

# Accelerating Innovations into CarE (AICE)

## FUNDING AND SUPPORT GUIDELINES (2018/2019)

### Background

*“The sustainability of Canada’s public health-care system will depend in large part on innovations that can enhance the efficiency, safety, quality, and productivity of health and health-care services”<sup>1</sup>.*

Small-medium sized enterprises (SMEs) are key drivers of innovation through development of new technologies with the potential to substantially improve patient outcomes, care quality, and efficiency within the health care system. Publicly-funded health systems and SMEs, however, face many challenges introducing new innovative health technologies into the health system. These challenges can, in part, be attributed to limited resources available to test the impact of innovative technologies developed by SMEs in an operational clinical setting.

### Description

The AICE program provides funding support to generate real-world evidence in a clinical setting for new technologies developed by SME innovators that have the potential to address priority needs of Alberta’s health system. The funding enables the health system to test and validate the impacts of new technologies, particularly on disease pathways or workflow, with the intent of informing adoption and improving the health system and overall health of Albertans.

The AICE program will support activities that:

- Include innovative technologies that address an Alberta health system “pull” (i.e. the product or technology must address an existing health related need in Alberta’s health system) and have a clearly articulated plan for commercialization and market entry;
- Align with the strategic priorities of Alberta’s health system and/or focus on solving health-related problems that affect Albertans along any part of the continuum of their care or disease pathway;
- Test and validate the impacts of new technology on patient outcomes, disease care pathways and/or workflow in a ‘real world’ clinical setting;
- Involve implementing, testing, and evaluating SME-based technologies, including but not limited to medical devices, information technology (IT) and health informatics products, within a clinical operational environment; and
- Are positioned to generate evidence to inform health system adoption beyond the test site(s) and involve team members and stakeholders capable of championing the evidence generated from the project to decision makers within the broader health system.

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian Conference Board of Canada’s Council for Innovation Procurement in Health Care:  
<http://www.conferenceboard.ca/networks/cip/default.aspx>

## Objectives

The program's objectives are to:

- Foster collaborative relationships between the Alberta health system and SMEs to address priority health related challenges in Alberta;
- Accelerate testing and evaluation of innovations through demonstration projects to generate evidence within Alberta's health system to inform decision making with a view towards broader health system adoption;
- Build capacity within the Alberta health system to develop and implement industry-related projects that lead to health, social and economic gains for Albertans; and
- Promote the entry of competitive health technologies into the Alberta and global market.

## Funding Details

**Level of Funding:** Alberta Innovates contribution for the AICE opportunity will be a maximum of **\$150,000** per project.

A minimum of 50% of total project costs must be provided from other sources (in-kind or cash contributions), with the **SME contributing at least 25%** of the total value of the project budget.

In-kind resources will only be recognized as an eligible contribution where the costs incurred are directly attributable to the project and easily auditable. More detailed information related to this will be provided in the application instructions.

**Application Deadline:** This is an Open Call funding program. Applications for the program will be accepted throughout the fiscal year but acceptance is contingent on availability of Alberta Innovates funding for this program.

**Project Term:** Maximum of 18 months.

**Eligibility:** To be eligible, a proposal must include:

- A project lead who has a position with an Alberta post-secondary institution or a not-for-profit organization that is part of Alberta's health system.
- A SME<sup>2</sup> partner who is providing the innovation or technology.
  - The relationship between the applicants and SME must be at arm's length (i.e. there can be no legal relationship between any members of the project team conducting the project and the SME);
  - Involvement of Alberta-based SMEs is strongly encouraged.
- A SME technology that is of sufficient readiness that it can be tested in a real world clinical setting and its impact on the health system can be appropriately assessed; and
- A detailed project protocol and robust study design that will generate sufficient evidence to inform technology adoption decision makers across the health system.
  - Note: Local programs or projects in one zone or one hospital that are not generalizable to other zones, hospitals or sectors **will NOT** be considered eligible.

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<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of the AICE, a SME is defined as a private company with fewer than 500 full-time employees and less than \$50,000,000 annual gross revenues.

## Allowable Costs

AICE funding can be used for costs incurred associated with testing and evaluating the technology in a real world health care setting as provided below. Funding can be used within the health system to support the proposed activities (some examples include but are not limited to: project manager time, nursing time, data collection and analysis) as well as contracted out activities, provided that no more than 50% of Alberta Innovates AICE funding can be used for equipment, services, goods or staff/contractor time of the SME.

**Costs associated with the following will NOT be supported by Alberta Innovates AICE funding:**

- Overhead/indirect costs;
- General administrative and travel costs greater than 5% of total project budget;
- Salary support for the Lead/Co-Leads, physicians, academic faculty members or company executives/senior management involved; and
- Costs associated with development and protection of intellectual property.

## Assessment Criteria

The proposals will be assessed using the following criteria:

- **Alberta Health System Pull and Impact:** The technology being utilized in the project proposal must provide a solution to a significant, existing health-related problem in Alberta. The project proposal should demonstrate how the technology is anticipated to improve disease pathways or workflow in comparison to existing standards of care. The proposal should provide a summary of the evidence surrounding existing practices and identify the technology's expected impact on patient outcomes, quality of care, operations, and budget implications, including other technology that could be displaced.
- **Methodology & Deliverables:** The project proposal must include a detailed description of how the technology will be tested and evaluated in terms of its expected impact and value proposition to the health system and demonstrate clear, measurable metrics and deliverables. The deliverables should address the key metrics required by operational leaders and decision makers to support scaling/adoption of the technology. This should include what the improvements in health and quality of care are in comparison to the standard of care or comparator product, as well as the anticipated operational impact within the health system of the product or technology. Applicants should engage with relevant operational decision makers, Health Technology Assessment delegates, and AHS Contracting, Procurement and Supply Management (CPSM) to ensure the deliverables will provide the required evidence needed for technology scale and spread decision making.
- **Feasibility:** The applicants must have appropriate resources and capabilities, including any required operational approvals, to conduct the project testing in a relevant operational environment. It must be clear that all relevant operational leaders and decision makers have been consulted and that the applicants are adequately positioned to champion the results broadly across the health system. SME(s) involved must have capabilities related to financing, governance, manufacturing, and providing the technology tested, and provide a high level business plan overview. The proposal must demonstrate ability to obtain the required matching

funding and have a robust plan for subsequent steps of the technology development and health system adoption process.

Guiding questions are listed below to support applicants in formulating an approach. This list is presented as a guide and not all questions below may be relevant since different proposals will emphasize different approaches.

### **ALBERTA HEALTH SYSTEM PULL & IMPACT**

- What health-related problem in Alberta is the technology potentially able to reduce and what is the extent of the problem burden in Alberta (prevalence, incidence, associated health care costs, etc.)?
- How well does this proposal align with stated priorities of the Alberta health system?
- Is the anticipated impact that the technology will have on disease pathway or workflow been adequately mapped out? Does this solution address key intervention points?
- Does the technology have a clearly defined value proposition relative to the current standard of care? Are there specific current technologies or practices that could be replaced?
- What is the health, economic and social benefits for Albertans as a result of investing in this proposal?

### **METHODOLOGY & DELIVERABLES**

- Does the proposal clearly outline the scope, project plan, timelines and key deliverables that are measurable?
- How will success for the demonstration project be evaluated? What data will be used? How will the data be collected and by whom?
- What evidence is required by decision makers to validate the stated value proposition for the technology? Will validation of the value proposition support system adoption? What additional dissemination/knowledge transfer strategies are required?
- Is the project designed to validate the value proposition by measuring health outcomes and costs relative to the standard of care or comparator technology?
- Is the approach to implementing and testing the technology valid and based on sound scientific reasoning?

### **FEASIBILITY**

- Is the technology at a developmental stage to enable appropriate testing in a real operational health setting in Alberta?
- Is the proposal feasible given the available resources and timelines?
- Is the project translatable and do the applicants have a plan for broader implementation in the health system, including sustainability?
- How well are the decision makers in the health system engaged in the proposal? Have relevant operational stakeholders been included in the proposal development (including, for example, procurement and health technology assessment groups, etc.)?
- Are there additional funds leveraged towards the project and is the requirement of matching funds fulfilled?
- Is the company incorporated and does the company have an appropriate board/management in place?

- Is the company in a financial position to deliver on the project?
- Are there any potential perceived or real conflicts of interest between the SME and the applicants/project team?
- Does the company have a reasonable business plan for the technology tested?

## Review Process and Subsequent Requirements

Proposals submitted to Alberta Innovates will be reviewed by a group of independent professionals with expertise in health care implementation, including industry experts, healthcare professionals and administrators, clinicians and/or other subject matter experts from not-for-profit organizations. The reviewer(s) will evaluate and make recommendations for funding to Alberta Innovates based on the assessment criteria outlined above. Funding decisions will be based on these reviews, acquisition of matching funds and alignment with the objectives of the AICE program.

Applicants should consult with their appropriate administrative/research office to secure any necessary agreements with the SME that may be required to enable the applicants to perform the project. Likewise, applicants should also consult with their relevant health research ethics boards to determine what approvals may be required to conduct the project. Applicants may find Alberta Innovates' [ARECCI Guidelines and Screening Tool](#) helpful in planning their projects.

## Management, Reporting and Evaluation

Alberta Innovates will work with successful applicants to monitor the progress of the projects funded. Funding is contingent upon the applicant securing matching funding. An award may be cancelled if progress is delayed, inadequate and/or reporting requirements are incomplete.

The AICE program as a whole will be monitored and evaluated using the Alberta Innovates' [Performance Management and Evaluation Framework](#). The framework includes a program evaluation strategy, logic model and related performance indicators. Reports submitted by the awardees will be used to determine the overall return on investment including, but not limited to, compliance with the Terms and Conditions document, program performance, evaluating value for money, potential for future programs, and awareness among relevant stakeholders and the general public in Alberta.

### Contact information

For further information on the AICE program in general, please contact:

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