



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 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 2020-21, 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 ("The Applicant") 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.

The CASBE Program, launched in October 2016, was the first time that Alberta launched a joint Provincial/Federal initiative to address this goal for Alberta Institutions and SMEs interested in Engage Grants. It has been so successful that the decision made in 2020 was to continue offering CASBE Engage program for Alberta Colleges and Polytechnics and to extend the Program to include a new CASBE Long-Term R&D projects stream for Alberta Colleges, Polytechnics and Universities.



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

To qualify for Alberta Innovates funding, projects must be aligned to any of the Alberta Innovates Emerging Technologies priority areas listed below.

Platforms and Emerging Technologies

Alberta Innovates Campus Alberta Small Business Engagement program (CASBE)

Generating benefits for Alberta through priority-driven research and innovation

2020/21 Emerging Technologies Call (CASBE Program): Strategic Priority Areas		
Proposed projects must utilize Platform Technologies 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"> Economic Diversification Technology development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Digital Technology for Business Transformation: Visualization, Cryptocurrency, Cybersecurity, Geomatics, Geospatial technologies, Internet of Things (IoT) Innovative Production and Distribution: Robotics, Autonomous transportation, advanced manufacturing technologies including 3-D printing & fabrication Clean Energy: Water and climate technologies, emission reductions, smart grid, cleaner fuels, biofuels, solar, wind and nuclear.
Nanotechnology		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovative Production and Distribution: Advanced Nano engineered materials, devices and systems Atomic & molecular systems, Quantum Technologies, Sensors and MEMS
Omics		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genomics, Proteomics, Metabolomics, Metagenomics, Glycomics, etc.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Eligibility

(a) Applicant Eligibility Criteria - To qualify, an Applicant:

- 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;
- 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 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 a physical presence in Alberta;
- 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 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;
- Have at least one Alberta SME as Industry Partner;
- be stepped with critical "go/no go" milestones;
- 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

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.

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 applicants need to be reporting to NSERC on results.

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



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



PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

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

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. NSERC will extend the Engage grant to 12 months after the CASBE application is approved.

The maximum Alberta Innovates investment is \$25,000 (the “Investment”), which combined with the NSERC Engage investment of \$25,000, provides a total 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 in-kind contributions (the “Contribution”).

CASBE Stream I projects are subjected to the Alberta Innovates eligible and ineligible expenses as established in the [AI grant agreement template](#). 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 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 two (2) years maximum regardless of the original length of the ARD or Alliance project supported by NSERC. 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 depending on the project duration funded by NSERC.

All contributions in CASBE Stream II follow NSERC guidelines.

CASBE Long Term R&D projects Stream II will leverage NSERC’ contribution in NSERC ARD grant (Colleges and Polytechnics) or Alliance grant (Universities). The combined funds from NSERC and Alberta Innovates will provide sufficient funds for academics to develop long term emerging technologies research projects to assist Alberta SMEs to shorten the time it takes for them to innovate. Alberta Innovates’ Investment and NSERC’s funding will flow to the Applicant to cover Eligible Expenses. Eligible expenses would follow each funding partner’s eligible expenses tables.

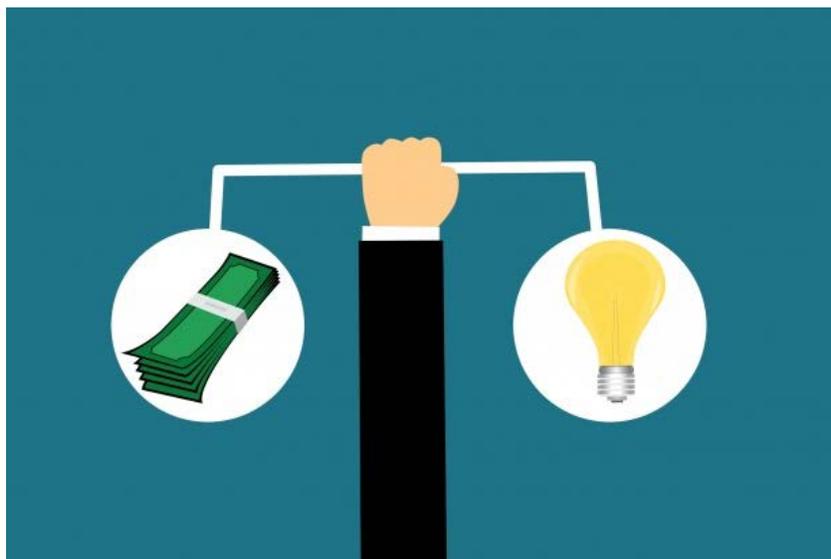
CASBE Stream II (ARD or Alliance) projects subject to the Alberta Innovates eligible and ineligible expenses as established in the [AI grant agreement template](#).

NSERC will release funds to the Applicant at the beginning of the project for the first year and further funds will be released by annual installment subject to NSERC requirements being met. Alberta Innovates will release the first 50% 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 Alberta Innovates' 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

During 2020-21, the Applicants (researchers from Universities or academic institutions such as Colleges or polytechnics) with NSERC Engage, Alliance or ARD projects already approved by NSERC are eligible to apply for the AI CASBE match. Applicants must contact Marlene Huerta (Alberta Innovates Program manager) to assure project eligibility and then submit the application to Alberta Innovates through SmartSimple. The applicant must mention in the SmartSimple application form the CASBE stream that has been chosen. During 2021-22, Applicants could apply simultaneously to NSERC and AI CASBE program and must read instructions available in the NSERC webpage for the CASBE program.



STEP 2 Evaluation and Decision

Applications will be reviewed by Alberta Innovates and NSERC and only those Projects approved by **both** NSERC and Alberta Innovates will receive the Alberta Innovates Investment.

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.

Stream II

Milestone reports have to be submitted to Alberta Innovates. Approval of the Milestone is required for the next trench of CASBE funds can be paid. A mid-term project presentation will be required by Alberta Innovates and it will become the first milestone.

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

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 evaluates internally and uses as well the corresponding NSERC external reviewers' letters for Applications aligned with the Alberta Innovates Platform and Emerging Technologies as shown in this Program Guide.

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.

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

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 and post-completion. Should you have any questions about this guide or what is expected, please contact Marlene Huerta, Marlene.Huerta@albertainnovates.ca 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 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

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