

Export Readiness Micro Voucher Program (ERMV)

December 1, 2022

Continuous Intake

About Alberta Innovates

Innovation is the catalyst for sustainable jobs, economic and community strength, improved health and environmental benefits. [Alberta Innovates](#) leads and accelerates innovation from discovery to use across all sectors in all parts of the province. As Alberta's largest research and innovation agency, we are uniquely positioned to propel great ideas forward to improve the lives of Albertans today and for generations to come.

Alberta Innovates believes the research and innovation (R&I) ecosystem is stronger and more sustainable when it is broadly representative of the overall diversity of our community. We strive to ensure that all interested and qualified parties have an equitable opportunity to participate and contribute to the ecosystem and that our processes are inclusive.

The projects that our programs invest in are critical to how Alberta Innovates achieves positive impact for Albertans in alignment with the Government of Alberta's R&I priorities, as expressed in our corporate Business Plan. (See the most recent Business Plan on our [Publications](#) page on our website.) Accordingly, it is essential for project outcomes to align with those of the program.

The Export Readiness Micro Voucher Program is managed through the Entrepreneurial Investments business unit within Alberta Innovates. The [Entrepreneurial Investments](#) business unit assist high-growth, high-potential SMEs to reduce the time it takes to commercialize new technology and knowledge-based products, and to scale their business. We offer three Cs: coaching, community, and capital to help Alberta businesses commercialize new technology and grow our province's economy. We manage several high-demand investment programs with a growing number of subscribers. Through these highly-competitive programs we look to invest in high-potential, high-growth technology companies that will provide economic and social benefits for Alberta.

Program Overview

The Export Readiness Micro Voucher Program (ERMV) (the “Program”) is part of the Alberta Export Expansion Package (AEEP) developed by the Government of Alberta and, administered by Alberta Innovates to help prepare Alberta Small-Medium Enterprises (“SMEs”) for export in new international markets.

Exports and imports are important for the development and growth of Alberta’s economy. Accessing global markets opportunities allows Alberta SMEs to grow and increase their competitiveness, supports Alberta jobs, and helps grow Alberta’s economy.

The objectives of the ERMV are to:

- Increase knowledge readiness to enter new export markets
- Access to export expertise to create export strategy
- Grow sales and revenue through exports in new markets
- Entrepreneurs, businesses and communities are supported to drive growth and job creation
- Innovation system is optimized to support economic growth
- Investment is attracted, retained and expanded in Alberta and trade is grown

The key outcomes (i.e., measurable effects) the program will accomplish for the benefit of Albertans are:

- Net jobs created
- Revenue/export growth
- Follow-on investment secured
- Technology progression & scale-up
- Economic diversification
- Socio-environmental benefits to Alberta

Funding

The ERMV provides support for up to \$20,000.

- The applicant is required to contribute a minimum 25 percent cash contribution to the total eligible project costs at the project start date. If the Service Provider agrees, the Applicant contribution may be divided in half; one at the beginning of the Project and the final half at the end of the Project.
- Alberta Innovates encourages co-funding of Projects with other funding agencies but stacking limit to ensure there is sufficient financial commitment from the Applicant. The stacking limit is employed as follows: the maximum level of total government assistance, whether from federal, provincial/territorial, or municipal sources, cannot exceed 75% of the eligible Project costs



Funds for the ERMV are dispersed directly to the Applicant.

Alberta Innovates only funds reasonable costs incurred after an Investment Agreement is signed by Alberta Innovates and the Applicant. Any costs incurred prior to the signing of the Investment Agreement, and costs greater than market prices, are ineligible. Costs must be incurred between arm's-length entities. Please refer to Schedule B in the [Investment Agreement](#) posted on the Export Readiness Micro Voucher Program web page for detailed information, including eligible and ineligible expenses.

Key Dates

The Applicant may apply at any time, as this Program is a continuous intake. The program is set to end on May 1, 2023.

Eligibility

The focus of the program is to hire a qualified Service Provider to assist with the development of an Export Plan or Market Entry Strategy. That plan can include export related activities such as:

- Market entry strategy or export plan;
- International marketing plan;
- Export pricing strategy;
- Research on export markets for product;
- Distribution and logistic;
- Help to find a broker or distributor, including international distribution channels;
- Business services and advice
 - Accountancy (taxes, receivables etc.)
 - Legal (contract support, patent protection)
- Tariff, certification requirements, regulations and insurance advice;
- E-Business or online strategy (may include online international plan, sales or online security advice);
- Translation support (translate user manuals, product guides, labelling etc.)

This program is specifically designed for export strategy activities to prepare the Applicant for international markets. If the Applicant is looking for travel support to explore export markets, please contact the Government of Alberta , and refer to the Alberta Export Expansion Program <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-export-expansion-program.aspx>

Applicant Eligibility

Export Readiness Micro Voucher Program is open to For-Profit Organizations

In addition, to qualify for funding, the **Applicant** must:

- Exist as a corporate person, with up-to-date corporate filings;
- Be authorized to undertake the proposed project, and execute a grant with Alberta Innovates on our standard terms; and
- Not otherwise be prohibited from receiving Alberta Innovates funding, for instance due to a past bad debt or otherwise not be in good financial standing with Alberta Innovates or its subsidiaries, InnoTech Alberta and C-FER Technologies.
- Be incorporated in Alberta AND/OR incorporated in another jurisdiction and extra-provincially registered in Alberta;
- Be a General Partnership, Limited Partnership or Limited Liability Partnership and registered in Alberta.

- To qualify as a small or medium enterprise (SME), a company must have fewer than 500 full-time employees and less than \$50,000,000 in annual gross revenue.
- Companies must be Alberta-based with an Alberta footprint, which includes a significant physical and corporate operational presence in Alberta; appropriate Alberta ownership; and discernible intent that operational benefits will flow primarily within the Province of Alberta.
- Must have a minimum of \$20,000 of revenue (sales) in the current or previous fiscal year; **Please note:** For Applicants that are **not** post-secondary institutions, Alberta Innovates may perform corporate, bankruptcy and litigation searches, and conduct other forms of due diligence on the Applicant company and its principals.

Service Provider Eligibility

Service Providers are required to:

- Exist as a corporate person, with up-to-date corporate filings.
- Be authorized to undertake the proposed project.
- Demonstrate that the relationship between the Applicant and Partner/Strategic Partner/Service Provider/Collaborator does not create a conflict of interest.
- Be at arm's length from the Applicant (i.e., no legal relationship with the Applicant).
- Provide the service(s) and/or product(s) at reasonable market rates.
- Not otherwise be prohibited from receiving Alberta Innovates funding, for instance due to a past bad debt or otherwise not be in good financial standing with Alberta Innovates or its subsidiaries, InnoTech Alberta and C-FER Technologies.

Note: For partners, collaborators and/or service providers that are **not** post-secondary institutions, Alberta Innovates may perform corporate, bankruptcy and litigation searches, and other forms of due diligence.

Project Eligibility

To qualify for funding, all Projects must:

- Align with the objectives of the ERMV;
- Demonstrate clear activities that lead to export and market expansion;
- Expand research for export to new jurisdiction;
- Be completed within the 6-month term or by April 30, 2023;
- Be approved by both Alberta Innovates and the Government of Alberta;
- Include a detailed Statement of Work;
- Comply with other criteria that Alberta Innovates may develop from time to time.

Project Expenses

[Investment Agreement](#) outlines the eligible and ineligible expenses for projects in the Export Readiness Micro Voucher Program.

How to Apply

The Program will accept applications on a continuous basis.



Phase 1 Engagement and Intake

- 1) The Applicant identifies a project and Service Provider
- 2) **Contact us** to assess if the project scope meets the minimum requirements of aligning with Government of Alberta, Alberta Innovates and AI priorities, and Program requirements.



PHASE 2 Application

- 3) **Register** on the [Alberta Innovates Application Portal](#) (“Portal”).
- 3) The Applicant submits their [Application online](#), including the quote from the Service Provider



PHASE 3 Agreement

Successful applicants will execute an agreement with Alberta Innovates to proceed with the Project. Agreement will include details regarding:

- Reporting on progress to milestones and budget on an agreed timeline during the term of the Agreement; and
- Reporting on progress to outcomes on an agreed to timeline during and following the term of the Agreement.
- Project payments are based on milestone achievement and progress reporting.

Evaluation Process

All applications are reviewed and evaluated to determine fit with the Export Readiness Micro Voucher Program objectives and intended outcomes. Alberta Innovates staff and external expert reviewers are engaged to evaluate Applications.

Alberta Innovates evaluates submitted Applications to the Export Readiness Micro Voucher Program based on the Service Providers qualification, scope of work, and market opportunities to the program criteria and objectives. The Applicant must demonstrate activities that contribute to the development of an export plan or market entry strategy.

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

All investment decisions are at the sole discretion of Alberta Innovates.



Performance Measurement

Alberta Innovates invests in research and innovation activities on behalf of Albertans to help build a healthier, more sustainable and prosperous future for the province.

To maximize the impact of these investments, our funding is tied to achievement of results and outcomes. For this reason, Alberta Innovates funds on a milestone completion basis. This means the Applicant must submit a Progress or Final Report and demonstrate sufficient progress before Alberta Innovates advances the next milestone payment.

The Investment Agreement outlines the responsibilities the Applicant has in reporting Project outcomes to Alberta Innovates over the course of the Project and following completion of the Project. Outcomes of the Project may be monitored for up to five years after Project completion, so Alberta Innovates can evaluate the economic, social, health and/or environmental benefits to Alberta resulting from our investments.

Alberta Innovates has a common set of performance metrics it monitors, both at the individual Project level and for the aggregate Program. These metrics may evolve over time.

Terms and Conditions

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 for your reference.

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.

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.

Should you have any questions about this guide or what is expected, please contact Alberta Innovates (see contact information below). Please note that Alberta Innovates may modify this guide from time to time in keeping with any changes to the program.



Contact Information

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