

CIEE CALL FOR WORKING GROUP PROPOSALS (VIRTUAL, IN-PERSON AND HYBRID)

The Canadian Institute of Ecology and Evolution (CIEE) seeks proposals for new **Working Groups** to be staged over the 12 month period from March 2022 to February 2023. The **deadline** for submission is **October 18, 2021**.

Goals

Proposals should outline a plan to address significant questions in ecology and/or evolution through collaborative, synthesis-based research in the form of: (a) conceptual synthesis; (b) aggregation and analysis of existing information from multiple sources (e.g. meta analysis, data synthesis) or of multiple types (e.g. cross-disciplinary integration); (c) methodological integration, or (d) application of compiled research data to applied problems of societal importance. CIEE supports working groups in any area of ecology, evolution and environmental science which address questions of high conceptual or applied importance. Applicants must define the project objectives, scope, agenda of meeting, inclusive budget, and plan for publications and other outcomes. CIEE provides financial support for working groups and working group meetings, but applicants are expected to manage the logistics of their funded meetings.

Virtual, in-person and hybrid meetings supported

The philosophy behind this year's call is to support researchers in finding creative but low risk ways to collaborate within an evolving pandemic.

Supported working groups can meet either virtually or in-person, or a hybrid of both (see Srivastava et al. 2021. Nature Ecology and Evolution). We expect to fund a variety of different collaboration approaches.

International travel is not being supported in this year's Call. However, proposed CIEE working groups are encouraged to consider virtual collaborations with existing working groups or research networks in other countries (e.g. see "regional hub model" in Srivastava et al. 2021).

In-person meetings may take place anywhere in Canada. When proposing an in-person meeting, please also include a contingency plan (including budget) in case the in-person meeting is prevented by public health restrictions. Participants in in-person meetings should be fully vaccinated against COVID. Note that all working groups must conclude their funded activities within 12 months, even if this means converting an in-person meeting to a virtual one; such a change may require refunding the difference in meeting costs to the CIEE.

Application Procedures

Proposals can be submitted in either official language. Proposals include a completed application form (available online at www.ciee-icee.ca), a three-page proposal (with optional extra page for a contingency plan), and short resume(s) of the organizers.

The **application form** should be completed with the following information:

1. The project title, name and complete contact information for the organizer(s), and project summary (max. 300 words), suitable for public circulation. At least one of the organizers must be a faculty member at a Canadian university to allow transfer of funds between universities.
2. A list of participants, with affiliations and a short (one paragraph) biographic profile including description of their expertise contributed to the working group. CIEE will fund working groups from 8 to 15 participants. Participants should be chosen to enable synergy between different disciplines, skill sets and ways of knowing (including traditional Indigenous knowledge), and may be drawn from both academic and non-academic sectors. Proposals for large numbers of participants should be well justified, as previous analyses have shown that per capita productivity declines as group size increases (Hampton and Parker, 2011). Productive working groups typically include participants from a variety of career stages. CIEE requires the participation of at least one graduate student and one postdoctoral fellow in each working group. Participants should be drawn from multiple universities or organizations; meetings with primarily local participants should demonstrate that these participants do not normally collaborate with each other on a day-to-day basis. International participants are welcome to participate virtually but note that international travel will not be supported in this year's call because of the potential for future travel disruptions. There is strong evidence for the positive impact of institutional and demographic diversity on the productivity of working groups (Hampton and Parker 2011, Campbell et al. 2013, Crowston et al. 2015). Working groups must have demographic diversity, including gender balance ($\geq 40\%$ self-identified as women or gender non-binary and $\geq 40\%$ self-identified as men or gender non-binary), and consider inclusiveness of under-represented racialized minorities, Indigenous people, persons with disabilities, self-identified LGBTQIA+, and those with very different disciplinary, social and cultural backgrounds. Please only provide such identifying information that participants freely volunteer to disclose. Finally, please distinguish between those who have committed to the project and those who are potential participants.
3. A Data Management Plan. Funded working groups are required to deposit original or derived data and all code needed for reproducibility in a data repository. Some of the

information that is relevant to a data management plan includes: (1) ownership of the data and conditions for accessing and publishing results based on this data; (2) how the data will be compiled and integrated prior to the first meeting; (3) how the data will be stored and backed-up; and (4) the plan for making the meta-data, original or derived data, and code publicly accessible at the end of the project with timelines and names of those responsible.

4. A budget to support the proposed activities. For working groups that only meet virtually, this budget should be at most \$9,000 total. For working groups that meet in-person, at least in part, this budget should be no more than \$12,000 total. Costs for all meetings can include: (1) fees and training associated with online meeting technology, excluding hardware; (2) costs required for in-person meetings, including accommodation, transportation, meals and meeting room(s); (3) Up to \$5000 for stipends for 5 weeks full-time work by a graduate student or postdoctoral fellow that explicitly and only supports the working group, such as data collation for a database that is subsequently analysed by the working group, development of a model that is subsequently used to test hypotheses by the working group, analysis of literature for a structural review, and development and maintenance of digital infrastructure used to make the collaboration more efficient (e.g. R packages, version control platforms); (4) Professional facilitator fees, where the facilitator guides the dynamics of the group rather than the science; (5) Costs associated with increasing accessibility for participants with disabilities, for example a contract with a professional captioner for virtual meetings; (6) Up to \$750 for exceptional (i.e. not normally incurred) costs for childcare or eldercare to enable participation for those with caring responsibilities who would otherwise not be able to participate. Other costs may include COVID-19 rapid tests for in-person meetings up to \$500.

Please note that overhead costs, faculty stipends and equipment cannot be included as eligible expenses. Our experience is that few working groups are able to have manuscripts accepted for publication within the 12-month timeframe of the budget, so publication costs should not be included in this budget. We anticipate a separate competition for publication fees to be announced later this year. We encourage applicants to consult with the CIEE Program Coordinator if there is any uncertainty about allowable budget items. **Working groups can be co-sponsored with other organizations.** For example, CIEE has sometimes sponsored an additional meeting for working groups already or simultaneously funded by other synthesis centres. In this case, please inform all sponsors that co-funding is being sought.

Appended to the application form should be a:

5. A maximum three-pages, single-spaced proposal (12 point font, 2.5 cm margins). Please note that proposals longer than 3 pages will not be accepted. The proposal should include:

5.1. Brief introduction to the project goals.

5.2. Work plan of activities: schedule of any pre-meeting activities, agenda of the planned meetings, follow-up plan in order to reach the expected outcomes. Although in-person working group meetings are normally constrained to be 4-5 consecutive full days, there is no such constraint on virtual working group meetings and we encourage researchers to envision the most productive way to schedule the equivalent amount of meeting time. For example, you could also meet one day a week for 5 weeks, or one morning a week for two months (see CIEE-ICEE Guide for Virtual Working Groups). As appropriate, please include the source of the data to be synthesized and methods of the analyses.

5.3. Discuss how your working group will ensure a broad diversity of participants (see #2 in Application Procedures), and create an equitable, inclusive and productive working environment.

5.4. Expected outcomes (e.g., publications, white papers, open access databases)

5.5. Importance to Canada (e.g., benefit to Canadian environmental and economic well-being).

6. For proposals which involve an in-person meeting component, an additional one page (single-spaced, 12 point font, 2.5 cm margins) contingency plan in case future public health measures prevent the proposed in-person meeting from occurring. Please include a brief budget, remembering that entirely virtual meetings are funded to a maximum of \$9000.

7. Short resume(s) of the organizer(s). Maximum 3 pages for each resume.

The selection process

As in the past grant cycles, CIEE's funding decisions for new Working Groups will be based on confidential evaluations performed by individual members of the CIEE's Scientific Advisory Committee. The CIEE's Directors will determine the final level of funding to be received by each awarded project, and will provide all applicants with formal feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of their proposals. In the case of a conflict of interest, the CIEE Directors will defer to the CIEE Management Board.

In general, scientific excellence and likelihood of success are the main criteria for evaluation, although consideration will also be given to the benefits to Canada, cost effectiveness, participant complementarity and diversity, and benefits to CIEE member institutions. The *specific criteria* of evaluation are:

1. Project rationale: scientific and/or applied significance of the questions, likelihood to advance understanding in ecology, evolution and/or environmental issues, evidence of novel synthesis, and evidence of benefit to societal well-being.
2. Project description: clarity of objectives, outcomes, work plan, meeting schedule.

3. Expertise and appropriateness of applicants and participants (from the organizer's resume and the summaries of the participants).
4. Participant diversity, including the criteria of career, geographic, and demographic diversity as defined in criteria #2 of the Application Procedure.
5. Anticipated outcomes. Potential for impactful products, such as refereed publications, white papers and open access databases.
6. Budget adequacy and feasibility (complete estimates and coherent justification). Presence of matching funds or partner organizations should be indicated.
7. In this Call, final decisions will consider both the vulnerability of the meeting plan to future public health restrictions (e.g. travel across Canada is more likely to be restricted than within provinces) and the strength of contingency plans for an alternative mode of collaboration should in-person meetings not be possible. The possibility of in-person meetings being cancelled is weighed against the recognition that, done well, in-person collaboration is often more effective than virtual collaboration.

Deadline: Submit the full proposal, as a single document, by **October 18, 2021**, to:

ciee-icee@biodiversity.ubc.ca

Applicants are encouraged to contact the CIEE Director, Deputy Director or Program Coordinator with any questions, including those on content, budget and facilities.

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