

The Industry r&D Associate Program

November 19, 2025

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 Industry r&D Associate Program is managed through the Entrepreneurial Investments business unit within Alberta Innovates. Entrepreneurial Investments supports innovation in Alberta through Coaching, Community, and Capital to help Alberta businesses commercialize new technology and grow the province's economy. More information about the Entrepreneurial Investments unit can be found through this [link](#).

Program Overview

The commercialization of innovative technology and knowledge-based products is critical to Alberta's global competitiveness. Reducing the time to commercialize innovations is a priority for research and development-based SMEs. Access to non-dilutive funding that de-risks technology or knowledge-based product development has been identified as a critical success factor.

Alberta Innovates developed the Industry r&D Associate Program (the "Program") to provide high potential, high growth SME's, with novel, promising technologies, strong management, and an identified product-market fit, with in-house professional research and development capability. The goal is to advance the acceleration of new product commercialization.

The program is part of a suite of SME funding programs focused on the commercialization technological solutions and is funded by the Government of Alberta, Ministry of Jobs, Economy, and Innovation and administered by Alberta Innovates.

The objectives of the Industry r&D Associate Program are to:

- Accelerate and progress the development of new products.
- Create jobs for digital and non-digital technical expertise in Alberta.
- Provide access to financial resources to de-risk r&D of new products.

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

- Net jobs created.
- Revenue/export growth.
- Technology progression & scale-up.
- Economic diversification.

Funding

The Industry r&D Associate Program provides support for up to \$105,000.

- Recognizing a wide range of skills may be required by the Applicant, Alberta Innovates has created a maximum funding level. Funding amounts will be determined by the Associates experience and education level.
- The Applicant is required to provide a minimum of 25% of the Associate's salary in cash (the "**Contribution**"). For example, if the Applicant wishes to receive \$90,000 from Alberta Innovates for a r&D Associate, the Applicant must contribute at minimum \$30,000 cash making the minimum Eligible Salary \$120,000/year.
- The amount funding is dependent on qualifications of the Associate, and Alberta Innovates' assessment of the needs of the project.

- Funds are dispersed directly to the applicant,
- Alberta Innovates encourages co-funding of Projects with other funding agencies but employs a 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.

A senior technology professional may also have a high level of business acumen, in this case, the Applicant should apply under the Industry Commercialization Associate Program.

Please note that Alberta Innovates is a Provincial (eg. 'Crown') corporation funded by the Government of Alberta. Our mandate is to deliver economic, health, and social benefits for Alberta and Albertans. We are also subject to Government of Alberta directives restricting purchases from US based vendors. Such purchases are not generally allowed except in exceptional circumstances. Accordingly, if you are using our grant funds to pay for goods or services, we require you to work with domestic (Canadian) suppliers only, or suppliers from a jurisdiction Canada has a free trade agreement with that is being honoured. If no such vendor is available, please advise us immediately. In any case, our grant funds must not be used to pay a US based vendor *without our prior written consent, which consent can be withheld for any reason.*

Alberta Innovates only funds reasonable costs incurred after an Investment Agreement is signed by Alberta Innovates and the Applicant. Any costs incurred before 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 Industry r&D Associate [web page](#) for detailed information, including eligible and ineligible expenses.

Key Dates

The Applicant may apply at any time, this Program is open for continuous intake.

Eligibility

Alberta's high potential, high growth, technology and knowledge-based small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) may be eligible for funding to enable them to employ a highly trained resource with the goal of advancing business readiness levels and/or accelerating product commercialization.

Applicant Eligibility

The Industry r&D Associate 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.
- 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.
- Not have more than two (2) active Alberta Innovates-funded associates simultaneously.
- Clear our due diligence and risk screening as determined by Alberta Innovates in its sole and unfettered discretion.

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.

Associate Eligibility

The r&D Associate has the advanced technical skills required by the SME to make that last leap from research to a marketable product.

Associates are required to:

- Be authorized to undertake the proposed project.
- Demonstrate the relationship between the Applicant and Associate does not create a conflict of interest.
- Be at arm's length from the Applicant (i.e., no legal relationship to the Applicant);
- Be a T4 employee for the duration of the project.
- Not currently own, have no right, option, or entitlement to purchase more than 15% of the issued and outstanding shares of the Applicant.
- Not have been an Associate for the Applicant other than in the case of a re-application.
- Not have been employed by the Applicant as a T4 employee for more than twelve (12) months prior to the submission date of the application. The deadline for the Associate's eligibility is 11:59pm on the 365th day from the Associate's first day of employment.
- Provide a letter indicating the Associate's intention to participate in the Project at the time of the application.
- Intend to live in the Province of Alberta at least for the duration of the Investment in the Project.
- 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.

Project Eligibility

To qualify for funding, all Projects must:

- Align with the objectives of the Industry r&D Associate Program.
- Be stepped with critical "go/no go" milestones.
- TRL level between 3 and 9.
- Be completed within the 1-year term.
- Outline the financial contribution required by the Applicant, and
- Comply to other criteria that Alberta Innovates may develop from time to time.



Project Expenses

Schedule C in the [Investment Agreement](#) outlines the eligible and ineligible expenses for projects in the r&D Associate Program.

How to Apply

The Program will accept applications on a continuous basis.



PHASE 1 Pre-Application Connection

All interested Applicants must engage with a [Technology Development Advisor](#) (TDA) prior to applying online. TDAs provide guidance, coaching and will assess an applicant's program readiness.

The Applicant may apply in two stages:

- Stage 1 – Associate not yet identified, the Applicant has six months to submit the Associate and Project sections of the Application.
- Stage 2 – Associate identified at time of application.



PHASE 2 Application and Evaluation

Access and submit application form on the [online application portal](#) at any time.

Applications outline:

- Applicant's management and project team,
- Innovation and Market opportunity,
- Activities and Outcomes for the project, and
- Applicant's current financial state; please refer to the [Financial Documents Resource](#) on the program webpage for details.



PHASE 3 Monitoring and Reporting

For approved applications, the Applicant will execute an [Investment Agreement](#) with Alberta Innovates to proceed with the activities of the Project.

- TDAs will monitor the progress of the project and provide coaching to the Applicant.
- Reporting includes Progress Report (6 months) and Final Report (12 months).

Evaluation Process

All applications are reviewed and evaluated to determine fit with the Industry r&D Associate Program objectives and intended outcomes. Alberta Innovates staff and external expert reviewers are engaged to evaluate Applications.

Alberta Innovates evaluates submitted Applications to the program based on a variety of common business and technical factors such as the management team, market conditions, competitive advantage and product/market fit, go to market plan, financials, technical feasibility and export potential.

- Stage 1: Associate identified at time of application.
- Stage 2: In addition to stage 1, the evaluation considers the Associate's suitability and the project work plan.

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.

An Applicant whose application is declined by Alberta Innovates may, on a one-time basis, re-apply to Alberta Innovates to address and correct any deficiencies or issues.

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 the 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

PROGRAM MANAGER, R&D ASSOCIATE PROGRAM,
ENTREPRENEURIAL CAPITAL

EMAIL smeprograms@albertainnovates.ca



APPENDIX A: Evaluation Criteria

Applications for Industry r&D Associates 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:

All applications are reviewed and evaluated to determine fit with the Industry r&D Associates Program objectives and intended outcomes. Alberta Innovates' staff and external expert reviewers are engaged to evaluate Applications. Alberta Innovates evaluates submitted Applications to the Program based on the technology, the business opportunity, applicant risks and the overall potential size of the return to Alberta against the performance outcomes. A variety of common business and technical factors such as: the management team, market conditions, competitive advantage and product/market fit, go to market plan, financials, technical feasibility and export potential are also considered. 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.

Assess your company for Alberta Footprint by reviewing the criteria noted below.

All companies must be incorporated in Alberta AND/OR incorporated in another jurisdiction and extra provincially registered in Alberta, OR be a General Partnership, Limited Partnership or Limited Liability Partnership and registered in Alberta.

Next, if you meet the following Alberta Footprint criteria you are an Alberta company that can apply to our program.

- Over 50% total Alberta ownership
- And over 50% Alberta employees (FTE, PTE, and Contractors)
- And an Alberta Founder residing in Alberta as primary residence, where income tax is paid

If you do not meet the criteria above you may still be eligible and the following evaluation criteria will be used to assess your Alberta Footprint:

Alberta Footprint Evaluation Criteria for Entrepreneurial Investment Programs
Location of main operations (operations, salaries, taxes, expenses, license, permits, assets, and capital flow) and head office.
Portion of physical assets based in Alberta if applicable to your business model.
Number of Alberta-based T4 employees currently employed by the applicant and percentage of total jobs in the company based in Alberta.
Taxable revenues, current and future, flowing back to Alberta.
Percent of Alberta Ownership as demonstrated on Capitalization tables and registration documents. Due to unclear ownership and liquidity of shares, publicly traded companies are only eligible if significant Alberta ownership and control can be demonstrated. The Alberta ownership does not include Alberta investment firms that have investors from outside Alberta.
Number of Founders based in Alberta
Connections to Alberta eco-system, industry, strategic partners, and resources to grow business in Alberta. Current and future growth in Alberta to promote jobs, economic growth, and benefit to Albertans.
Publicly identified as, and corporate messaging consistent with, being an Alberta company
Collaborative support from other provinces on a large strategic win for Canada

These criteria are considered together to determine if there is sufficient Alberta benefit.