



Cyberinfrastructure Initiative – Challenge 1

Guidelines for completing
notices of intent and proposals

July 2015

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are intended for researchers and institutional research services personnel wishing to prepare and submit a notice of intent (NOI) or a proposal to the Cyberinfrastructure – Challenge 1 competition. For further information, consult the Cyberinfrastructure Initiative [Call for Proposals](#) on the Canada Foundation for Innovation’s (CFI) website. Researchers and institutional research services personnel will use the CFI Awards Management System ([CAMS](#)) to prepare, share and submit notices of intent for this competition.

Helpful links (PDF)

Cyberinfrastructure Initiative: [Call for Proposals](#)

Getting started with CAMS: [An overview document for researchers](#)

Getting started with CAMS: [An overview document for institutional research services personnel](#)



Deadlines

Notices of intent

Institutions wishing to participate in the Cyberinfrastructure Initiative – Challenge 1 must first submit an NOI. The submission deadline for the NOI is May 22, 2015. The NOIs will be subject to merit review by a Multidisciplinary Assessment Committee (MAC).

Proposals

For institutions invited to submit a proposal following the merit review of the NOIs, the submission deadline is October 16, 2015.

CHAPTER 2 – GUIDELINES FOR ATTACHMENTS

Electronic forms

NOIs and proposals for the Cyberinfrastructure Initiative – Challenge 1 competition must be completed and submitted to the CFI through CAMS.

Conformance with instructions for NOI and proposal preparation

It is important that all projects conform to the instructions provided on the electronic forms as well as those in this guide. Prior to electronic submission, it is strongly recommended that researchers and institutional research services personnel review the forms to ensure that NOIs and proposals comply with these guidelines.

Pagination

CAMS will automatically paginate NOIs and proposals submitted to the CFI. Attachments *should not* be individually paginated prior to upload to the electronic system.

Page formatting

Since many reviewers will be assessing NOIs and proposals electronically, the applicant should only use a standard, single-column on an 8.5" x 11" page layout for attachments. Avoid using a two-column or landscape format since it may cause difficulties when reading the document electronically.

The attachment must be clear and easily readable. Legibility is of paramount importance and should take precedence in the selection of an appropriate font for use in the form. **The applicant is strongly encouraged to use a 12-point, black-coloured font and use single line spacing (six lines per inch) with no condensed type or spacing.** Small font sizes make it difficult for reviewers to read the documentation; consequently, the use of small font not in compliance with the above recommendation may result in the CFI returning the NOI or proposal for further revision.

Additionally, the CFI expects attachments to conform to the following guidelines:

- **Header:** Indicate the administrative institution on the top left, the title of the section in the middle and the project number on the top right of each page.
- **Footer:** Do not include any information in the bottom right side of the page as this area will be used for automatic page numbering.
- **Page margin:** Insert a margin of no less than 2.5 cm (1 inch) around the page. The header and footer may be within the margin.
- **File format and size:** Only PDF files may be uploaded. Documents in other formats should be converted to PDF prior to upload and should not be encrypted or password protected. The file size must not exceed twenty megabytes (20MB).

Adherence to the page formatting guidelines and requirements noted above is necessary to ensure that no applicant will have an unfair advantage by using smaller type, line spacing or margins to provide more text in the NOI or proposal.

CHAPTER 3 – NOTICE OF INTENT STRUCTURE

Given the available competition budget, the limited number of awards that will be made and the level of effort required to develop proposals, institutions intending to submit research data infrastructure project proposals will be required to submit an NOI. The NOIs will be subject to merit review by a Multidisciplinary Assessment Committee (MAC). The NOI consists of the following six sections:

- Project information
- Collaborating institutions
- Core scientific team
- Core technical team of the consortium and other consortium members
- Project description
- Suggested reviewers

Project information

The “Project information” section captures basic information about the project such as the title, administrative institution and keywords.

Collaborating institutions

In this section, identify the institutions eligible for CFI funding that are collaborating in this project. For the purpose of this competition, a collaborating institution is one that would ultimately receive CFI funding.

Do *not* include the administrative institution identified in the “Project information” section in this list.

Core team members

This section lists the members of the core scientific team, including the project leader, for the research data infrastructure project and may include researchers from non CFI-eligible organizations. Members must have a CAMS account and must accept to participate in this project before the NOI can be submitted to the CFI. Researchers listed as members of the core scientific team automatically gain read access to the NOI and the proposal, should the project reach this stage.

Core technical team of the consortium and other consortium members

This section lists the members of the core technical team for the research data infrastructure project and identifies other consortium members. This list will include technical personnel, and may include researchers from non CFI-eligible organizations. These individuals will not be notified via CAMS of their inclusion in the NOI, therefore, the administrative institution should ensure that they have been informed and consented to their participation in the project. Do not repeat names of the members of the core scientific team.

Project description (maximum eight pages)

For this section of the online form, upload a PDF document that contains key information on how the project meets the objectives and established assessment criteria for this competition (see below) as described in the Call for Proposals. Ensure that the document follows the guidelines on format, spacing and font use detailed in Chapter 2 of this document. Additionally, the applicant should address each criterion in the order that they appear below.

The attachment allows the applicant maximum flexibility to address each criterion, including through the use of figures or diagrams where appropriate. The exact distribution of space among sections is at the applicant’s discretion, up to the total page limits noted.

Based on the information provided and the description of the project proposed, the MAC members will be asked to assess the NOI based on the following criteria:

Cyberinfrastructure Initiative – Challenge 1

- Canada has significant research strengths and globally-competitive expertise in the area of the proposal;
- The research data infrastructure project is essential in maintaining Canada at the leading-edge internationally;
- The consortium is composed of a critical mass of leading Canadian researchers in the domain who are fully engaged in the project and who are capable of exploiting the full potential of the research data infrastructure. *Please note that the NOI must demonstrate that the proposed group is representative of the Canadian research community and will be involved in the development of the research data infrastructure.*
- The consortium has the required expertise to design and construct the research data infrastructure and develop the analytical tools, methods and standards to achieve the desired outcomes. *Please note: As CVs are not included as part of the NOI, ensure that the text provides a clear description of the roles, responsibilities and expertise of the consortium members.*
- The scope of the project has been clearly defined and allows for commissioning within two to three years. *Please note: Inclusion of a timeline for the project, including key milestones, as well as the expected outcomes, is strongly recommended.*

Suggested reviewers

Identify a minimum of six reviewers who are especially well-qualified to review the proposal and that are not in a position of conflict of interest. A conflict of interest may be deemed to exist or perceived as such when reviewers:

- are a relative or close friend, or have a personal relationship with the project leader or one of the principal users;
- are in a position to gain or lose financially/materially from the funding of the proposal;
- have had long-standing scientific or personal differences with the project leader or one of the principal users;
- are currently affiliated with the project leader's or the principal users' institutions, organizations or companies, including research hospitals and research institutes;
- are closely professionally affiliated with the project leader or one of the principal users, as a result of having in the last six years:
 - frequent and regular interactions with the project leader or one of the principal users in the course of their duties at their department, institution, organization or company;
 - been a supervisor or a trainee of the project leader or one of the principal users;
 - collaborated, published or shared funding with the project leader or one of the principal users, or have plans to do so in the immediate future; or,
 - been employed by the administrative institution; and/or
- feel for any reason unable to provide an impartial review of the proposal.

Please note: The decision whether or not to use the suggestions remains with the CFI.

CHAPTER 4 – PROPOSAL STRUCTURE

The proposal should clearly present the merits and excellence of the proposed project. The requisite proposal preparation instructions are contained herein. Sufficient information should be provided to enable reviewers to evaluate the proposal in accordance with the assessment criteria established by the CFI (please refer to the “Assessment criteria” section).

The proposal consists of three separate modules:

- **Project module:** Information about the proposed project, how it meets the objectives and criteria of the competition;
- **Finance module:** Information about the budgetary details of the proposal and a budget justification;
- **Suggested reviewers module:** Recommendation of potential reviewers of the proposal.

The online forms will dictate the maximum number of characters that can be included in each section and/or the page limits for uploaded files.

Project module

The Project module consists of the following sections:

- Project information
- Plain language summary and project summary
- Core scientific team of the consortium
- Core technical team of the consortium and other consortium members
- Assessment criteria
- Collaborating institutions

Project information

The “Project information” section captures basic information about the project such as the title, administrative institution and keywords. The information on this page is automatically populated with information provided in the NOI.

Plain language summary (1,500 characters)

The CFI’s ongoing efforts to remain accountable to the Government of Canada include showing how CFI investments lead to tangible social, economic and environmental outcomes for Canada and Canadians. To do so, we need your help in providing information that will help us tell the stories about how CFI-funded infrastructure plays a key role in outcomes such as creating jobs and spin-off companies, and improving products, policies, processes and services.

Please provide a short summary of the proposed project in plain language, focusing on the expected outcomes and benefits for Canada, beyond the academic accomplishments.

Please note: This summary will not be used in the review process. Should the project be funded, the CFI may use it in its communications products.

Project summary (maximum one page)

In language appropriate for a MAC, provide a general description of the research data infrastructure project and of the research or technology development to be enabled. This summary must concisely address the extent to which the proposal meets the objectives to be assessed by the MAC:

- **Scientific excellence:** The proposal relates to a field in which Canada is recognized for having significant research strengths. The research data infrastructure project is necessary to

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maintain Canada's position by enabling established or emerging leaders to carry out timely, innovative and leading-edge research programs;

- **Impact and ongoing relevance:** A critical mass of Canadian researchers is actively involved in the research data infrastructure project and will be able to maximize its use through optimal access mechanisms and sound data management plans. The research enabled has the potential to lead to significant tangible benefits to society, health, the economy and/or the environment;
- **Feasibility:** The research data infrastructure project's scope is clearly defined and the team has the necessary expertise and experience to design, develop and deliver the project within 36 months. The proposed budget, as well as the long-term financial sustainability of the infrastructure, is realistic.

Core scientific team of the consortium

As for the NOI, this section lists the members of the core scientific team, including the project leader, for the research data infrastructure project and may include researchers from non CFI-eligible organizations. Contrary to the NOI, the CVs of the core team members will be appended to the proposal.

Members must have a CAMS account and must accept to participate in this project before the proposal can be submitted to the CFI. Researchers listed as members of the core scientific team automatically gain read access to the proposal.

*Please note: Even though the information on this page is automatically populated with information provided in the NOI, the applicant has the ability to change the core scientific team members from the time of the NOI submission to the proposal deadline. However, the CFI uses the NOI to help prepare the review committees. Changes made to the team may result in a conflict of interest for a review committee member. **Therefore, we ask that you inform your Senior Programs Officer as soon as possible of any changes made to the list of core scientific team members.***

Core technical team of the consortium and other consortium members

This section lists the members of the core technical team for the research data infrastructure project and identifies other consortium members. This list will include technical personnel, and may include researchers from non CFI-eligible organizations. These individuals will not be notified via CAMS of their inclusion in the proposal, therefore, the administrative institution should ensure that they have been informed and consented to their participation in the project. Do not repeat names of the members of the core scientific team. CVs of core technical team members and other consortium members will NOT be appended to the proposal.

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Assessment criteria (maximum 20 pages)

For this section of the online form, upload a PDF document that contains key information on how the proposal meets the objectives and established assessment criteria for this competition. Ensure that the document follows the guidelines on format, spacing and font use detailed in Chapter 2 of this document. Additionally, the applicant should address each criterion in the order that they appear below.

Each criterion contains a number of aspects that the applicant must address in the proposal. These aspects are described in the following pages. Failure to address all the aspects that apply to the proposal within each of the criterion will weaken the proposal. Each assessment criterion will be evaluated against a standard. Expert committees will be asked to rate the degree to which the proposal meets each standard.

The attachment allows the applicant maximum flexibility to address each criterion, including through the use of figures or diagrams where appropriate. The exact distribution of pages among sections is at the applicant's discretion, up to the total page limits noted. Applicants should be aware that the proposal will first be assessed by an expert committee on the basis of the five criteria identified in the Call for Proposals:

- Research or technology development
- Consortium
- Infrastructure
- Sustainability and maintaining relevance
- Benefits to Canadians

Those projects recommended for funding by the expert committees will then be assessed by the MAC based on the five criteria identified in the Call for Proposals. In order for the MAC to select the proposals that best meet the standards of excellence and the objectives of the initiative, the five criteria have been grouped into three categories. The MAC will use these categories to assess meritorious proposals following the expert committee review phase:

- **Scientific excellence:** The proposal relates to a field in which Canada is recognized for having significant research strengths. The research data infrastructure project is necessary to maintain Canada's position by enabling established or emerging leaders to carry out timely, innovative and leading-edge research programs;
- **Impact and ongoing relevance:** A critical mass of Canadian researchers is actively involved in the research data infrastructure project and will be able to maximize its use through optimal access mechanisms and sound data management plans. The research enabled has the potential to lead to significant tangible benefits to society, health, the economy and/or the environment;
- **Feasibility:** The research data infrastructure project's scope is clearly defined and the team has the necessary expertise and experience to design, develop and deliver the project within 36 months. The proposed budget, as well as the long-term financial sustainability of the infrastructure, is realistic.

Criterion standard:

The proposed research activities enabled by the research data infrastructure are timely, innovative and at the leading edge internationally.

Research or technology development

Each of the following aspects must be addressed:

1. Explain how the research to be enabled by the infrastructure project is timely, innovative and at the leading-edge internationally;
2. Describe Canada's leading position in the area of research and how the proposed research data infrastructure will help Canada maintain this position.

Consortium

Each of the following aspects must be addressed:

1. Explain how a critical mass of Canadian researchers is involved and engaged in the proposed project;
2. Describe how members of the core scientific team are established or emerging leaders in their area;
3. Explain how the team will engage external collaborators and users to ensure the infrastructure is used to its full potential;
4. Demonstrate that the core technical team has the expertise necessary to design and develop the research data infrastructure project;
5. Describe the partnerships necessary to fully develop the research data infrastructure project.

Criterion standard:

The consortium has the required expertise to design and build the research data infrastructure resource and to develop the analytical tools, data management methods and standards required to enable the proposed research activities. As well, members of the core scientific team the consortium members who are the principal users of the research data infrastructure are established or emerging leaders in the relevant research domains. The team has and possess the necessary expertise, ability and relevant collaborations and partnerships in place to exploit the full potential of the research data infrastructure.

Criterion standard:

The research data infrastructure is necessary and appropriate to conduct the proposed research activities. The scope and requirements of the project, including development of tools, methods and standards are well defined and able to be commissioned within two to three years.

Infrastructure

Each of the following aspects must be addressed:

1. Explain why the research data infrastructure project is essential to conduct the research activities described.
2. Describe the scope of the project and potential challenges in its realization. In addition, provide a clear timeline for the development of the research data infrastructure project, including roles, responsibilities and milestones.

Sustainability and maintaining relevance

Each of the following aspects must be addressed:

1. Describe the long-term financial plans to ensure the sustainability of the research data infrastructure;
2. Describe the long-term data management plans;
3. Describe the strategy envisioned to ensure the infrastructure remains relevant and at the leading-edge.

Criterion standard:

The proposal presents a credible and convincing plan that addresses the long-term financial sustainability of the research data infrastructure. A compelling plan for the long term management of the data is in place to ensure ongoing relevance and usefulness of the infrastructure.

Criterion standard:

The research activities enabled by the infrastructure have the potential to lead to significant tangible benefits for society, health, the economy and/or the environment. The use of the research data infrastructure will be maximized by adopting best practices in accessibility, interoperability and generalizability.

Benefits to Canadians

Each of the following aspects must be addressed:

1. Describe the mechanisms to be developed to allow the broader community to access data;
2. If applicable, explain how the research data infrastructure project integrates with other endeavours at the international level and how this integration will facilitate optimal usage by the research community;
3. Describe the potential benefits of the research activities to be enabled by the research data infrastructure.

Collaborating institutions

As for the NOI, in this section, identify the institutions eligible for CFI funding that are collaborating in this project. For the purpose of this competition, a collaborating institution is one that will ultimately receive CFI funding.

Do not include the administrative institution identified in the “Project information” section in this list.

*Please note: Even though the information on this page is automatically populated with information provided in the NOI, the applicant has the ability to change the collaborating institutions from the time of the NOI submission to the proposal deadline. However, the CFI uses the NOI to help prepare the review committees. Changes made to collaborating institutions may result in a conflict of interest for a review committee member. **Therefore, we ask that you inform your Senior Programs Officer as soon as possible of any changes made to the list of collaborating institutions.***

Finance module

The Finance module consists of the following sections:

- Cost of individual items
- Budget justification
- Floor plans (if applicable)
- Contributions from eligible partners
- Infrastructure utilization
- Financial resources for operations and maintenance
- Overview of infrastructure project funding (generated automatically)

For each section of the Finance module, the applicant should ensure that all requested information has been entered into the relevant fields.

For the section “Overview of infrastructure project funding”, the tables will be automatically populated with information taken from the other sections of the Finance module. Note that the amount requested from the CFI is calculated based on the difference between the total contributions from eligible partners and the total eligible costs.

Cost of individual items

When completing the “Cost of individual items” section, the CFI recommends that the applicant bundle items into functional groupings. The budget justification should, however, detail and provide justification for each item within a group. Section 4.6 of the [CFI Policy and program guide](#) outlines the eligible costs for infrastructure projects.

List only the eligible infrastructure acquisition and development costs. List the full cost of each item. Retain documentation (price lists, quotes, etc.) so that you can provide it to the CFI upon request.

Please note:

1. *If the infrastructure will be used for purposes other than research or technology development, list only pro-rated research or technology development costs;*
2. *The total eligible costs must include taxes (net of credits received), shipping and installation. However, taxes must not be calculated on the in-kind portion.*
3. *When preparing budget estimates, the applicant must follow its existing institutional policies and procedures. Costs included in this budget must be close estimates of fair market value. Refer to section 6.5 of the [CFI Policy and program guide](#) for information on how in-kind contributions must be assessed.*

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Budget Justification (maximum six pages)

In this section, by referring to the “Cost of individual items” section of the Finance module, describe the requested items, their proposed location, if applicable, and how they will enable the research or technology development activities. Provide a clear and concise budget justification for all the items requested. For personnel costs, indicate the roles and responsibilities, task(s) to be assigned to each person and the estimated time required to carry it out. Please reference items with their respective line item number and description. Provide a cost breakdown for any grouping of items.

Floor plans (if applicable)

For proposals that include construction or renovation involving multiple rooms, please provide floor plans of the proposed area(s), showing the location of the infrastructure and the scale of the plans. The floor plans must be legible when printed in black and white on standard letter size paper (8.5" x 11").

Please note: The floor plans will be a separate attachment and not included in the 20-page maximum for the “Assessment criteria” section of the proposal or in the six-page maximum for the budget justification.

Contributions from eligible partners

List all contributions from eligible partners. Do *not* include the amount requested from the CFI. Provide the partner name and type, as well as a breakdown of contributions (cash and in-kind) for each eligible partner. The applicant is encouraged to bundle all expected in-kind contributions from vendors into a single line. If partner contributions are expected but have not yet been confirmed, outline the plans for securing these funds.

Infrastructure utilization

This section of the Finance module captures the use of the requested items (as per the “cost of individual items” section) for CFI-eligible and non-eligible purposes and any applicable pro-rating of costs.

Financial resources for operations and maintenance

This page of the Finance module captures the annual costs and sources of committed support to ensure the effective operations and maintenance of the research data infrastructure for the first five years after implementation.

Do not include costs related to research and/or technology development. If funding sources include the CFI Infrastructure Operating Fund (IOF), list these under the “Institutional contribution” category.

Suggested reviewers

The list of suggested reviewers is pre-populated using the list provided in the NOI. You may want to identify additional reviewers who are especially well-qualified to review the proposal. Refer to the “Suggested reviewers” section of Chapter 3 for conflict of interest guidelines.

Please note: The decision whether or not to use the suggestions remains with the CFI.

CHAPTER 5 – SUBMISSION PROCESS

Notice of intent submission

Notices of intent for the Cyberinfrastructure Initiative – Challenge 1 competition must be submitted through CAMS. Note that the CFI does not require a hardcopy of the NOI. Rather, a list of all NOIs must be submitted to the CFI, outlining all NOIs on which the institution is the administrative or a collaborating institution. This summary must conform to the template for submission of NOIs (refer to Appendix 1), be signed by the President or an authorized signatory at the institution as per the *Institutional agreement* with the CFI, and be sent to the CFI by the submission deadline (May 22, 2015).

Proposal submission

Proposals for the 2015 cyberinfrastructure initiative – Challenge 1 must be submitted through CAMS. Note that the CFI does not require a hardcopy of the proposal. Rather, a list of all proposals must be submitted to the CFI, outlining all proposals on which the institution is an administrative or collaborating institution. This summary must conform to the template for submission of proposals (refer to Appendix 2), signed by the President or an authorized signatory at the institution as per the *Institutional agreement* with the CFI, and be sent to the CFI by the submission deadline (October 16, 2015).

Please mail the NOI and proposal submission letters to the:

Canada Foundation for Innovation
Attn: Elaine Salmon
230 Queen Street, Suite 450
Ottawa ON K1P 5E4
Tel: (613) 943-0210



Note: The NOI and proposal submission letter must be postmarked no later than the deadline dates for the submission of the NOIs and proposals respectively.

In addition, please email electronic versions of the lists of NOIs and proposals to cyber@innovation.ca.

Collaboration with provinces

The CFI will share a list of the NOIs and of the proposals with relevant provincial and territorial funding authorities to assist in their planning process.

The CFI encourages institutions to work with relevant provincial and territorial funding authorities as key partners at an early stage in the planning and development of the project.

APPENDIX 1: TEMPLATE – NOTICE OF INTENT SUBMISSION LETTER TO THE CFI

May 22, 2015

Guy Levesque
Director, Programs
Canada Foundation for Innovation
450 - 230 Queen Street
Ottawa ON K1P 5E4

Re: Submission of notices of intent (NOIs) to the Cyberinfrastructure Initiative – Challenge 1 competition.

Dear Mr. Levesque,

In response to the CFI's *Call for Proposals* for the Cyberinfrastructure Initiative – Challenge 1 competition, I am pleased to submit the NOIs outlined in the attached document.

Sincerely,

President (or authorized signatory)

Signature

Institution

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NOIs led by <<Insert name of institution>>:

Project #	Project leader (Last name, first name)	Project title	Total project cost (\$)	Amount requested from the CFI (\$)	Collaborating institution(s) (use a comma separated list, if applicable)

NOIs on which <<Insert name of institution>> is collaborating:

Project #	Lead institution	Project leader (Last name, first name)	Project title	Total project cost (\$)	Amount requested from the CFI (\$)

APPENDIX 2: TEMPLATE – PROPOSALS SUBMISSION LETTER TO THE CFI

October 16, 2015

Guy Levesque
Vice-President, Programs and Planning
Canada Foundation for Innovation
450 - 230 Queen Street
Ottawa ON K1P 5E4

Re: Confirmation and institutional approval of proposals to the Cyberinfrastructure Initiative – Challenge 1 competition.

Dear Mr. Levesque,

In response to the CFI's *Call for Proposals* for the Cyberinfrastructure Initiative – Challenge 1 competition, I am pleased to approve the submission of the proposals outlined in the attached document.

In signing this letter, I confirm that the institution:

- Agrees to and accepts the conditions governing CFI funding, as outlined in the *Policy and program guide* and the *Institutional agreement*, and
- Accepts its commitment to ensure appropriate resources are provided for the operation and maintenance of the proposed CFI-funded research infrastructure over its useful life (i.e., the period of time over which the infrastructure is expected to provide benefits and be usable for its intended purpose as per the proposal, factoring in normal repairs and maintenance).

Sincerely,

President (or authorized signatory)

Signature

Institution

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Proposals led by <<Insert name of institution>>:

Project #	Project leader (Last name, first name)	Project title	Total project cost (\$)	Amount requested from the CFI (\$)	Collaborating institution(s) (use a comma separated list, if applicable)

Proposals on which <<Insert name of institution>> is collaborating:

Project #	Lead institution	Project leader (Last name, first name)	Project title	Total project cost (\$)	Amount requested from the CFI (\$)



Research builds communities

La recherche au service des collectivités

450-230 Queen St.	450-230 rue Queen
Ottawa ON K1P 5E4	Ottawa ON K1P 5E4
Tel 613.947.7260	Tél 613.947.7260
Fax 613.943.0227	Télééc 613.943.0227