>	<p>The submitted proposal inadequately considers the IP Planning for the project.</p>	<p>The submitted proposal considers the IP Planning for the project; however, some key IP issues are not addressed and/or there is no plan in place to address them.</p>	<p>The submitted proposal considers the IP Planning for the project. It is largely well thought out with a thorough and clear mechanism in place to move forward.</p>
<p>Project Sustainability</p> <p>This scoring focuses on the “<i>Project Sustainability</i>” section of the submitted Project Proposal.</p> <p>If this is an R&D Spearhead project, refer also to the Project Plan.</p>			
	<p>Poor (1)</p>	<p>Fair (3)</p>	<p>Excellent (5)</p>
<p>Project Sustainability</p> <p>Note: This feedback section focuses on understanding the future state of the project and the planning for this project after this NCC funding cycle ends and the overall progressive impact the project may have on the Canadian cybersecurity ecosystem.</p>	<p>The submitted proposal does not demonstrate how the project would be sustainable; the project duration is completely dependent on NCC funding.</p> <p>The project does not have the ability to have strong economic, innovation, and social benefits, including technological advancement. As applicable, it does not have potential for commercialization in Canada.</p>	<p>The submitted proposal generally demonstrates how the project could be sustained outside the NCC funding cycle.</p> <p>The project somewhat demonstrates the ability to have strong economic, innovation, and social benefits, including technological advancement. As applicable, it has potential for commercialization in Canada.</p> <p>--</p> <p>For R&D Spearhead: The submitted proposal does generally demonstrate a plan forward for developing the project,</p>	<p>The submitted proposal clearly demonstrates how the project would be sustainable beyond the NCC funding cycle.</p> <p>The project demonstrates the ability to have strong economic, innovation, and social benefits, including technological advancement. As applicable, it has potential for commercialization in Canada.</p> <p>--</p> <p>For R&D Spearhead: The submitted proposal demonstrates a clear and viable plan forward for developing the</p>

	-- For R&D Spearhead: The submitted proposal does not demonstrate a clear plan forward for developing the project alongside any current and future project partners.	but additional work is needed to have commitment by potential project partners.	project, with likely or realized support by potential future project partners.
Additional Feedback			
Provide any additional constructive feedback about this submitted application that will support the Project Proposal Review.	[write in]		

Reporting

Recipients awarded funding for their projects are required to provide regular financial and progress reporting to support the successful completion of NCC-funded projects. The NCC will also use the reporting outcomes to inform and improve future initiatives and support continuous improvement in the design and delivery of our programs.

The following reporting will be required; however, this information is provided here as a guide and is subject to change:

Financial Reporting

- Financial Reporting for reimbursement of eligible project expenses will be completed and submitted quarterly via the online portal. Eligible matching contributions will also be reported in the same way.

The appropriate financial reporting template(s) will be provided by the NCC in advance of each reporting due date. These must be completed by the Ultimate Recipient organization's authorized Financial Representative.

- Invoices and receipts must be retained so they may be submitted to the NCC upon request. Information on the acceptable forms of receipts and invoices can be found in the [Funding Program Guide: Post-Award](#). Detailed information on how to complete financial reports is provided in the Companion Guide - [Completing Expense Claims](#).

Progress Reporting

- Project Progress reporting provides the NCC with information to determine that the project is on time, in scope, and within budget. Progress reporting will be completed and submitted quarterly via the NCC online portal.
- Brief updates are required for the first three quarterly report periods with a more fulsome report annually. Informal touchpoints may be arranged with Project Leads to assist and assess any risks or delays to the project.
- A final project closeout report must be submitted before the final disbursement is released.

Note: The NCC may hold back up to 10% of the grant total pending submission, review, and completion of all documentation.

Additional Data Collection

On an annual basis, recipients will be asked to provide Key Performance Indicators relating to engagement and representation of underrepresented groups as designated groups under the *Employment Equity Act* to monitor program impact. Information related to intellectual property, data management plans, and other compliance metrics will also be requested by the NCC through the term of the project.

Membership

As the NCC is a member-driven organization, the potential Ultimate Recipient (Lead Organization) will need to be a member in good standing of the NCC to receive funds from the NCC.

It is expected that the base membership will be paid in full by the close of the Stage 2: Project Proposal period. If the project is successful in receiving an NCC grant, the Ultimate Recipient will be required to pay an additional 3.5% incremental membership fee based on the amount of awarded grant funds. Note: membership fees are not an eligible expense of the NCC or CSIN project funding.

For Project Proposals that proceed beyond Stage 3, any Partner Organizations identified are encouraged to become members in good standing of the NCC.

For additional information on NCC membership, including detail on membership benefits, visit our website: <https://ncc-cnc.ca/membership/>

Appendix A: Glossary

Below are important terms and definitions used throughout the NCC's Grant Competition Process.

Authorized Signatory

An Authorized Signatory is an individual authorized to sign and submit on behalf of the Lead Applicant/Ultimate Recipient confirming the Letters of Intent, Project Proposal, and award agreements. The Authorized Signatory is also authorized to submit award finalization forms, and project progress reports.

Collaborators

Collaborators on a project can either be an individual project team member contributing intellectually and/or financially, or a partner organization that is designating an individual to contribute to the project financially or intellectually. See below definition of Partner Organization.

Lead Organization/Ultimate Recipient

The Lead Organization is the organization affiliated with the Project Lead. The NCC enters into an agreement with the Lead Organization, who becomes an "Ultimate Recipient" upon signing the funding agreement and is responsible for meeting the terms and conditions of the agreement.

Letters of Commitment

Letters of Commitment are statements of commitment or partnership letters, written on organizational letterhead, and signed by an Authorized Signatory. These letters are required to include a clear statement of:

- The scope of the commitment or partnership
- The contribution in dollar format (CDN \$)
- The type of contribution (cash or in-kind)
- The duration of the commitment

These letters must be signed by an individual authorized to make and/or confirm financial commitments on behalf of their organization (Authorized Signatory). Letters of Commitment for matching contributions are strongly encouraged to be included in the Stage 2 Project Proposal and will be required for Stage 3, Due Diligence Review Submission.

Matching Contributions

The NCC is committed to furthering the government's investment into projects by requiring matching contributions. Matching contributions may be either monetary (cash or actual costs, including employee salaries) or non-monetary ("in-kind").

- Cash - any monies that would have to be spent for the project if this were not being provided from another source.
- In-Kind - cash-equivalent goods or services that replace an incremental expense that would be paid with awarded funds.

Matching contribution requirements for this Call are noted in the [Constraints on Call 2025](#) section above.

Partner Organization(s)

An affiliated organization of a Project Team member that is contributing either intellectually and/or financially to the project's completion. For Project Proposals to proceed beyond Stage 3, any Partner Organizations identified are strongly encouraged to be members in good standing of the NCC.

Project Lead

The Project Lead is the individual who heads the project, contributing core intellectual and/or research design efforts. The Project Lead identified on a project must have a full-time/tenure-track appointment with the Lead Organization they are affiliated with. The Project Lead will be submitting the application components and will be the point of contact for the project regarding reporting. A Co-Lead may be named for the project. Supporting curriculum vitae will be included in a Stage 2 submission for these named individuals.

Project Team Member(s)

Project Team Member(s) are individuals who contribute core intellectual and/or research design efforts to the project. These names will be included in Stage 1 with supporting curriculum vitae included in a Stage 2 submission. The Project Team may be updated through each Stage of the application process and additional members may be added through the lifetime of projects.

Spearhead Projects

Note: Spearhead projects can be submitted via the New 2025 Projects category in Call 2025.

Spearhead projects are research and development projects that originate from post-secondary educational institutions (PSE) and/or not-for-profit (NFP) organizations but do not have matching contributions identified. Matching contribution recommendations are under the heading 'Grant Amounts and Matching Contributions'.

Spearhead projects should be novel in nature and explore riskier early-stage ideas. However, they are NOT curiosity-driven projects. A spearhead project should have defined goals and milestones but should be sufficiently flexible to adapt as new insights emerge. Thus, the approaches to the goals may change but the goals should not. Changes to goals and milestones will need to be reported in advance of such alterations as specified in the reporting requirements of the Post Award Program Guide.

Note: Although no matching contributions are required for a spearhead project, a plan must be provided to describe how a broader set of collaborators will be engaged over the lifespan of the project. These must be measurable (e.g., a private sector partner will be onboarded by Y2/Q3 to provide expertise and/or funding; or three not-for-profit organizations will be approached to work on an initiative to expand to areas beyond the applicant's local jurisdiction). The purpose is to expand the project's participants and broaden its potential impact beyond the lab. In addition, it is anticipated that this could allow for a subsequent application to the NCC in the Standard category to continue to move the idea forward.

Standard Projects

Standard projects are research, training, or commercialization projects that are larger in scope and have clearly defined goals and milestones.

Matching funds for standard projects have specific requirements depending on the category they are submitted to:

- Accelerated Projects:
 - All matching funds must be committed by the end of Stage 3.
- New 2025 Projects:
 - All matching funds must be in place by the end of the UR agreement process and be consistent with those identified by the end of Stage 3.

Matching contributions may be drawn from the public sector including post-secondary institutions (see Pre-Award Program Guide for detailed allowable matching), the private sector, philanthropic sources, provincial/territorial and municipal government sources, and/or not-for-profit organizations.

Technology Readiness Levels

The table below describes the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) scale as defined by [Innovative Solutions Canada](#).

Technology Readiness Level	Description
TRL 1—Basic principles of concept are observed and reported	Lowest level of technology readiness. Scientific research begins to be translated into applied research and development. Activities might include paper studies of a technology's basic properties.
TRL 2—Technology concept and/or application formulated	Invention begins. Once basic principles are observed, practical applications can be

	invented. Applications are speculative, and there may be no proof or detailed analysis to support the assumptions. Activities are limited to analytic studies.
TRL 3—Analytical and experimental critical function and/or proof of concept	Active research and development are initiated. This includes analytical studies and/or laboratory studies. Activities might include components that are not yet integrated or representative.
TRL 4—Component and/or validation in laboratory environment	Basic technological components are integrated to establish that they work together. Activities include integration of "ad hoc" hardware in the laboratory.
TRL 5—Component and/or validation in simulated environment	The basic technological components are integrated for testing in a simulated environment. Activities include laboratory integration of components.
TRL 6—System/subsystem model or prototype demonstration in a simulated environment	A model or prototype that represents a near desired configuration. Activities include testing in a simulated operational environment or laboratory. Levels 7 through 9 represent the pre commercialization gap for innovations.
TRL 7—Prototype ready for demonstration in an appropriate operational environment	Prototype at planned operational level and is ready for demonstration in an operational environment. Activities include prototype field testing.

TRL 8—Actual technology completed and qualified through tests and demonstrations	Technology has been proven to work in its final form and under expected conditions. Activities include developmental testing and evaluation of whether it will meet operational requirements.
TRL 9—Actual technology proven through successful deployment in an operational setting	Actual application of the technology in its final form and under real-life conditions, such as those encountered in operational tests and evaluations. Activities include using the innovation under operational conditions.