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# PROGRAM GUIDE: Campus Alberta Small Business Engagement (CASBE) Program (Streams I & II)

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### Background

The Campus Alberta Small Business Engagement “CASBE Program” is a funding Program within Post-Secondary Investments & Emerging Technologies at Alberta Innovates (AI) to leverage the different partnerships programs offered by Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) including Engage, Applied Research Development (ARD) and Alliance programs. During 2021-22, the CASBE program will offer two different streams (“Engage”) only for Colleges and Polytechnics and (“Long term R&D projects”) programs for Universities, Colleges and Polytechnics to facilitate SMEs (the “Industry Partner”) in Alberta to adopt emerging technologies to diversify their technological products (the “Project”) with the support of Post-Secondary Institutions (the “Applicant”). The applicants will use their technology platforms’ world-class knowledge facilities, and students within Campus Alberta to support the Alberta SMEs.

#### **Stream I      CASBE Engage**

NSERC created the Engage Program to foster the development of new research partnerships and has been working with Canadian Provinces to build funding opportunities that facilitate collaboration between Post-Secondary Institutions and Canadian industrial partners. Alberta Innovates is interested in incentivizing Alberta Colleges and Polytechnics and Alberta SMEs to collaborate more and take advantage of NSERC Engage Grants.

#### **Stream II      CASBE Long-Term R&D projects**

NSERC created the Long-Term R&D projects programs (Applied Research & Development (ARD) for Colleges and Polytechnics and Alliance Grants for Universities) to support well-defined long term applied

research and development projects undertaken by college, polytechnics, or university researchers with their industrial partners. Alberta Innovates is interested in incentivizing Campus Alberta Institutions and Alberta SMEs to collaborate more and take advantage of NSERC ARD & Alliance Grants.

The CASBE Long-Term R&D projects program's aim is to encourage college, polytechnics or university researchers (The "Applicant") to collaborate with Alberta SMEs, by financially supporting long term research projects led by strong, complementary, collaborative teams that will generate new knowledge and accelerate SMEs adoption of emerging technologies to diversify their technological products and create benefits for Alberta.



## Program Details

### Stream I **CASBE Engage**

The CASBE Program extends a NSERC Engage project from 6 months to up to 12 months in duration with a total \$50,000 budget; \$25,000 provided by NSERC and \$25,000 provided by Alberta Innovates.

### Stream II **CASBE long-term R&D projects**

The CASBE long term R&D projects program leverages NSERC’s contribution per project up to \$150,000 per year for one year or a maximum of two years (\$300,000) regardless of the original length of the ARD or Alliance project supported by NSERC.

To qualify for Alberta Innovates funding in Stream I and II, projects must be aligned to any of the Alberta Innovates Emerging Technologies priority areas listed below:

## Alberta Innovates Platforms and Emerging Technologies

2021/22 Emerging Technologies Call (CASBE Program): Strategic Priority Areas		
<b>Proposed projects must utilize Platform Technologies</b> in the natural sciences and engineering:		
Platforms and Emerging Technology Priority Areas		
Platform Technologies	Common Enabling Outcomes	Business areas (Not Exhaustive)
Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Diversification</li> <li>Technology development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data-enabled Innovation: Artificial intelligence, Machine Learning, Big Data and Data analytics, Quantum Technologies, Communication Technologies, Cloud computing, Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality Virtual service delivery, and Smart communities and bioinformatics</li> <li>Digital Technology for Business Transformation: Visualization, Cryptocurrency, Cybersecurity, Geomatics, Geospatial technologies, Internet of Things (IoT)</li> <li>Innovative Production and Distribution: Robotics, Autonomous transportation, advanced manufacturing technologies including 3-D printing &amp; fabrication</li> <li>Clean Energy: Water and climate technologies, emission reductions, smart grid, cleaner fuels, biofuels, solar, wind and nuclear.</li> </ul>
Nanotechnology		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Innovative Production and Distribution: Advanced Nanoengineered materials, devices and systems</li> <li>Atomic &amp; molecular systems, Quantum Technologies, Sensors and MEMS</li> </ul>

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*The CASBE Program, is a joint Provincial/Federal initiative to support College, Polytechnics and University Researchers to collaborate with Alberta SMEs by financially supporting research that will generate new knowledge and accelerate SMEs adoption of emerging technologies to diversify their technological products and create benefits for Alberta.*

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## HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

### Eligibility

**(a) Applicant Eligibility Criteria** - To qualify, an Applicant for CASBE Stream I and II:

- must meet eligibility criteria for NSERC Engage, ARD or Alliance programs; and
- demonstrate the relationship between the Applicant and Industry Partner does not create a conflict of interest; and
- have a physical presence in Alberta.

**(b) Industry Partner Eligibility Criteria** To qualify as an Industry Partner in the CASBE program (Stream I and II), at least one Alberta SME as industry partner is required. The SME is required to satisfy the following criteria:

- be a for-profit SME; with at least 2 Full Time Employees (FTE)
- demonstrate the relationship between the Applicant and Industry Partner does not create a conflict of interest;
- have demonstrated operations in Alberta and able to continue developing in house the results of the academic research;
- meet the following definition of an SME: a company with fewer than 500 Full Time employees, and less than \$50,000,000 annual gross revenue;
- be a legal entity:
  - incorporated in Alberta; or
  - 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; and
- be in good financial & final reporting standing with Alberta Innovates and its subsidiaries InnoTech Alberta and C-Fer Technologies.

### **(b) Project Eligibility Criteria**

To qualify for funding all Projects must:

- meet NSERC's eligibility criteria;
- align with any of the Emerging Technologies priorities listed in this Program Guide;
- multiple partners including MNEs are encouraged however at least one Alberta SME as Industry Partner is required to get the CASBE match;
- be stepped with critical milestones including Mid-project and final presentations;
- be completed within the one or two-year term; and
- submit to other criteria that Alberta Innovates may develop from time to time.

## Program Objectives and Performance Measurement

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*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 are expected to submit a Progress Report before Alberta Innovates advances the next tranche of CASBE funds.*

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

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



## APPLICANT OBJECTIVES

- Access exciting industry-related research challenges
- Establish collaborative relationships with industry
- Provide links for career opportunities between HQP and industry



## PROJECT PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Increased R&D activity within and between Alberta SME and academic partner.
- Increased knowledge transferred to the Alberta SME industry partner



## PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Reported increase in R&D investment
- Enhanced skill and knowledge base in industry
- Increased experience and technical skills for HQP relevant to the SME
- Increased HQP career opportunities
- New and improved products and/or services



## INDUSTRY PARTNER OBJECTIVES

- Create marketable solutions to current large industry challenges
- Provide links for career opportunities between HQP and industry
- Gain access to unique facilities and research equipment

## How Funding Works

### (a) Project Funding

#### **Stream I            CASBE Engage**

The Alberta Innovates-NSERC Engage partnership supports Projects for one (1) year instead of 6 months as originally established by NSERC Engage. If the CASBE application is approved, NSERC will then extend the Engage grant to 12 months.

The maximum Alberta Innovates investment is \$25,000 (the “Investment”), which combined with the NSERC Engage investment of \$25,000, provides a total partnered investment of \$50,000 per Project. Alberta Innovates’ Investment and NSERC’s funding will flow to the Applicant to cover Eligible Expenses. Eligible expenses would follow each respective (NSERC and CASBE) eligible expenses tables.

The SME is expected to provide only in-kind contributions (the “Contribution”).

NSERC will release their funds to the Applicant at the beginning of the project. Alberta Innovates will release the 50% of the CASBE funds after grant agreement execution and release the other 50% of the CASBE Investment to the Applicant after an approved Project Mid-year presentation by the Applicant and their industry partner six (6) months after the Project Start Date. The CASBE Engage project includes R&D activities covered by both the NSERC Engage and the CASBE portion.

#### **Stream II            CASBE long-term R&D projects**

The Alberta Innovates-NSERC CASBE long term R&D projects program supports Projects for up to two (2) years max regardless of the original length of the ARD or Alliance project supported by NSERC.

The industry partner(s) is expected to provide cash and in-kind contributions (the “Contribution”). If there are additional partners such as large companies in the proposed NSERC Alliance or ARD providing cash, the AB SME could only provide in-kind contribution. All partner cash contributions in CASBE Stream II will get NSERC matching % following NSERC matching guidelines (NSERC Alliance Option I or NSERC ARD program). If the NSERC Alliance or ARD is approved by NSERC, the CASBE long term R&D projects program can leverage NSERC’s contribution per project up to \$150,000 per year for one year or a maximum of two years (\$300,000) depending on the project duration funded by NSERC.

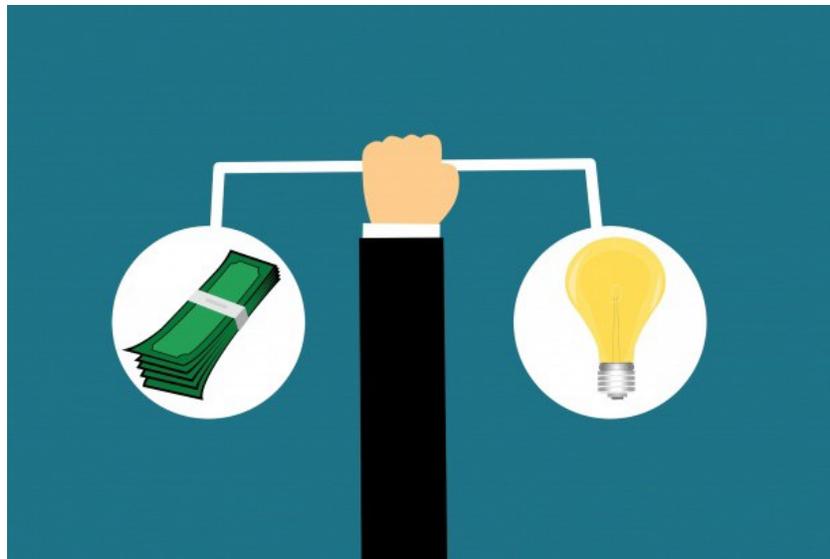
Alberta Innovates’ Investment will flow to the Applicant to cover Eligible Expenses. Eligible expenses would follow each funding partner’s eligible expenses tables. Alberta Innovates will release the first installment at the beginning of the project and the rest of the funds by milestones completed.

A mid-term project presentation will be required by Alberta Innovates and will become the first milestone.

**(b) Eligible and ineligible expenses**

Eligible expenses would follow each respective (NSERC and CASBE) eligible expenses rules.

Alberta Innovates only funds reasonable costs incurred after the Effective Date on an Investment Agreement with you. Any costs incurred prior to the Effective Date in the Investment Agreement, or costs greater than market prices are deemed ineligible. Costs must be incurred between arm's length entities. Please refer to our standard form Investment Agreement found on our website to get an in- depth understanding of eligible and ineligible costs.



## HOW TO APPLY



### STEP 1 Application Submission

If the 2021-22 application is to be submitted to NSERC and Alberta Innovates in parallel, the Applicant must apply first to Alberta Innovates CASBE program through the AI online portal. Alberta Innovates will provide a signed NSERC consensus letter to conditionally approved applicants to be submitted with the NSERC application, through the NSERC online portal. Applicants must also read instructions available in the NSERC webpage for the CASBE program. Applicants with pre-approved NSERC Engage, ARD or Alliance programs (within one year) are also welcome. Applicants must attach to the CASBE application on the AI online application portal, the original approved NSERC project, reviewers' comments, NSERC Notice of Decision and Terms & Conditions. A Gantt chart including CASBE and NSERC R&D activities, CASBE R&D proposal and budget are also required as attachments in AI [online application portal](#)



### STEP 2 Evaluation and Decision

Applications will be reviewed by Alberta Innovates and NSERC (within a few weeks after submission) and only those Projects approved by **both** NSERC and Alberta Innovates will receive the Alberta Innovates Investment.

For parallel AI NSERC applications, the applicant reports to the AI Project Advisor when the application has been approved by NSERC and submits in the original CASBE NSERC application in the AI online application portal, along with the Notice of Decision (NOD) and Terms of Conditions issued by NSERC.

NSERC and Alberta Innovates will execute separate agreements with the Applicant.



### STEP 3 Project Management

#### Stream I

A mid-year progress report (after 6 months of the beginning of the project) in the form of a presentation by the Applicant to Alberta Innovates will provide the only Milestone before the Final Report. It must be approved by the AI Project Advisor.

#### Stream II

Milestone reports must be submitted to Alberta Innovates through the AI online application portal. A mid-term project, final presentations and final report will be required by Alberta Innovates and they will become the first and second milestones. Approval of the Milestone by the AI Project Advisor is required for the next tranche of AI CASBE funds to be paid.

## EVALUATION PROCESS

During the different phases of the program, Alberta Innovates leverages internal staff as reviewers to evaluate the CASBE Streams I and II Applications submitted. NSERC uses its own review process. Alberta Innovates reviews applications internally and uses the corresponding NSERC external reviewers' letters to complete the evaluation. Only Applications aligned with the Alberta Innovates Platform and Emerging Technologies, who meet all program eligibility requirements, as shown in this Program Guide, will be accepted.

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

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

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## 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 CASBE Project, from the announcement of the Program, through the Application stage, during the Project. Should you have any questions about this guide or what is expected, please contact Marlene Huerta, [marlene.huerta@albertainnovates.ca](mailto:marlene.huerta@albertainnovates.ca). 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 in writing and provide copies of 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.

## EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (EDI)

Alberta Innovates believes the Research and Innovation ecosystem is stronger and more sustainable when it is broadly reflective of the overall diversity of our community and therefore embraces the principles of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Marlene Huerta, PhD  
Principal Business Advisor  
Edmonton  
TEL: 780-450-5034  
Email: [Marlene.Huerta@albertainnovates.ca](mailto:Marlene.Huerta@albertainnovates.ca)  
Alberta Innovates

Irene R. Mikawoz, P.Eng.  
NSERC Deputy Director | Directrice adjointe  
Prairies Regional Office  
Telephone 204-984-6300  
[Irene.Mikawoz@nserc-crsng.gc.ca](mailto:Irene.Mikawoz@nserc-crsng.gc.ca)  
Natural Sciences and Engineering Research  
Council of Canada, Government of Canada