



FIND YOUR FUTURE PROJECT

Scale-Up and Growth Wayfinding Scan & Analysis

Phase 1 Report - 'Nascence'

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Prepared Dr. Simon Raby for Alberta Innovates



About the Lead Author – Dr Simon Raby



As an educator, author and advisor, Dr. Raby is passionate about helping individuals and organizations realize their potential to achieve significant, sustainable growth. Dr. Raby is an Associate Professor of Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Mount Royal University's Bissett School of Business, Associate Director for the Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship and Director for Growth Compass. Growth Compass delivers evidence-based insights on business growth and scaling. Dr. Raby is also Academic Director for Growth Programs, including the Growth Catalyst, Innovation Accelerator and the Growth and Resiliency Speaker Series.

About the Impact Action Lab (IAL)



The Impact Action Lab, at Alberta Innovates, partners with the ecosystem to amplify and activate the collective economic and societal impact of research and innovation investments. The IAL is made up of global and local impact experts that help move from ideas to actionable insights. We are creative in iterating fit-for-purpose approaches to effect real change and scale impact. The IAL works with organizations to enhance their capacity by incorporating performance and impact management systems to demonstrate their value and generate benefits to their communities.

About the Scale-up and Growth Program



Administered by Alberta Innovates, the Scale-up and Growth Program's objectives are to: address scale-up gaps to help Alberta, Canadian and global ventures to scale and grow and contribute to build a thriving innovation ecosystem in Alberta; diversify Alberta's economy by supporting entrepreneurship and innovation in new technology areas that will create high-quality jobs throughout the province; and drive Alberta's global innovation mindset by attracting global technology firms and investment to Alberta via a world class acceleration ecosystem. The program has two pillars. Pillar one is a portfolio of Pre-Accelerators and Accelerators working collaboratively to move companies through the client journey. Pillar two is an approach called "Fund and Fellowship" that fosters the collective efforts of the ecosystem for sustainable scale-up and growth impact. Fund and Fellowship includes three tactical areas:

- Network Analysis and Capacity Building, using evaluation processes and techniques to share lessons learned, improve outcomes and demonstrate program return on investment;
- Ecosystem Collaboration, leveraging Alberta's strengths in strategic focus areas, working with what exists locally to help build an integrated collaborative system to accelerate Alberta's companies to scale and grow; and,
- Alberta Alumni Network, supporting Accelerator program graduates in their scale-up goals by providing ongoing navigation and strengthening supports and creating a community of practice.

Foreword and Acknowledgement

As part of its Scale-up and Growth Program, in March 2021 Alberta Innovates launched a Request for Proposals to attract global Accelerators to Alberta. One local and four global Accelerators were selected to provide integrated acceleration services for Alberta entrepreneurs. As part of the Scale-up and Growth Program's Fund and Fellowship strategy, we aim to leverage Alberta's ecosystem strengths and opportunities that target gaps across the entrepreneur journey.

The success of the Accelerators in helping Alberta entrepreneurs overcome their growth gaps depends on a number of factors, not least the embeddedness to the Alberta and local ecosystems in which they operate. To ensure that high growth Alberta entrepreneurs maximize the value of Accelerator programs, there is a need to accurately map and catalogue the ecosystem.

Our vision for the "Find Your Future" project is to enhance the connections between entrepreneurs and ecosystem resources in an entrepreneur-centric way, to promote collaboration on solving scale-up and growth challenges and creating future Alberta ecosystem opportunities.

We would like to thank the author of this report - Dr Simon Raby – and value the recommendations contained within this Phase of the project. We would also like to share our appreciation for Reesa John for engaging Dr Kathryn Graham of the Impact Action Lab in the testing and implementation of a wayfinding approach. Finally, we would like to thank Doug Holt who shares our commitment to better understanding how to navigate easier pathways to ecosystem impact, and the wider project management team: Jasper Buys, Reid Mills, Liza Chan and Samira Ayache.

Thank you to all of the stakeholders who participated in the interviews and shared prior ecosystem scans and reports. This report would not have been possible without you!

Executive Summary

Each year, thousands of meetings take place between Alberta entrepreneurs, funders and support providers. New programs are coming online all the time in response to emerging business needs. The entrepreneurial support ecosystem is constantly changing, so much so that it can often feel like a full-time job just trying to keep up.

Our current approach is to follow the puck. Investing precious time trying to make sense of the ecosystem. The current approach to entrepreneurial support is akin to a shopping centre. A multitude of services await entrepreneurs should they step through the doors; many do, many do not.

One of the many stakeholders we spoke to painted a different image to that of a shopping centre - the entrepreneurial highway. Entrepreneurs can be seen travelling at varying speeds. Some stalled and in need of a push, with others moving at a rapid pace to reach their destination, stopping on the way to refuel and for routine maintenance. The entrepreneurial support crew watches on, working together to scout out opportunities to accelerate the entrepreneurs' journey.

The purpose of these distinct images is that what got us here, won't get us to where we need to be in the future. We cannot expect entrepreneurs to navigate a complicated ecosystem without support. We need a shift in mindset, behaviors and systems that enables service provision to become more visible, proactive, and purposeful within a strategic systems approach.

This is the rationale for *Find Your Future*, a project commissioned by Alberta Innovates in collaboration with the Impact Action Lab.

Find Your Future focuses on entrepreneurial ecosystem navigation, or 'wayfinding' as it is often called. The aim is to explore how wayfinding currently works and identify solutions that enhance the experience for entrepreneurs. The number of businesses we are collectively serving continues to increase. To help scale entrepreneurial ventures, we need to scale ourselves.

The *Find Your Future* project will be delivered in three phases. This is the Phase 1 report, which we title 'Nascence'. It serves as a new beginning, an opportunity to reflect on how far we have come, and where we go next. This report would not have been possible without the support from those stakeholders we interviewed. These stakeholders are the real 'boots on the ground', meeting with entrepreneurs on a daily basis, invested in their journey.

This report identifies constraints that limit wayfinding across the province - vague language, low market awareness, incomplete needs assessment, nearsighted concierge, service provider scope and the navigator learning curve. It also proposes a set of actionable insights to be debated and refined.

Now is the time for us all to work together to find new ways to help entrepreneurs overcome their most pressing navigation challenges. Thank you for coming on the journey with us.

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1. Introduction

Entrepreneurs mobilize resources to start and scale their organizations. Whether it be raising capital to invest in new products, employing new capabilities to build repeatable processes, forging connections and entering new markets, or being challenged to think differently. Entrepreneurs simultaneously orchestrate¹ these resources to drive growth within themselves, their teams and their enterprises.

Because of this, funders and service providers spend considerable time identifying the constraints that entrepreneurs face and devising programs to help entrepreneurs overcome their barriers to growth at different stages in their scale-up journey. These services should ideally form into one connected and interrelated ecosystem, but often function in silos. In Alberta alone, there are over 300 service providers supporting entrepreneurs. Aside from general services, there are those that target specific industry sectors (e.g., AgTech), that focus on a particular type of entrepreneur (e.g., female), or even a particular topic (e.g., finance).

Life for most entrepreneurs is busy. When self-made millionaires were asked how many hours they typically work, the answer was 14 to 16 hours per day². For some, long working hours is a consequence of sweating the small stuff³, while for others it is an ongoing anxiety that if you're not working harder than the competition you're losing ground. Whatever the reason, time for entrepreneurs is precious and needs to be allocated to those activities that add the most value to their venture.

And here is the crux of the issue. The more support programs that are launched, the more complex the entrepreneurial support ecosystem becomes. While service providers themselves may have the time to understand the evolving ecosystem and program offerings, entrepreneurs rely on the knowledge of others to help them find what they are looking for. In the largest study of its kind in Alberta, the Small Business Steward project found that just over 1 in 10 entrepreneurs were aware of, or accessed any form of public-funded business support services⁴. It is evident that there is more the entrepreneurial support ecosystem can do to enhance the process of entrepreneurial navigation and wayfinding.

Find Your Future is just such an attempt. In collaboration with the newly launched Alberta Innovates' Impact Action Lab and the Scale-up and Growth Accelerator Program, Alberta Innovates is launching a multi-phase project that will help to improve entrepreneurial wayfinding and navigation across the province. This report titled 'Nascence' is an output of Phase 1 of this project.

2. Project Approach

Significant investment is being placed in acceleration services for Alberta entrepreneurs. A portion of investment is being allocated to services targeting scaleup and growth stages of the entrepreneurial client journey⁵. The success of accelerators and other entrepreneurial support programs depends on a number of factors, not least their connectivity to Alberta entrepreneurs and the local support ecosystems in which they operate.

To ensure that high potential Alberta entrepreneurs can access appropriate entrepreneurial support at the right time, *Find Your Future* aims to catalogue ecosystem players and resources in a meaningful way and convene a conversation on provincial and local navigation and wayfinding processes. In addition to creating awareness for stakeholders about the 'lay of the land' of Alberta entrepreneurial support, this information will increase awareness across incumbents and those new to the province, helping to promote Alberta's global entrepreneurial reputation.

In so doing, *Find Your Future* aims to create new connections between entrepreneurs and ecosystem resources, along with identifying challenges and future opportunities for development.

2.1 Project Questions

The *Find Your Future* project seeks answers to the following questions:

- Which support organizations participate in the scaleup and growth ecosystem?
- What resources are available to entrepreneurs through said organizations?
- What ecosystem weaknesses / gaps need to be filled?
- What ecosystem strengths / opportunities can be leveraged?
- How can the ecosystem be visualized to encourage entrepreneurial self-directed access and navigation?
- How can we use the resources we create to mobilize stakeholders to solve economic development challenges and enhance a socially vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem?

2.2 Project Phases

The *Find Your Future* project is broken into three distinct phases. We outline these phases in Figure-1 opposite, and provide a description below.

→ Phase 1 - Wayfinding Current State

Phase 1 will a) engage stakeholders⁶ across the entrepreneurial support ecosystem through a set of semi-structured interviews, b) catalogue existing ecosystem players and resources, c) build a set of initial static maps, and d) make these maps available on the Alberta Innovates website. This exploratory process will identify the current constraints in entrepreneurial wayfinding, and will lead to actionable insights.

→ Phase 2 - Wayfinding Solution Design

Phase 2 will engage stakeholders across the entrepreneurial support ecosystem in an ideation process that leads to the definition of features and specifications for a future entrepreneurial navigation and wayfinding solution⁷.

→ Phase 3 - Wayfinding Solution Implementation

Phase 3 will engage stakeholders across the entrepreneurial support ecosystem to refine the entrepreneurial navigation and wayfinding solution, incorporating new features such as search filters, visualization and live updating processes to lay the foundation for a successful launch, implementation and adoption.

2.3 Phase 1 Objectives

Phase 1 of the *Find Your Future* project will address the following objectives:

- Understand the vision for, and specific features of the ecosystem scan and analysis from core stakeholder groups, identify target audience requirements using the scan and informing decision making;
- Identify leading practices examples of ecosystem scans;
- Undertake an audit of agnostic services and those specific to Digital Health Tech, Agri-Food Tech, Sustainability (Clean Tech and Energy), Community Safety and Wellness, Emerging Tech using existing sources and including core ecosystem assets and groups;
- Catalogue ecosystem services and present an initial static map on the Alberta Innovates website that can be accessed by core stakeholder groups.

2.4 Interview Design

In order to explore the strengths and weaknesses of wayfinding across the province, data was collected via two semi-structured interviews:

- **Stakeholder Interviews:** Interviews conducted with representatives of entrepreneurial support organizations.
- **Expert Interviews:** Interviews conducted with individuals and organizations who have helped build wayfinding resources (e.g., maps).

The interview structures can be found in Appendix A. These exploratory interviews collected stakeholder and expert perspectives on the current and future wayfinding process, while surfacing existing wayfinding assets (we outline these assets in Appendix C).

Figure-1: Find Your Future Project Phases

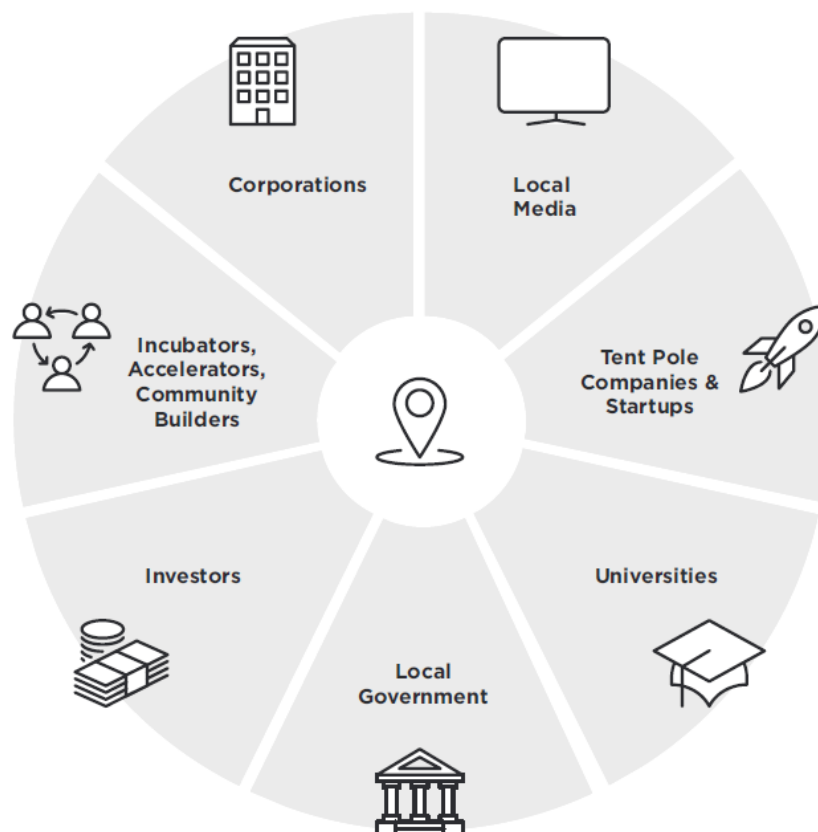


3. Preliminary Findings

3.1 Introduction

The findings in this report are based on interviews with stakeholders supporting the entrepreneur along the client journey. Figure-2 depicts these stakeholders.

Figure-2: Ecosystem Stakeholders



Source: Rise of the Rest Ecosystem Playbook (2019)

In total, 41 stakeholder interviews were conducted, covering 84 participants. The interviews represented a broad range of organizations, including: accelerators; consultants; collision spaces/convenors; funders; government; networks; and, Post Secondary Institutions (PSI). The perspectives of underrepresented groups were also included, to connect the project to social entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurs, Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC), and those from rural locations. Please see Appendix B for a complete list of the organizations that participated in these interviews. From this point forward we refer to these groups collectively as ‘stakeholders’.

This section will explore the nature of wayfinding across Alberta, surfacing key constraints. The following section will then present a set of actionable insights aimed at improving how the ecosystem can provide better tools to assist entrepreneurs to navigate the entrepreneurial support ecosystem.

Current State Reality| The Entrepreneur's Perspective

You finally found it! After much searching you stumble across a building with a large banner 'entrepreneurial ecosystem support'. The building is huge, covering a space as far as the eye can see. You look at your watch - it reads 14:00 hours. You are nervously anxious, brimming with anticipation to uncover the value that lies within. There is a long line up of people at the front of the building. You know you do not have much time, with much of your day so far being taken up with client meetings and employee reviews. You see a small unmarked door open on the side of the building. You decide to make a run for it. You're in!

You walk down a corridor, passing logos of organizations along the way. None of the names ring a bell, but some do feel like they could help you. You reach a crossroad, where to turn? It is then that you bump into Steve and Jane. You are lucky... you learn that both have been in the building for many years. They are kind, and sit you down, listen and help triage your issues. They present three possible service options. However, before you can explore them in any depth they quickly have to depart. You can hear Jane mention to Steve that there is an event being held to launch five new services "if we don't get to this event Steve, we'll miss these new opportunities. We have to be there!". They disappear out of sight.

You are left with your own notes, three web addresses and a contact name - Tom. You figure you are in now...so why not try and find Tom. By luck you pass by his office. You knock on the door and Tom asks you to sit down. You explain to Tom that you've been referred. Tom asks you to tell the story about your business and how it has developed. You're getting good at this, having articulated this to Jane and Steve earlier. However, this takes up precious time. Tom asks you to book an appointment with his colleague, Sam. Apparently Sam is the one who can help. A bell rings in the building. You glance at your watch and it's 15:45. You hear the excitement - it's home time. The big migration is on! You say to yourself "I'll come back when I have the time".

Unbeknown to you, Steve and Jane bump into each other on their way out of the building. They swap comments about meeting you. Steve says "I must find a better way to record my client notes and pass them on". Jane responds "Yes, unfortunately I left my needs assessment in the break room and now they are missing".

3.2 Current State

Mapping is important, was a broad conclusion from the stakeholder analysis. Mapping as a visual tool was broadly seen as useful for stakeholders, and in some cases entrepreneurs, to understand the range of entrepreneurial support services available.

“Mapping helps us understand the ecosystem and see where we want to play.”

“We were driven to develop [our own] tool because people did not know what else was out there and were not comfortable referring them to resources outside of those that they trusted. We were hearing - we do not know what you do and it was a roller desk in the sky!”

The ‘but’ refers to mapping alone not being enough. Mapping is seen as a resource that augments the personal and direct relationships with entrepreneurs. Indeed, the overwhelming finding from Phase 1 was that entrepreneurs rely on people they trust to locate the resources they require to start and scale their enterprises.

“There is a short list [of service providers], but it doesn't replace the social, personal connection. There is still a need for personal touch.”

“I would argue that [solely mapping] is the wrong way to go. We get a lot more traction with clients through personal connection and boots on the ground. The digital platform is second to personal interaction.”

These connectors, who we call ‘Navigators’ in this report, include peers, or those who have a relationship with their business operations (e.g., Lawyers, Accountants, Funders). For those without a trusted relationship, a search engine is the typical first port of call.

“The best thing you can do is to connect entrepreneurs to other entrepreneurs who have already experienced various forms of support.”

Figure-2 outlines the *Approaches to Ecosystem Mapping*, derived from the stakeholder interviews. This ‘scan of scans’ surfaced current approaches to ecosystem mapping. The most popular approach to mapping was the creation of a **service list**, or registry. This involves cataloguing core service provision in a particular geographical area (e.g., a region) or for a specific type of entrepreneur (e.g., women entrepreneurs). While most exist as lists, there was one example of a more advanced data visualization tool⁸.

The next approach focused on the **service journey**. Stakeholders presented examples where they have aligned available service provision with the Client Journey⁹ or the Startup Development Phase Model¹⁰. This approach results in verticals of service provision for each phase of enterprise development.

Both of the above approaches focus partially on *roles*¹¹. We say ‘partially’ because the process of mapping *roles* would typically identify the roles actors play in generating ecosystem results. Roles are one of five components of a system (See Figure-4). Owing to its resource intensity, very few stakeholders have examined **ecosystem connections**, namely the *relationships* between themselves and others, achieved through techniques like network analysis. We did not identify any stakeholders examining the *rules* that govern, the *resources* that fuel, or the *results* generated by the entrepreneurial support ecosystem.

Figure-3: Approaches to Ecosystem Mapping

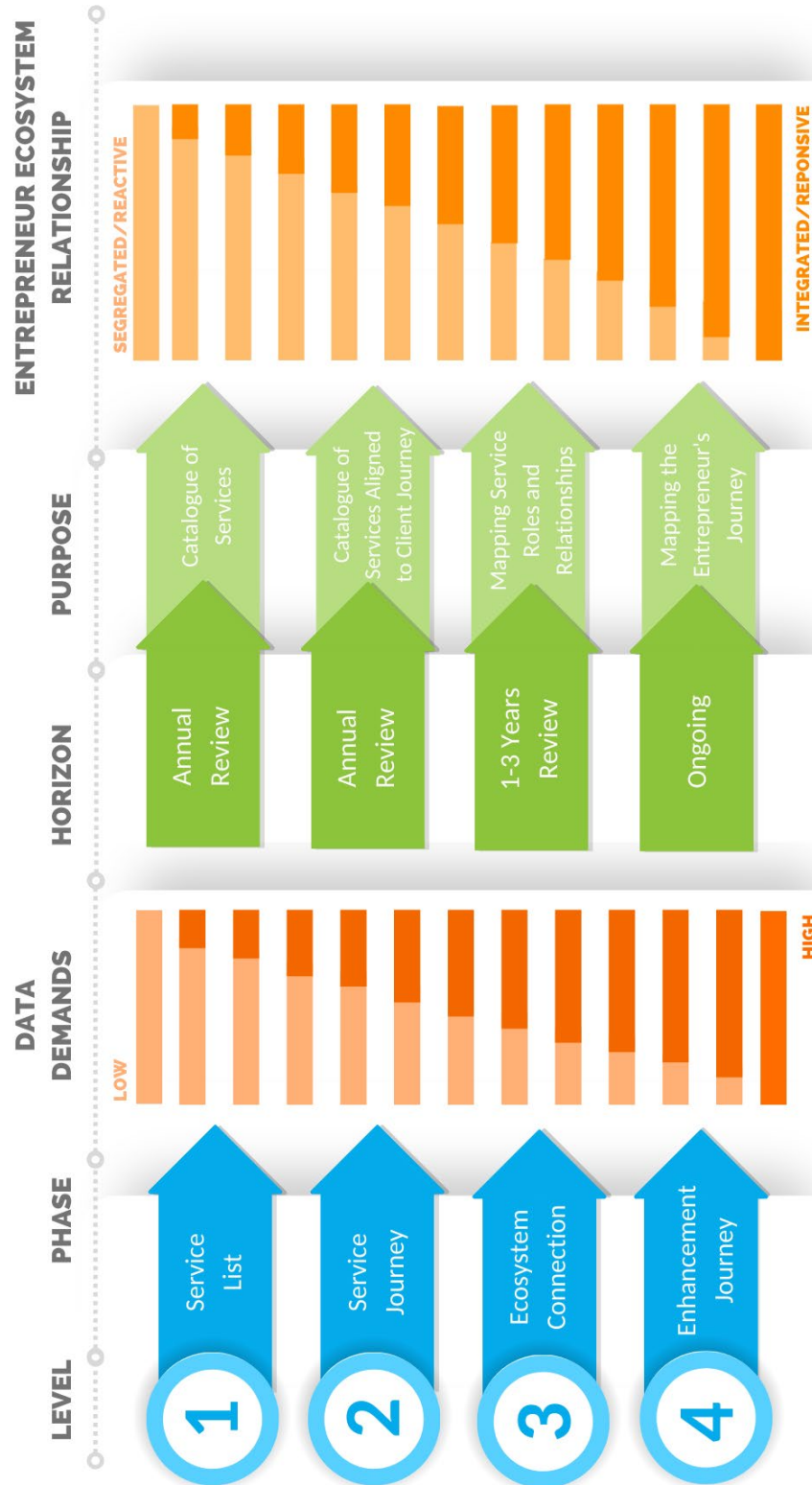
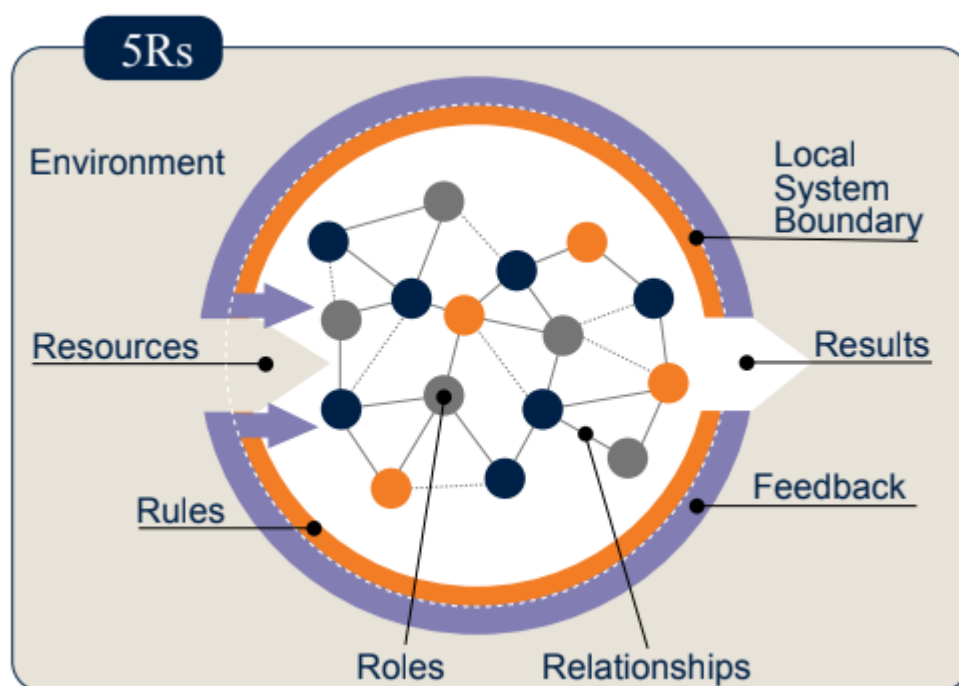


Figure-4: The 5Rs of Systems Mapping

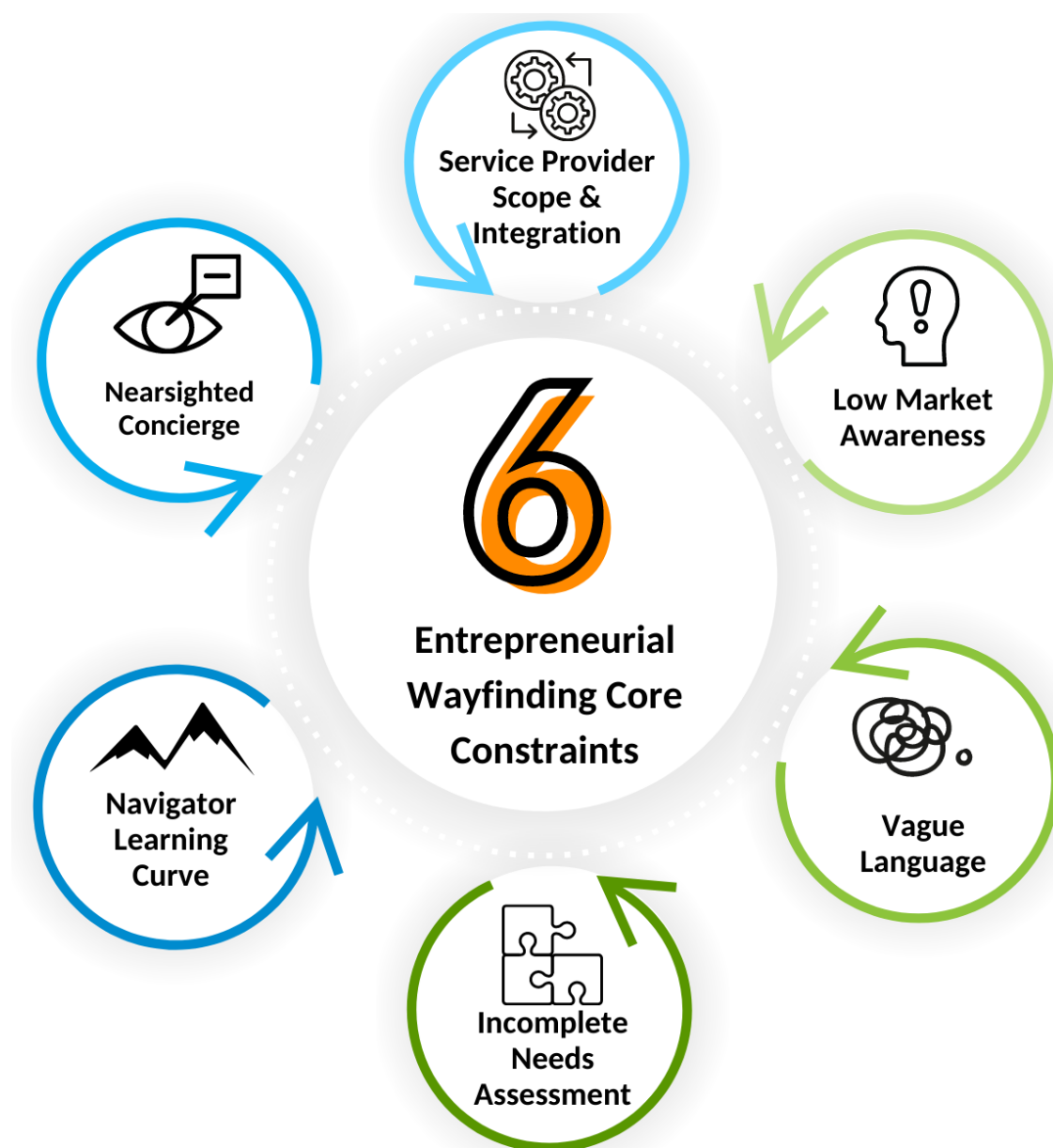


Source: Johnson, Papi-Thornton and Stauch (2019)

In total, the exploratory stakeholder interviews surfaced 21 ecosystem mapping assets - old and new. We include a high-level audit of ecosystem assets in Appendix C. These assets include service registries, static maps, guides and digital tools. Mapping was largely used by stakeholders as a sensemaking process, rather than a tool for entrepreneurs. A map helps to situate stakeholders in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, orient to the services available, and clearly delineate their role. Mapping can, therefore, help stakeholders fine tune their value proposition, positioning where they play in relation to others. Mapping, however, is a resource intensive activity and maps themselves can quickly become outdated.

Few stakeholders were formally tracking service offerings across the **entrepreneurial journey**. Those tracking the entrepreneurs' journey, particularly funders, had a significant presence in the ecosystem with 'boots on the ground'. This data was being stored in organization-level customer relationship management (CRM) systems, not accessible to the wider ecosystem. This approach leads to the current isolation of those who do not possess the requisite resources to build their own tracking systems. This results in an unlevel playing field between stakeholders, can fuel a protective mindset, and underpins many of the constraints that we explore in the next section.

Figure-5: 6 Entrepreneurial Wayfinding Constraints



3.3. Constraints

The stakeholder interviews surfaced a set of constraints common to the wayfinding process in Alberta. We explore each of these constraints in this section. These constraints are presented in Figure-4. We start each constraint with an analogy shared with us during our interviews.

3.3.1 Vague Language

It's like setting out on a journey and realizing the map you picked up at the gift store is in a different language.

Interviewees alluded to the language and terminology adopted by stakeholders to be distinctly entity specific. While this facilitates communications within and across the support ecosystem, it creates a barrier between the ecosystem and entrepreneurs.

Essentially, stakeholders have developed their own 'code book', and are referring to this in their interactions with entrepreneurs. This approach could work against the desire to place the entrepreneur at the centre of the community¹².

Specific examples were provided during the stakeholder interviews, and we thematically review these below.

Entrepreneur: Language is localized. Urban stakeholders use labels like 'Founder' and 'Technology Entrepreneur', while rural stakeholders refer to 'Entrepreneur' and 'Business Owner'. Stakeholders in general reported that awareness campaigns can often conflate these labels.

"In Calgary...they call them 'founders', but we call them entrepreneurs and business owners."

"We are not there [yet] in 'tech'. It is not a big thing [in rural areas]."

"We have hired a company to look at the language to better connect with different types of entrepreneurs. We are good at reaching tech males, but not rural indigenous women."

Enterprise: Common definitions appear absent. Terminology is frequently used to describe a type of enterprise, including 'technology intensive', 'technology enabled' and 'innovation driven'. Stakeholders were unable to clearly define these terms.

"We do see tech as important, but do these entrepreneurs identify as a 'tech entrepreneur'? The current message is quite tech heavy rather than being technology driven or enabled. This also speaks to inclusivity. Are we speaking the same language? Is there greater flexibility [in the definition]?"

"Black entrepreneurs do not look at technology [in the same way]. They are digitally literate, but not technological literate. They are sub optimized. They are building traditional businesses; however, this means they think small, their mindset is limited. Many of these individuals therefore cannot make it into existing programs. They think that being in tech means writing software code."

Evolution: Standard growth models bias early startup phases. The most frequently cited framework was the Startup Development Phase model¹³. This model presents scaling as a discrete development phase following the startup phases of ideating, concepting, committing, and validating. Stakeholders reported this to be a limiting factor pointing to scaling and growth as their own distinct phases of development that required deeper analysis and exploration.

"If we could attain a definition of stage of development, a generally accepted stage model. We would like it to be community informed. So, early stage means this... and late stage means that. Etc."

"What does 'validate' mean? We largely work with entrepreneurs on...How do I know I have a good idea? It is about changing language to what resonates with entrepreneurs."

"The problem with a lot of mapping tools is that the entrepreneurs do not understand them. For example, using Startup Commons we asked entrepreneurs to stand at the table for their phase... and they selected their phase by peer. They don't care how you bucket them. They want help with the path of least resistance. They often have not learned the business language."

"I think entrepreneurs really struggle to find frameworks. The Startup Commons framework is not that helpful for them, due to terminology and stage. They are just doing their business. They know they need to grow, but they do not focus on the terminologies like we do in the ecosystem."

Ecosystem: The ecosystem biases the needs of new ventures. Stakeholders were largely reported to focus on young, early stage ventures. Stakeholders reported the scale-up and growth ecosystem to be underdeveloped.

"We are not all sharing the same language. We do use TRL levels and startup commons models. We started quarterly meetings to ensure we are using the same language."

3.3.2 Low Market Awareness

The entrepreneurial support ecosystem is like an oasis on the horizon. Most believe it doesn't really exist, and many entrepreneurs are not able or willing to set out to find out.

Stakeholders reported that the entrepreneurial support ecosystem is nascent. Reference was made to the time it has taken for Alberta Innovates and the Regional Innovation Networks (RINs) to build brand awareness. Stakeholders also pointed to the limited investment at a local level to build identity and that local organizations can become lost under provincial programming.

"Who is Alberta Innovates? [entrepreneurs ask] Having only been brought together 4-5 years ago, there is a brand awareness we have been building."

"Helping businesses understand that the RINs exist. They get lost under Alberta Innovates, Platform Calgary, Innovate Edmonton. I think they are the best kept secret across the province."

"We [RINs] have been limited with marketing dollars. We do spend a lot of time with

bankers, lawyers, accountants and share with them what we do and how to benefit our clients.”

“When Connectica came to market everyone kept asking for a Wayfinding tool. No money has been spent on marketing. So, this sits there in splendid isolation.”

3.3.3 Incomplete Needs Assessment

It’s like arriving at a hospital and meeting a specialist. Each time you arrive, you meet a different specialist. Every meeting you are asked to explain your entire family history.

Stakeholders alluded to the 1000s of meetings taking place across the province every year.

“We have a program... that helps entrepreneurs identify where they are in their entrepreneurial journey. We conducted 500 last year, 30-minute meetings. They explore the stage they are at and the resources they need. It is a personalized approach, which is so important to uncover the real challenges that exist.”

“We are speaking with 4,000 companies a year.”

Not all stakeholders are equipped to effectively diagnose entrepreneurial issues and stakeholder organizations each have their own unique intake process.

“The entry points to the ecosystem are infinite/unique. Not all groups that an entrepreneur first meets are equipped to guide them through the process.”

“There is no standardized way to diagnose, so they land at a door, but it's like turning up to the door of a specialist first. It doesn't lend itself well to mapping. We are building a hospital where you can enter through any door possible. But not via ER or a family physician. It leads to chaos, randomness and a lack of inclusion...How can we create some standard paths for entrepreneurs?”

“We never share the same intake process. Entrepreneurs have to complete this multiple times.”

While the needs assessment process can often employ the Startup Development Phase model, as outlined in 3.1.1, stakeholders referred to the different interpretations of what constitutes a particular phase. The Startup Development Phase model was also criticized for being too shallow, overlooking the activities that make up a phase, and that such models focus on symptoms, while failing to understand the root cause of what stands in the way of growth.

“There has to be an agreement that there is a common record, tool, intake process... to record the client journey. Otherwise we are just going to be stumbling over each other.”

Stakeholders reported entrepreneurs having to continuously educate the ecosystem on their entrepreneurial journey. This ‘groundhog day’ mentality wastes time, increases the level of frustration, and ultimately reduces the value inherent in the entrepreneurial support ecosystem.

“I endorse the Fund and Fellowship model. There is often a fund and forget process... and we move on to the next investment.”

“Because there are 5-6 organizations that have dedicated ecosystem navigation,

regardless of where you navigate there should be a common connecting point. Either your requirements as an entrepreneur changes or the organization supports, your person moves onto a different role. If they were to invest in something, focus on continuity of care."

In addition, stakeholders referred to entrepreneurs being treated as a homogenous group. Specifically, 'Subsistence Entrepreneurs' and 'Transformational Entrepreneurs'¹⁴ currently enter through the same access points and can experience the same assessment process. Stakeholders also pointed out that underrepresented groups required a more considered and nuanced approach.

"There is a challenge that goes along with [being diverse and inclusive]... lower quality entrepreneurs can take a lot of [support providers] time. How can we focus on the entrepreneurs that can make the biggest impact? Identify those who will be successful."

"Most startups are static growth or high growth, [it is] difficult to find anything in between."

3.3.4 Near-sighted Concierge

Once you have been triaged you are told that a number of specialists can help with your condition. The fortunate entrepreneurs are provided with direct introductions and a handover. Most, however, are given the 'yellow pages' with a list of contact names and addresses. Many entrepreneurs become stuck in the 'needs assessment loop'.

Stakeholders revealed that the needs assessment process is often incomplete. Given the volume of clients, stakeholders reported they do not always have time to understand the actions that entrepreneurs have already taken and the support they have received prior to meeting. Stakeholders feel they are providing a solution with an incomplete picture of the entrepreneur.

"When an entrepreneur reaches out to AI, they fill out a form and then have a 20-minute call. The data is not shared due to data protection. None of that form or information is transferred. I then receive an e-introduction "Hey, following our conversation, you need to speak to XXX", then I do the same, and so the process continues. The diagnostic process is incomplete, and we are giving them [entrepreneurs] tools and access to resources. Realistically this is at least three 30-minute conversations... nothing is gathered on the entrepreneur."

"I cannot say with confidence that entrepreneurs are being navigated and concierged appropriately. They [Navigators] would need a strong understanding of the ecosystem to be able to do this. Do they?"

Overall, stakeholders noted limited incentive to invest and a lack of tools to manage the handoff process to other providers. In essence, entrepreneurs have to learn the ecosystem to find the right support. Ultimately, this can lead to entrepreneurs getting 'bounced around'.

"It doesn't make sense to say "here are all the organizations you could connect into". It is important to say...what do you need to grow? Then identify the resource and pathway."

“A big map does help to know “who is in the zoo”, but it doesn’t lower the barrier to the entrepreneur. As an entrepreneur you might need to ‘kiss a lot of frogs’ to find the right support.”

“Because it [the support ecosystem] is so vast...the challenge is to get people directed. There has been a lot of talk for a long time for some version for a central intake...This would serve entrepreneurs! We get calls after calls after calls... why could I not have been referred to you first? I have been bounced around.”

The core of the issue is that entrepreneurs are not in control of their data profile, with individual stakeholders collecting their own data on the entrepreneur. This builds an incomplete picture of who the entrepreneur is. It also means that without a common profile, entrepreneurs continuously reproduce their data for various ecosystem initiatives.

“CRM is the wrong tool at large. It is about making data better. Who can maintain the venture profile and the access point. We need to hit like a gym membership, not a large meal and then a lagged survey. We have a page that says... [the entrepreneur is responsible] to keep their profile up to date, then we will make that referral. When we make the referral, the next organization can access that profile, and they can then directly book through calendar links.”

“One of the major barriers...let me go back to my experience as an entrepreneur. Explain an ecosystem to me... most [service providers] would explain it as a wheel... and I can tell you from my lived experience...the wheel keeps spinning. As an entrepreneur... you get passed between pillars on the wheel... you meet with each of these organizations. Why [as an entrepreneur] can I not manage my own data profile and they [service providers] can understand my story, without me having to regurgitate this multiple times?”

“You can have an adjacent field... but over my dead body will we share a tractor! We will invest and put ourselves in debt so we own our tractor. We are disincentivized to collaborate. The brand [of the tool] could be its own thing across the province.”

3.3.5 Service Provider Scope & Integration

You think you’ve found the right support provider who can help you. On attendance at the meeting you quickly realize that the specialist advice you require is not available and that a referral to another specialist is required to dig deeper into the area of concern.

Interviewees shared that many stakeholders present themselves as a generalist rather than specialist service. In so doing, stakeholders seek to cover as many of the Startup Development Phases as possible, which allows them to cast a wide net over entrepreneurs.

“Not sure this [aligning services to Startup Commons] worked very well. Providers end up creating scope creep. Some say they can traverse 30 of the 50 boxes. In reality they can only help traverse 5-10.”

“When you try and build a tool you immediately run into the precision of product offering. Many ‘do everything’. This is useless if I am trying to build a system for wayfinding. It is difficult to then place in a hierarchy.”

This approach could represent to a fear of missing out (FOMO), that narrowing their offering could lead to a lower intake and marginalization in the ecosystem. This constraint is to be considered in conjunction with 3.3.3, which reveals an inconsistent application of the Startup Development Phase model.

Stakeholders indicated that the majority of support available to entrepreneurs targets pre-concept and the early stages of venture development. Knowledge of, and support targeting scale-up and growth phases of enterprise development are underdeveloped.

"[The RINs largely] deal with a lot of early-stage companies, incubators etc.... but when you are talking about scale-up we do not really track these companies and they are not part of a group."

"Rural development professionals do not know anything about scale up and growth support. Perhaps a business licence, but [not typically] beyond this."

"There is pushback [from service providers]. I'm getting paid for this [start-up development], but not getting paid for growth and scaleup. Providers are stuck in their niche."

"It [support] breaks out into the industrial sector and vertical. Scale up and growth companies do not meet as one group."

Stakeholders did highlight that while further programming could be developed in this space, not everything needs to be 'made in Alberta'. Many Alberta entrepreneurs have, and continue to benefit from attending programs outside of the province.

"We know that entrepreneurs access support outside of our ecosystem, this is a good thing. The digital availability of tools and the networks that can be tapped into... our ecosystem doesn't have to provide every single resource."

"90% [of what our entrepreneurs need] is not in our province."

On a more practical note, stakeholders pointed out that service provider hours of operation mirror a typical working day, while entrepreneurs can often require more flexible and accessible support.

"We [service providers and funders] are [typically] only available between 9am and 4pm."

3.3.6 Navigator Learning Curve

You have recently joined an ecosystem support organization. As a recent entrepreneur, you have experienced many of the accessibility challenges that you would like to help other entrepreneurs overcome. On your first day you are greeted by colleagues who have worked in the ecosystem for many years. You ask what you believe to be a simple question: "Can you point me to a guide to the ecosystem - the key sources of information that I can use to get up to speed?" You quickly learn that the majority of the knowledge is tacit, it is in the heads of your colleagues. You, and they, will need to be patient while you learn the ropes.

Stakeholders pointed to the important 'Navigator' role many of them and their colleagues play in the ecosystem.

"Given my personal knowledge of the ecosystem I can help them identify and refer them to resources. Warm introductions cannot be digitized. Identifying intuitively which programs can be matched to entrepreneurs."

"This idea of a navigator as a 'specialist' - I think this is an interesting role...Hand holding is the most important thing."

"Much like the sports industry, think of advisors as scouts...spotting entrepreneurs and opportunities."

"We are noticing the need for an ecosystem navigator resource. A person to help connect entrepreneurs [to support]."

Navigators have typically built their career in the ecosystem and have amassed knowledge over many years. They exist in the public *and* private sector. Stakeholders told stories of their journey through the ecosystem, working in business, then economic development agencies, business support providers and now accelerators. It is currently time consuming and frustrating for new Navigators to get up to speed, and existing Navigators continue to feel that they are fighting to stay up to date with the dizzying array of programs on offer.

"It is best if someone has been in the ecosystem for five years to be able to help others navigate."

"We have two business analysts that have just joined - how do they know where to connect clients? Ideally there would be training or programming that I could put someone new into."

Future State Vision | The Entrepreneur's Perspective

You've been meaning to reach out for some help for a while. Acquiring customers has taken much of your attention these past few months, along with bringing in some new talent. You decide to attend an event you've been recommended to by your friend who runs another business which is growing fast. The event is focused on entrepreneurial leadership development. You recognize that you need to start to make a shift in your role, if you are going to grow the business sustainably.

While at the event you pick up a leaflet on a service - scalealberta - supported by Alberta Innovates. It sounds intriguing. When you get home, you decide to log online. Wow, you think! They are describing the exact challenges you are experiencing in growing and scaling your organization. You notice a chat bot, so you start asking some questions. The bot identifies you have yet to create a profile, so many of the features are not yet available to you. While creating your profile a 'one click' option pops up to sign up for an upcoming event and also book time with a ScaleUp Navigator. You select these options, and your information is populated. You accept the calendar invites. It all takes less than 5 minutes. You're registered and your first meeting is booked!!

Today you meet with your ScaleUp Navigator, James. You're surprised that James knows so much about you. He talks about your profile and how important it is to keep updated - he wouldn't have met with you unless this action had been taken. James explains that there are 1000s of ScaleUp Navigators across the province. Each Navigator has a badge that helps to identify the stage of development they focus on and their specific sector and expertise, like finance or agriculture. You can connect with them through your profile. You think to yourself... I finally have my people! James recommends you connect with Laura who is knowledgeable in growth finance in your industry sector. You make the appointment through scalealberta on your phone as you walk back to the office. How easy is this, you think!

Laura's meeting is also useful. She explains she has seen James' notes and that you need more capital. You explore the need at a deeper level, and it becomes clear that non-dilutive financing would be helpful, along with some fractional CFO time. These actions are left on your profile which you look at in the office. The Executives on Demand program is a one click process on your profile, you're all signed up! The funding has a short application. You are amazed when most of your information populates - it only takes another five minutes to complete. As you are finishing another advisor reaches out. This time they are local to you. They noticed you had met with Laura in town and mention that there is a local meetup for scaleups this evening. How happy I am to be living in Alberta you think to yourself. It feels like they really have my back!

4. Actionable Insights

4.1 Introduction

The intention of this report is to highlight core constraints to entrepreneurial navigation and wayfinding across the province and propose a set of actionable insights. We encourage readers to reflect on the insights presented in this section, their relevance and the approach that can be taken to maximize the impact across the ecosystem. We present actionable insights for the scale-up ecosystem and scale-up enterprises.

4.2 Scale-Up Ecosystem Development - NASCENCE

The following actionable insights emerged during the stakeholder consultation process:

1. **Needs Assessment:** Align on a common needs assessment process that draws on the Entrepreneurial Scale-up Journey and is incorporated into a common Entrepreneurial Data Profile.
2. **Accessible Services:** Make services accessible beyond the 9-5pm. Build a provincial event and network consolidator.
3. **Scale-up Fellows:** Launch a Scale-up Fellows program to build a network of ambitious Alberta entrepreneurs scaling their enterprises. These Scale-up Fellows become the ambassadors of scale in Alberta and an important voice in the development of future support.
4. **Common Language & Tools:** Launch an 'Office of Clarity'. Agree on a common glossary of terms for the ecosystem that is respectful of entrepreneurial diversity and used by entrepreneurs themselves. Store maps, and other ecosystem assets in one location.
5. **Entrepreneurial Scale-up Journey:** Develop a deeper understanding of what defines the scale-up and growth phases of development, and the typical constraints experienced and actions taken by entrepreneurs.
6. **Navigator Accreditation:** Launch a ScaleUp Navigator accreditation program that recognizes the skills inherent in the public *and* private ecosystem. Navigators stay current and share best practices through regular events, and retain membership to a community focused on ecosystem development.
7. **Customer Driven Marketing:** Circulate responsive information on the support available by identifying 'triggers' in the data profiles of entrepreneurs.
8. **Entrepreneurial Data Profile:** Enable entrepreneurs to own their story and capture this in a data format that can be accessed by all ecosystem Navigators.

Table-1: Scale-Up Enterprise Support Requirements

IMPORTANCE	THEME	DESCRIPTION
1	Talent	Attraction and Retaining, Senior Roles
2	Fundraising	Growth Finance, Risk Analysis
3	Network/Mentoring	Peer networks, Cohorts, Mentorship
4	Sales	Customer Acquisition, Sales
5	Digital	Digital innovation
6	Leadership	Leadership Development
7	Strategy	Strategy, Growth Strategy
8	Marketing	Marketing
9	Legal	Legal Service, IP
10	Internationalization	Import & Export

*Importance based on the number of stakeholders raising this as a support need.

4.3 Scale-Up Enterprise Support

We now know there is no such thing as a 'high growth firm' (HGF), only firms that experience 'high growth episodes' (HGEs)¹⁵. HGEs are not persistent, which is to say that growth is not sustained over the long run¹⁶. Firms 'bounce'¹⁷ in and out of the OECD's high growth classification¹⁸, with HGEs lasting anywhere from one to three years. Only 1 in 10 firms ever repeat an HGE¹⁹. This reality has led some commentators to label HGFs as 'one hit wonders'²⁰.

However, while HGEs are rare, they do serve to protect firms from decline and exit. There is a group of outperformers - a subset of HGFs²¹ - that experience more persistent HGEs and make an oversized contribution to job creation and economic growth. But how do they achieve this? There is a pressing need to unpack the drivers and causes of growth episodes to better understand the constraints that entrepreneurs need to overcome and the support that can help them scale their ventures.

Scale-ups are a specific subset of HGFs. There currently exists little consensus as to how one defines a 'scaleup'. Below are some examples currently proposed in the literature [**bold and underlined** emphasis added]:

*"A scale-up can be defined as an HGF whose accelerated cycle of growth and wealth creation is fundamentally based on the **scalability of its business model**"²²*

*"We define scaling as **spreading excellence** within an organization as it grows"²³*

*"We propose to define scale-ups as high-growth firms at an intermediate stage of organizational development (situated between the start-up and mature firm stage in the organizational life cycle), which pursue strategies that **prioritize the attainment of economies of scale**"²⁴*

*"Scalability is about achieving **profitable growth** and is therefore a fundamental consideration for managers and investors alike"²⁵*

*"Scale-up is a stage when a company **takes a proven concept and delivers it to a wider audience**, often through market penetration and geographic expansion"²⁶*

*"Scaling-up is a stage of growth where the firm: 1) leverages **economies of scale**; and 2) is characterized by **transformation in its processes, people and places**"²⁷*

What is common across these selected definitions is that scaling is a particular *stage* of development in an organization's growth trajectory, one that is defined by expansion, increased market penetration and improved economies of scale. As a starting point, this development phase requires a business model that is scalable; however, not every business model is²⁸.

During our stakeholder interviews we asked the question, in the context of scaling up, "what opportunities (or gaps) exist for the growth and success of the support ecosystem? Stakeholders identified a list of topics they believed core to scaling up. These are outlined in Table-1. These development areas were reported by stakeholders as having been requested by entrepreneurs in a scale-up phase of development, and were seen as currently underserved areas. These results are to be interpreted with caution; as they were an outcome of an exploratory research process, but not a core focus. It will be important to validate these needs directly with Alberta entrepreneurs.

4.4 Phase 1 Ecosystem Maps

As outlined earlier in Section 2.3, in addition to a detailed stakeholder analysis that will serve as a baseline for conversations on possible improvements to the entrepreneurial navigation and wayfinding process, an audit of existing ecosystem assets will lead to the cataloguing of ecosystem services and an initial set of maps. These initial maps will be made publicly available on the Alberta Innovates website in Fall 2022²⁹.

The production of these initial maps required agreement on what to map and how to represent the information in a visual way. Our iterative approach built on existing assets and adhered to the following process:

1. Identify existing registries and lists of available support;
2. Analyze and integrate existing registries and lists into targeted catalogues³⁰; and,
3. Present catalogues visually.

Step 2 of our analysis process detailed above placed the entrepreneur at the centre. Extending the work of the Small Business Steward project, we asked the following questions for each stakeholder:

- Which customer segment(s) do you support?
- In what language are your services provided?
- Which geographical area(s) do you serve?
- Which industry(ies) / sectors do you target?
- What phase(s) of the client journey do you support?
- What services do you provide?

Informed by the Seven Spokes (Figure-2)³¹, we built a set of maps that separated key ecosystem ‘actors’ into common categories. These initial integrated catalogues and maps serve as a helpful starting point for future work on the *Find Your Future* project.

4.5 Phase 1 Limitations

Phase 1 conducted an exploratory and iterative stakeholder analysis. Using a snowball methodology, we first identified a set of 15 stakeholder organizations and at each meeting posed the question “Given what we have discussed, who would you recommend we next speak to, and why?”. This ultimately led us to conduct 40 stakeholder interviews including some 83 individuals. While this is one of the larger stakeholder consultation processes undertaken in the entrepreneurial support ecosystem, it is by no means exhaustive. Our research methodology has allowed the identification of key constraint themes for further exploration.

Appendix A: Interview Scripts

Stakeholder Interview

1. Sector Focus

- 1.1. What is your organization's role in the Entrepreneurial Scale up and Growth ecosystem?
- 1.2. Could you explain your target client and offer? Probe: [client journey](#) stage
- 1.3. Do you have a sector focus? (Y/N) If Yes, which sector(s)? (underline all that apply)
- 1.4. Would you say you also know of / draw on **agnostic sector** resources? [If yes, note for later]

2. Current State

- 2.1. Are you aware of any ecosystem scans that have been undertaken on the sector upon which you focus? Probe: Could you provide us with copies/links
- 2.2. What features of existing scans do you find the most value added? What features are missing?
- 2.3. What (or who) is/are YOUR current 'go-to' Wayfinding resource(s) in the sector, and why? Probe: IT platforms, visualizations or broaden the interpretation of resources
- 2.4. What (or who) is YOUR CLIENTS 'go-to' Wayfinding resource in the sector, and why?

3. Key Actors & Resources

- 3.1. Which organizations would you say are accessed most frequently by entrepreneurs in this sector? Please provide examples.
- 3.2. Which resources are most in-demand by entrepreneurs in this sector? Probe: IT platforms, visualizations or broaden the interpretation of resources
- 3.3. Which specific sector events are to be run over the next 6-12 months?

4. Opportunities & Gaps

- 4.1. What would you say are the key opportunities and trends that exist for the growth and success of the sector?
- 4.2. Given what we have explored, what would you say are the current gaps for your sector in the support ecosystem?
- 4.3. Any other comments? Is there anything that we should have asked or that we missed?

5. Next Steps

- 5.1. Snowball: Given what we have discussed, who would you recommend we next speak to, and why?

- 5.2. Ecosystem Event: We are aiming to run an event in late April to share the results of the Scaleup & Grow Ecosystem Scan & Analysis. Is there a day / time that would best suit you?

Expert Interview

1. Expertise

- 1.1. What is your role in the Entrepreneurial Scale up and Growth ecosystem?
- 1.2. Can you tell me about your expertise in entrepreneurial ecosystems?
- 1.3. Where have you conducted the majority of your work? Probe: Cities/Regions
- 1.4. Is there a particular sector upon which you have tended to focus?

2. Definitions

- 2.1. How do you define an 'ecosystem'? Probe: Authors/experts referenced

3. Wayfinding Resources

- 3.1. What would you say are the key trends in Wayfinding and mapping of entrepreneurial ecosystems?
- 3.2. What approach(es) to scanning/mapping have you found has been particularly successful?
- 3.3. What approach(es) to wayfinding have you found has been particularly successful?
- 3.4. Which actors do you believe are the most important in the entrepreneurial ecosystem? Probe: how to develop ecosystem connectivity
- 3.5. Given the outcomes* we would like to achieve, what advice would you give the team working on this project?
- 3.6. Any other comments?

4. Next Steps

- 4.1. Snowball: Given what we have discussed, who would you recommend we next speak to, and why?
- 4.2. Ecosystem Event: We are aiming to run an event in late April to share the results of the Scaleup & Grow Ecosystem Scan & Analysis. Is this something you would be interested in attending?

Appendix B: Participant Organizations

The findings from this preliminary report are informed by interviews with representatives from the following organizations:

Accelerators	Networks
500 Global	APEX
Alberta Catalyzer - Calgary	Central Alberta Regional Innovation Network (CARIN)
Alberta Catalyzer - Edmonton	Calgary Innovation Coalition (CIC)
Plug & Play	East Central Alberta Regional Innovation Network
SVG Thrive	Grand Prairie Regional Innovation Network
Telus CSW, Powered by Alchemist	Edmonton Regional Innovation Network (ERIN)
Advisors/Consultants	Regional Innovation Network of Southern Alberta
Qatalyst	Wood Buffalo Regional Innovation Network
Scale-Up Edge	StartupTNT
Venture Growth	Alberta Chambers of Commerce
Canada Accelerator and Incubator Network	Start Alberta
New West Networks	PSI
Collision Spaces / Convenors	University of Calgary
Accelerate Edmonton	Mount Royal University
Platform Calgary	Red Deer College
Community Futures - Medicine Hat, Red Deer	Lethbridge College
Funders	University of Lethbridge

NRC IRAP	Olds College
PrairiesCan	Underrepresented Groups
Alberta Innovates - Entrepreneurial Investments	Black Business Ventures Association
Alberta Innovates - Smart Agriculture	Women in STEM
Alberta Innovates - Health	Alberta Women's Entrepreneur Knowledge Hub (WEKH)
Alberta Innovates - Sustainability (Clean Resources)	Alberta Women Entrepreneurs (AWE)
Government	Business Link - Rural & Indigenous
Alberta Jobs, Employment and Innovation	Ab Seed - Social
Calgary Economic Development	
Innovate Edmonton	
Economic Development Lethbridge	
Economic Development - Sylvan Lake	

Appendix C: Audit of Wayfinding Assets

ID#	Title	Description	Sector
Service Lists			
1	Ecosystem Registry → Harvest	Resources available across the prairies that can take your idea, startup or scale-up to the next level.	Agnostic
2	AgPal → Government of Canada	Helps farmers and agri-businesses find relevant resources by gathering agricultural information and presenting it all in one place.	Agri-food
3	Service Directory → APEX RIN	List of services available to businesses in Southeast Alberta.	Agnostic
4	connectica → Alberta Innovates	Alberta's portal for connecting innovators to funding, facilities, and services.	Agnostic
5	StartAlberta → VCAA, A100, Alberta Enterprise	Alberta's tech industry and community portal. A digital platform and gathering space for companies, founders, investors and students.	Emerging Tech
6	StartUp YMM → Wood Buffalo RIN	Find links to various Startup YMM Resources to get your business started on the right track in Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo.	Agnostic
7	Navigating the Alberta Ecosystem → CSW Accelerator	Service provider list for the Community, Safety and Wellness sector.	CSW
8	Community & Investors → StartupTNT	List of community and Investor Partners in the Edmonton Region.	Agnostic
9	Seven Spokes → Calgary Economic Development	The Seven Spokes of an Innovation Ecosystem.	Agnostic
10	Women Entrepreneurs-in-STEM (WESTEM) → Government of Canada	A list of valuable resources that can help you start, build and grow your business.	Agnostic
11	Resources	Search our extensive database of	Agnostic

	→ Women's Entrepreneur Knowledge Hub	organizations supporting women entrepreneurs across Canada.	
12	Innovation Ecosystem Directory → University of Calgary	A directory of resources available in the innovation ecosystem.	Agnostic
Service Journey			
1	Client Journey and AICE Program Mapping → Alberta Innovates Digital Health Division	A detailed needs assessment tool aligned to the Alberta Innovates Client Journey.	Digital Health
2	The Alberta Clinical Research Roadmap Alberta Innovates → Alberta Clinical Research Consortium (ACRC)	The ACRC Concierge Service is here to help researchers and their teams navigate Alberta's clinical health research environment.	Digital Health
3	Client Journey & Accelerators → Alberta Innovates Accelerator Division	An overlay of the accelerators against the Alberta Innovates Client Journey.	Agnostic
Maps			
1	Overview of the Research and Innovation Ecosystem → Qatalyst	A map that presents the actors in the agrifood sector.	Agri-food
2	Innovation Ecosystem Connections → Alberta Innovates	A map that presents all actors in the cleantech sector.	Cleantech
3	Southern Alberta Institute of Technology	A set of visualization maps for various sectors intersecting with digital.	Digital
Guides			
1	OPEN	Your companion for starting and operating a	Agnostic

	→ Wood Buffalo RIN	business in Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo.	
2	Guide to Small Business Support in Alberta → Small Business Steward	Your listing of resources and supports to jumpstart your small business.	Agnostic
Digital Tools			
1	Community Innovation Connector → APEX	A 360-degree, interactive virtual space.	Agnostic
2	Resource Navigation Tool → Ab Seed	Under development.	Agnostic

Endnotes

- ¹ Resource Orchestration refers to the way leaders manage, leverage and allocate firm resources.
- ² Elkins, K. (2017) "[Self-made millionaires agree on how many hours you should be working to succeed](#)".
- ³ In the publication "[What Drives SME Growth? Introducing the Leaders Growth Mindset](#)" (p17), Raby outlines the evolving role of the entrepreneurial leader.
- ⁴ Raby, S. (2021) "[Exploring the Efficacy of the Alberta Public Entrepreneurial Support Ecosystem](#)", Growth Compass Insight Paper.
- ⁵ Alberta Innovates [client journey](#), based on the Startup Commons [Startup Development Phases](#).
- ⁶ We use stakeholders here to describe representatives of entrepreneurial support service organizations as well as the users of these supports - the entrepreneur. Phase 2 will include consultation with entrepreneurs.
- ⁷ The term 'solution' is used in a broad sense to describe the solution in its entirety. This solution does not necessarily equate solely to the creation of a digital asset.
- ⁸ SAIT is using Kumu (<https://kumu.io/>) to visualize the actors in various ecosystem verticals.
- ⁹ Ibid
- ¹⁰ Ibid
- ¹¹ See the 5Rs model in: Johnson, Papi-Thornton and Stauch (2019) "Student Guide to Mapping the Ecosystem"
- ¹² Feld and Hathaway (2020) "The Startup Community Way"
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ A distinction in the literature is made between 'transformational entrepreneurs' and 'subsistence entrepreneurs'. Subsistence entrepreneurs are those who run small businesses that provide employment for themselves and a small staff (that can include family members). These firms typically do not grow. Transformational Entrepreneurs are those who embody those entrepreneurs that support services typically target. See: Schoar, Antoinette. 2010. "The Divide between Subsistence and Transformational Entrepreneurship." In Innovation Policy and the Economy, vol. 10, edited by Joshua Lerner and Scott Stern, pp. 57–81. National Bureau of Economic Research.
- ¹⁵ Raby S. Hart M. and Harney B. (In Press) "In Search of the Next Growth Episode: How Firms Catalyse and Sustain Periods of High Growth", International Small Business Journal.
- ¹⁶ Coad, A., Cowling, M. and Siepel, J. (2017) Growth processes of high-growth firms as a four-dimensional chicken and egg, *Industrial and Corporate Change*, 26(4): 537–554.
- ¹⁷ Capasso, M., Cefis, E. and Frenken, K. (2013) On the existence of persistently outperforming firms, *Industrial and Corporate Change*, 23(4): 997–1036.
- ¹⁸ The OECD (2007) defined a high growth firm as all firms with average annualised growth greater than 20% over a three-year period, with 10 or more employees at the beginning of the observation period. Growth can be measured by the number of employees or turnover (i.e., sales revenue).
- ¹⁹ Goswami, A.G., Medvedev, D. and Olafsen, E. (2019) High-Growth Firms: Facts, Fiction, and Policy Options for Emerging Economies, World Bank.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ These firms are labelled extraordinary prolific job creators (EPJCs). See: Anyadike-Danes, M., Hart, M. and Du, J. (2015a) Firm dynamics and job creation in the United Kingdom: 1998-2013, *International Small Business Journal*, 33(1): 12-27.
- ²² Monteiro, G.F.A (2019) High-growth firms and scale-ups: a review and research agenda, *RAUSP Management Journal*, 54(1): 96-111.²³ Shepherd, D.A. and Patzelt, H. (2020) A Call for Research on the Scaling of Organizations and the Scaling of Social Impact, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 46(2): 255-268.
- ²³ Shepherd, D.A. and Patzelt, H. (2020) A Call for Research on the Scaling of Organizations and the Scaling of Social Impact, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 46(2): 255-268.
- ²⁴ Piaskowska, D., Tippmann, E. and Monaghan, S. (2021) Scale-up modes: Profiling activity configurations in scaling strategies, *Long Range Planning*, 54

²⁵ Nielsen, C. and Lund, M. (2018) Building Scalable Business Models, *Sloan Management Review*.

²⁶ Hellmann, T. & Kavadas, S. (2016). ScaleUp UK: Growing Businesses, Growing our Economy, Barclays.

²⁷ Coviello (2019) Is a high-growth firm the same as a 'scale-up'? Lazaridis Institute

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Navigate to: <https://albertainnovates.ca/programs/alberta-scaleup-and-growth-accelerators-program/>

³⁰ Targeted catalogues were built for agnostic services and those specific to Digital Health Tech, Agri-Food Tech, Sustainability (Clean Tech and Energy), Emerging Tech and Community Safety and Wellness.

³¹ See Page 4 of "Rise of the Rest: 2018 Ecosystem Playbook", <https://revolution.com/playbook/>

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