

Program Guide: Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Research Program

Program Overview

Background

The CWD Research Program funds research directly related to the prion disease, Chronic Wasting Disease, where the etiology involves protein misfolding and the pathogenesis has prion-like characteristics. Funding is accessible for all relevant fields of inquiry in the theme areas described in this guide. Funding encourages collaborations within Alberta and between Alberta investigators and researchers in institutions outside of Alberta.

PROGRAM DETAILS

The Chronic Wasting Disease Research Program is offered by Alberta Innovates. Projects considered under this Program must fit in one of the following prion disease themes:

Protein Folding and Misfolding

Applying tools of structural biology, biophysics, biochemistry, molecular biology and bio-computing to understand the mechanisms of CWD and other protein misfolding diseases.

Pathobiology of Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs)

Understanding CWD/TSE biology, susceptibility, transmissibility and disease progression using genomics, proteomics, metabolomics and other innovative approaches that contribute to the diagnosis, prevention, cure, and possible elimination of the disease.

Surveillance and Control

Minimizing risks associated with prion exposure, including disposal of specified risk material, technologies for inactivation and decontamination of prions in water, wastewater, soil and the environment.

Diagnosis of CWD using on prion genomics, focusing on immunologic and biomedical engineering technologies to apply, validate and improve antemortem tests developed elsewhere, and to explore opportunities for new tests to be developed in Alberta.

CWD and Society

Studying policy and response modeling, assessing economic and sociological components of community impact, risk perceptions, consumer acceptance and impact on markets, and ensuring fair and accurate communication of scientific advances. This component will also provide information useful to all levels of government for the development of public policies regarding CWD.

Proposals that embody expertise and approaches including more than one theme are strongly encouraged.

Projects must include partner funding and be completed by **December 31, 2023**.

Alberta Innovates is making up to \$1,000,000 CAD available over a two-year period to support projects to find solutions to the challenges that are faced from Chronic Wasting Disease that effect deer, elk and other cervids. Funding for individual Projects will be a maximum of \$250,000.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Eligibility

a) Research Eligibility Criteria - To qualify as an applicant under the Program:

- CWD Research projects will be carried out by at least two Investigators from at least two different research institutions and/or small and medium sized enterprises (SME). One Alberta-based Investigator is to be nominated as the Principal Investigator (PI) and will submit the Application to the Program as the Applicant Representative. Awarded funds will flow through the institution or SME of the nominated PI.
- CWD Research projects must include a cash contribution from a partner funder, external to the nominated PI's organization, of at least 25% of the total amount contributed by the Alberta Innovates. In-kind contributions are welcome but are not eligible to be counted against this requirement. Proof of partner funding must be submitted to Alberta Innovates within 10 days following the application deadline. Alberta Innovates will solely decide on the eligibility of the partner contribution(s) in meeting this requirement.

b) Applicant Eligibility Criteria - ***The Applicant is the institution, organization or SME that the nominated PI is affiliated with.***

To qualify as an Applicant, the Applicant must:

- be a post-secondary institution, research organization or SME;
- be Alberta-based; and
- be in good financial standing with Alberta Innovates and its subsidiaries, InnoTech Alberta and C-FER Technologies.

To qualify as an SME, the SME must:

- be a company with fewer than 500 full-time employees, and less than \$50,000,000 annual gross revenue;
- be a legal entity with up-to-date corporate filings*; and
- be incorporated in Alberta; or
 - be incorporated federally or in another jurisdiction AND extra-provincially registered in Alberta; or
 - a General Partnership, Limited Partnership or Limited Liability Partnership AND registered in Alberta.

**Please note, Alberta Innovates will perform a corporate search and may also perform bankruptcy and litigation searches.*

c) **Project Eligibility Criteria** - To qualify for funding all Projects must:

- be stepped with critical “go/no go” milestones;
- be completed by **December 31, 2023**; and
- agree to other criteria that Alberta Innovates may develop from time to time.

Program Objectives and Performance Measurement

The description of the research should clearly demonstrate how the Project will further the objectives of one or more of the identified theme areas.

The Program is designed to encourage collaboration within Alberta and between Alberta-based investigators and researchers outside of Alberta, to focus on innovative approaches to develop therapeutic strategies to control CWD.

Successful applicants are expected to provide opportunities for the **development and training of investigators**, especially graduate students and fellows.

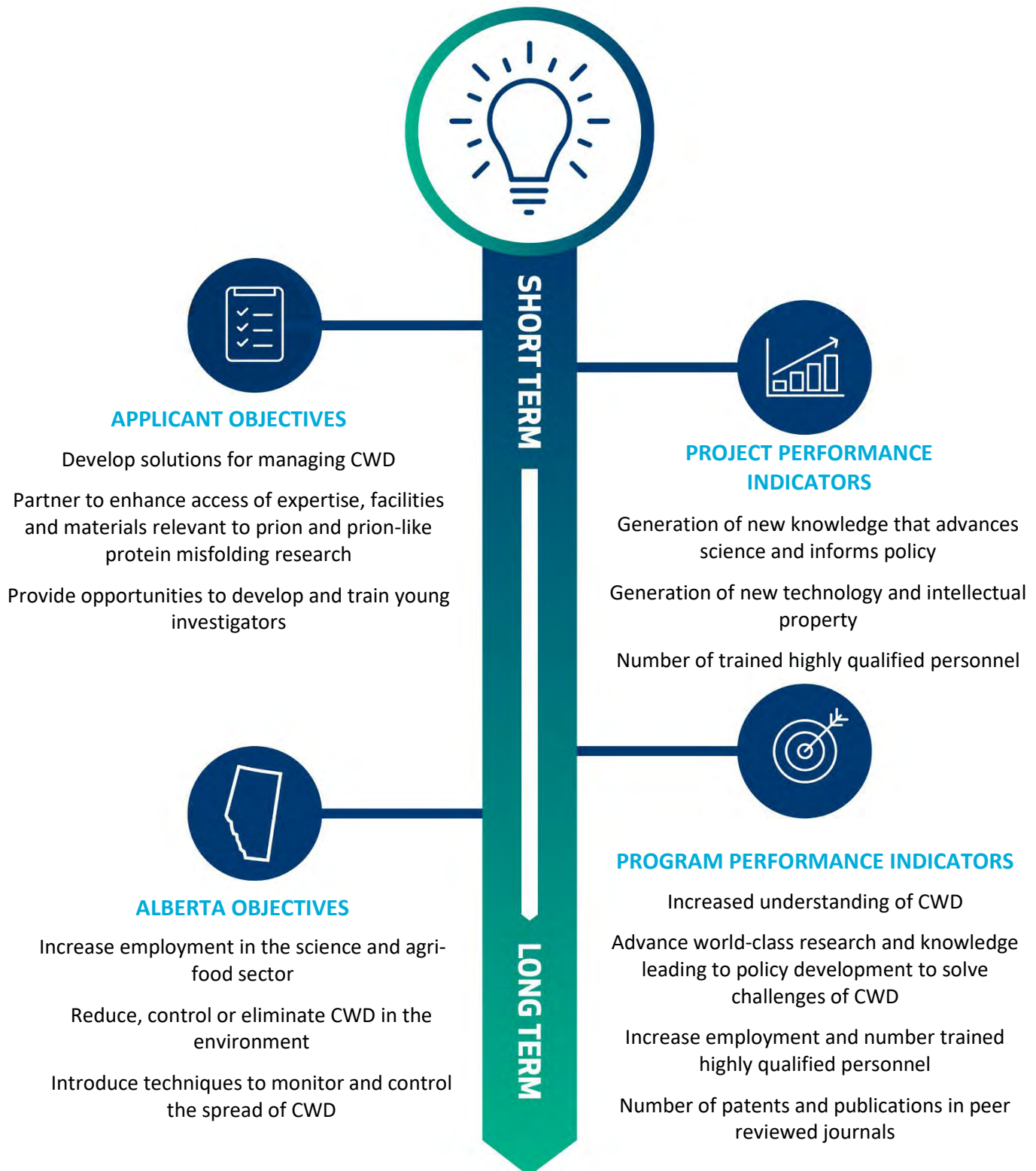
Over the life of a project, Alberta Innovates employs an active project management philosophy, regularly monitoring performance and supporting the Applicant to reach their objectives. Funding is tied to outcomes and achievement of results. For this reason, Alberta Innovates funds on a milestone completion basis. This means the Applicant is expected to submit a Progress Report before Alberta Innovates advances the next tranche of funds.

Alberta Innovates continues to monitor performance for five (5) years to accurately evaluate the economic, social and environmental benefits realized for the province once projects are completed.

All Investment Agreements outline performance indicators tracked over the course of the Project and the responsibilities of the Applicant to report on outcomes after the completion of the Project.

Alberta Innovates has a common set of performance metrics it monitors, both at the individual Project level and for the aggregate Program. These are highlighted on the next page.

Objectives and Performance Metrics



How Funding Works

(a) Project Funding

CWD Research Program funding may be up to \$250,000 per project. Projects must be completed by **December 31, 2023**, with reporting on outcomes following the completion date.

Applicants must identify the source(s) of partner funding and provide confirmation that funding of at least 25% of the amount provided by Alberta Innovates will be contributed to the Project from other sources.

(b) Eligible and ineligible expenses

Alberta Innovates only funds reasonable costs incurred after a signed Investment Agreement between Alberta Innovates and the Applicant. Any costs incurred prior to the signing of the Investment Agreement, or costs greater than customary market prices are deemed ineligible. Costs must be incurred between arm's length entities.

All usual operating expenses for a research project that are consistent with Alberta Innovates policy on the use of grant funding normally will be allowable for grants funded in a CWD Research Competition, except for salaries of investigators. Final decisions on the amount of funding awarded and limitations on specific categories of spending remain with Alberta Innovates and will be identified in an Investment Agreement.

The chart on the next page provides a high-level summary of eligible and ineligible expenses.

Summary of Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

Category	Eligible Expenses	Ineligible Expenses
Labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Labour costs for those individuals specifically identified as working on the Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Overhead costs charged to employee labour rates ✗ Professional training & development ✗ Professional fees unless directly related to the Project
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reasonable material costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Sales and marketing collateral
Capital Assets & Software	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Capital improvements ✓ Capital equipment ✓ Software or information databases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Acquisitions of land or buildings ✗ The undepreciated value of eligible capital costs which extends beyond the Project term
Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mileage, lowest economy class airfare, meals and accommodation for the purposes of executing the Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Costs relating to entertainment, hospitality and gifts ✗ Passport or immigration fees ✗ Reimbursement for airfare purchased with personal frequent flyer programs ✗ Commuting costs between place of residence and place of employment
Sub-contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Services or products of another entity 	
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Costs which Alberta Innovates pre-approves in writing as an eligible expense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Collection charges, allowance for interest on debt, fines and penalties ✗ Federal and provincial income taxes, goods and services taxes ✗ Expenses for projects or activities outside the approved Project ✗ Costs associated with applying for government grants and programs ✗ Technical or professional journals ✗ Provisions for contingencies ✗ Routine testing and maintenance ✗ Investigator salaries ✗ Costs Alberta Innovates deems ineligible at its sole discretion

HOW TO APPLY

1

STEP 1 Application Submission

Applications will be submitted electronically via the Alberta Innovates online grants management system.

<https://albertainnovates.smartsimple.ca/>

2

STEP 2 Application Review & Partner Funding

The evaluation is highly competitive and only the highest quality projects will be considered.

Alberta Innovates may require adjustments to applications and/or conditions that must be met to prior to obtaining funding.

Final approval will not occur until Alberta Innovates is formally advised in writing of the commitment by other funding partner(s).

3

STEP 3 Project Management

Successful Applicants will execute an Investment Agreement with Alberta Innovates to proceed with the Project activities.

Alberta Innovates will provide on-going project management, receiving and evaluating Applicant's reporting of milestones and payments based on achievement of milestone objectives.

Alberta Innovates continues to require information from the Applicant for five years following the completion of the Project to measure long-term benefits.

Applicants are welcome to contact Alberta Innovates - Alberta Prion Research Institute team at any time during the application process.

Applicants are encouraged to complete their submissions in advance of the deadline. Alberta Innovates will not accept partial or incomplete submissions. Late submissions will not be accepted.

The deadline for submission of Applications is **Wednesday, August 4, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. MDT**. Applicants will be notified whether their Application is approved for support following the evaluation.

EVALUATION PROCESS

Alberta Innovates leverages internal staff and external expert reviewers to evaluate the applications submitted. Alberta Innovates evaluates promising research and technologies based on:

- demonstrated contributions to the desired outcomes of the Program;
- quality of the research;
- experience of the participating investigators and trainees;
- success in attracting funding from other sources;
- proposed commercialization of inventions and research results; and
- plans for knowledge exchange.

Alberta Innovates retains the sole right to determine the evaluation process and does not disclose the names of its external reviewers to ensure their objectivity and impartiality. All external parties are subject to both confidentiality and conflict of interest policies set by Alberta Innovates.

The assessment criteria and all investment decisions are at the sole discretion of Alberta Innovates.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

This Program Guide is intended as a high-level overview of the Program. It provides interested Applicants with a roadmap of what to expect over the lifecycle of a **CWD Research Program** Project, from the announcement of the Program, through the application stage, during the Project and post-completion. Should you have any questions about this Guide or what is expected, please contact Alberta Innovates. Please be aware Alberta Innovates may modify this Guide from time to time in keeping with any changes to the Program.

Alberta Innovates will only correspond and provide information pertaining to the Application to the person named in the Application form as the one authorized to speak for the Applicant.

Once we have evaluated and approved an Application for funding, Alberta Innovates will require the Applicant to sign our standard form Investment Agreement. A copy of the Investment Agreement is

available on the [Alberta Innovates website](#). The Investment Agreement sets out in detail the roles, responsibilities and obligations of the various Parties to ensure a successful Project. Alberta Innovates will not provide any funding until the Investment Agreement has been signed by all Parties.

Alberta Innovates will only fund Applicants who have satisfied all eligibility criteria. Meeting the eligibility criteria does not guarantee access to funding, and all funding decisions will be made by Alberta Innovates at its sole discretion.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, and INCLUSION

Alberta Innovates believes the Alberta research and innovation (R&I) ecosystem is stronger and more sustainable when it is broadly reflective of the overall diversity of our community. Alberta Innovates strives to ensure all interested and qualified parties have an equitable opportunity to participate and contribute. Historically, there have been a number of groups/populations that have been under-represented in the Alberta R&I landscape including:

- Women entrepreneurs/researchers;
- Indigenous entrepreneurs/researchers;
- Remote/small community entrepreneurs/researchers; and
- New immigrant entrepreneurs/researchers.

Alberta Innovates is guided by the principles of:

- Diversity – both internal and external participants to our processes are comprised of a varied composition of demographics;
- Equity – our processes support equal access across all demographics; and
- Inclusivity – our processes proactively work to include underrepresented segments of the R&I landscape.

Accordingly, as part of its commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), Alberta Innovates will request Applicants' permission to:

- Collect data in the Application on a voluntary basis to better understand diversity;
- Provide Application navigation support to Applicants from under-represented groups; and
- Integrate a DEI focus into its due diligence processes including striving to have diverse review committees to foster unbiased decision making.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Version 1.0 – June 2021

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