Alberta Innovates

Strategic Networking & Development (SND) Program

September 20, 2022

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 Strategic Networking & Development (SND) Program is managed through the Post Secondary Investments & Emerging Technologies (PSIET) unit within Alberta Innovates. The PSIET unit funds, enables and connects emerging technology inventors, students, doers and other tech-creatives at post-secondaries and in the wider innovation ecosystem. Our goal is to increase commercial outcomes for Alberta's continued prosperity and growth in emerging and existing sectors.

Program Overview

Emerging technologies offer the promise of new industries and transformational solutions to challenges across Alberta's key sectors. Bringing Alberta's inventors and tech talent together along with industry and other key stakeholders is critical to create, develop and use technology to create new futures.
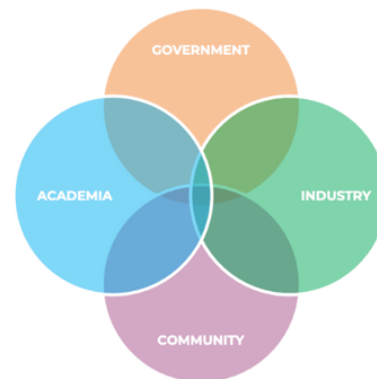
The objectives of the Program are to support high impact networking, workshops, gatherings, competitions, educational and experiential programming and events in emerging technologies which:

- Connect Alberta's tech talent and expertise including researchers, other inventors and students with each other and with industry, including the Small-Medium Enterprise (SME) / start-up community, Multinational Enterprises (MNEs), and other technology end-users and stakeholders

- Explore Alberta-based collaborations between and within members of Academia, Industry, Community, and Government (Quadruple Helix model)

- Provide exceptional experiential learning opportunities for K-12 or post-secondary students in STEM, especially in the emerging technology areas listed below

- Develop entrepreneurial thinking and skillsets in a tech setting, to become engaged individuals, contributors and leaders, helping to preparing students/inventors for their futures in Alberta.

To be considered for funding, projects must have a focus on emerging technologies development or utilization.

Emerging Technologies include:

- Artificial intelligence, Machine Learning, Data Analytics
- Internet of Things IoT
- Quantum technologies
- Communication Networks and Services (next generation)
- Blockchain, Cybersecurity
- Interactive Digital Media incl. Gaming and Augmented, Virtual, Extended or Mixed Reality
- Advanced and Additive Manufacturing
- Automation, Robotics
- Remotely Piloted Aircraft System RPAS or Unmanned Aerial Vehicle UAV,
- Autonomous Vehicles
- Advanced Materials, Nanotechnologies
- Geomatics or Geospatial Technologies
- Other nascent technologies and convergences of technologies above

Quadruple Helix Model for Ecosystem Engagement

The key outcomes the program will accomplish, for the benefit of Albertans and within the focus of emerging technologies, are:

- Increased collaboration between Alberta's Post Secondary Institutions, not-for-profits, industry (SMEs and MNEs), and other technology end-users and stakeholders

- Increased work readiness and access to employment opportunities for Alberta tech talent

- Increased intrapreneurship and entrepreneurship education and experiential learning opportunities for Alberta students

- Increased delivery of programming by and for key partners, to develop talent to become Alberta's future leaders, entrepreneurs, and innovators contributing to a stronger entrepreneurial culture in the province

- Increased awareness/profile of Alberta's research and innovation capabilities to support recruitment and collaboration efforts

Funding

The Program provides support for up to a maximum of $25,000 per project.

- The maximum term for a project is one year.

- Funding will be provided directly to the Applicant.

- There is no funding matching requirement under this program. However, Applicants are expected to demonstrate both the need for support, and when feasible (most cases), that they have secured or requested funding from other sources to cover a portion of the total Project cost. For example, an organizing researcher's department/faculty may contribute, industry may contribute, workshop fees offset some costs, and/or the organization's facilities/staff are made available for the activity at no cost.

- 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 SND Program web page. for detailed information, including eligible and ineligible expenses.

Key Dates

This program is open-call and applications may be made at any time when the program is open.

Eligibility

Projects should create or strengthen collaborations and connections within the innovation ecosystem, and/or provide experiential and intrapreneurial/entrepreneurial learning opportunities with a technology focus/in a tech setting. **Examples of eligible activities include (not exhaustive):**

- Focused networking events convening two or more groups including academia, industry, government and/or community stakeholders within an emerging technology topic area

- A workshop organized by university researcher(s) around a specific area of emerging technology for further development/adoption involving other institutions, industry end-users and/or students

- Team-based science-focused experiential learning opportunities (typically Post-Secondary or High School participants)

- Hackathons and coding contests

- Symposia showcasing student capabilities and skillsets to prospective employers

- Intrapreneurial/entrepreneurial training for students/youth

Applicant Eligibility

The Program is open to:

- *Post-secondary Institutions*

- *For-Profit Organizations**

- *Non-Profit/Not-for Profit Organizations*

- *Associations/Consortia/Societies*

- *Public, Private and Separate Schools*

*For-Profit Organizations will be considered based on the nature of the services provided; however, nonprofit is preferred. Reach out to the Program Coordinator for more details.

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;

- 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;

- Applicants are not required to be based in Alberta, but must demonstrate a clear value proposition for Alberta.

Please note: For Applicants **not** at 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.

Project Eligibility

To qualify for funding, all Projects must:
• Align with the objectives of the Program
• Serve the needs of the Alberta technology ecosystem
• Include critical "go/no go" milestones
• Be completed within the project term
• Comply with other criteria that Alberta Innovates may develop from time to time

How to Apply?

Applications are accepted at any time and are reviewed regularly. Applications should be submitted a minimum of eight weeks before the activity start date.

Familiarize yourself with the program resources on the program web page.

To start the application process, approach the SND program coordinator to discuss your proposed project at the contact information below or submit a summary of your proposed project using the Post Secondary Investments & Emerging Technologies (PSIET) Intake Form within the Funding Opportunities tab on the SmartSimple Application Portal dashboard. Applicants who submit an Intake form will be contacted in turn. Projects that are eligible and potentially aligned to the program objectives and intended outcomes will be invited to submit a full application.

Evaluation Process

All applications are reviewed and evaluated to determine fit with the Program objectives and intended outcomes described above, as well as with the Alberta ecosystem's needs. Alberta Innovates staff and expert reviewers are engaged to evaluate Applications. This program is continuous intake and applications are reviewed as they are received.

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

CHAO LIPUKA
COORDINATOR, POST-SECONDARY INVESTMENTS & EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES
TEL   780-450-5146
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ADAM BROWN
SR BUSINESS PARTNER – ECOSYSTEM, POST-SECONDARY INVESTMENTS & EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES
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APPENDIX

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applications for the Program will be reviewed based on several broad criteria, with more specific details evident through the information requested in the application form. A summary of those criteria follows:

Need for support

Alignment with SND program objectives and intended outcomes

Project outcomes and next steps identified

Benefits to Alberta

Benefits to AI (attendance, opportunity to participate etc)

Appropriateness of the participants

Appropriateness of Budget