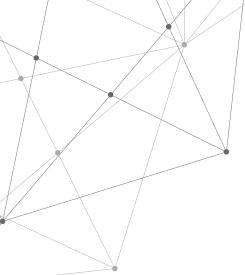




CANADA'S DIGITAL
TECHNOLOGY
SUPERCLUSTER

Capacity Building Pilot Program Guide

MARCH 2019



Introduction and Background

Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster ("the Supercluster") is a not-for-profit organization that accelerates the development, demonstration and commercialization of 'made in Canada' innovative digital processes, products and technology platforms. The Supercluster co-invests with Canadian companies, academic institutions and not-for-profit organizations to ensure Canada's innovation ecosystem has the capabilities, talent and infrastructure to secure global leadership in the digital technology sector that will create resilient jobs, drive economic growth and enhance Canada's reputation as a world-leading digital economy.

The Supercluster is mandated to build capacity in the digital technology ecosystem, increase the breadth and diversity of talent in the sector and expand Canada's capacity to be a global leader in digital technology development, adoption and deployment. The Supercluster has engaged various stakeholders, including our members and innovation ecosystem partners, in the development of the [Digital Technology Supercluster Strategy 2018-2023](#) and the design of the Capacity Building Program and its anticipated outcomes.

The Capacity Building Program will initially be guided by a Program Advisory Council (PAC) which will be made up of recognized experts from the community. The PAC will ensure that best practices in diversity and inclusion are met and that all facets of cluster development are considered. The PAC will:

- Advise the Supercluster on current trends, gaps and opportunities in the innovation ecosystem which may affect the program.
- Provide ongoing consultation with respect to the scope and focus of the program.
- Advise on the engagement strategy with related local, national and global parallel initiatives, and advise on how to expand and strengthen connections with the broader innovation ecosystem.

Capacity Building Program Objectives

The Capacity Building Program complements our Technology Leadership Programs and is designed to invest in areas where there is a demonstrated need or opportunity. The Capacity Building Program is focused on the following objectives:

A Develop a diverse pool of digital talent to ensure a workforce prepared for the jobs of tomorrow with a focus on improving the inclusion and participation of Indigenous people, underrepresented groups and women.

B Scale SMEs by providing the resources for growth and increasing supply chain links to enhance access to global markets for Canadian companies with technology capabilities.

The Capacity Building Program is being launched with this Pilot, which is focused on the first objective (A).



Pilot Program Parameters

The Capacity Building Pilot Program aims to:

Develop a diverse pool of digital talent to ensure a workforce prepared for the jobs of tomorrow with a focus on improving the inclusion and participation of Indigenous people, underrepresented groups and women.

Pilot Program Parameters:

- The funding envelope is up to \$2M for the Pilot Program
- Co-investment of at least 25% is required from project partners and/or other sources; co-investment from the Supercluster will be up to 75% of the total project costs
- Total project budgets are expected in the range of \$100,000 - \$500,000 for the Pilot
- Project term is expected to range between six to 24 months
- Projects should be new, incremental and not currently resourced or supported by other funding mechanisms

Pilot Program - Areas of Focus

The following ‘areas of focus’ have been identified through our consultations with stakeholders and in the development of the Capacity Building Pilot Program. The Pilot aims to solicit projects that:

- Develop Indigenous talent for future workforce and support Indigenous enterprises;
- Leverage work-integrated learning platforms;
- Develop diverse talent through relevant certification, work experience, education and training;
- Develop industry-relevant secondary, post-secondary and/or post-graduate expertise in digital innovation;
- Leverage access to Canada’s pool of scientific, technical, engineering expertise and capabilities;
- Encourage and enable senior-level digital and business development talent to work and develop skills in Canada;
- Support workforce transformation for industries facing digitization and automation, including re-skilling of Canadians;
- Use online or technology-based methods to reach potential talent, both to encourage them to pursue a career in tech and to train relevant skills; and,
- Develop best practices of diversity and inclusion that enable organizations to be more inclusive of participation by women and other under represented groups.

We acknowledge that this is not an exhaustive list of all challenges or opportunities in the ecosystem, and encourage applications that are able to address a clearly demonstrated need or opportunity.

Eligibility

Projects are selected using a competitive process. Eligible projects must demonstrate:

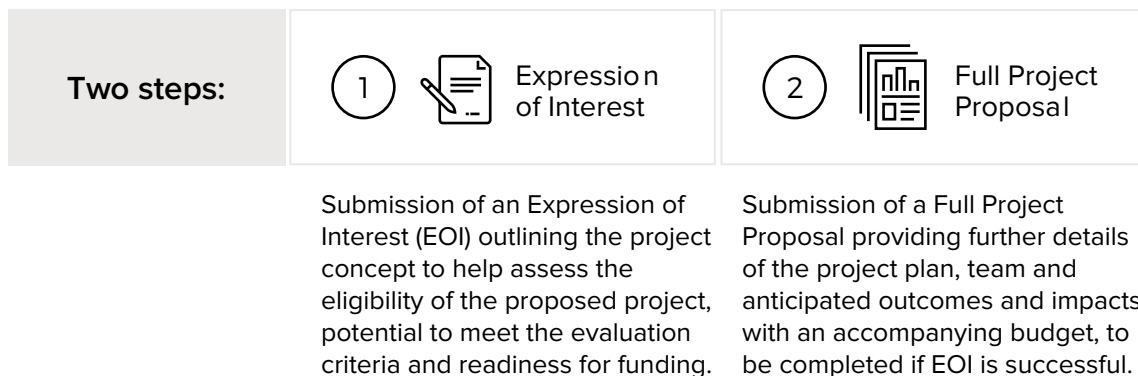
- The lead applicant of the consortium ‘championing’ the project must be a Member or an Associate of the Supercluster;
- All applicants in the consortium must be a Member or an Associate of the Supercluster by the Full Project Proposal submission deadline;
- There must be a minimum of three project partners (consortium), of which at least one must be industry;
- The initiative must be “incremental” to the regular business undertakings of the participating organizations, in that the project is new, would not be possible without participation of consortium partners or not undertaken at the same scope or scale without the co-investment provided by the Supercluster;
- Projects that build and expand linkages beyond Supercluster participants and leverage existing assets (capabilities, talent, infrastructure) are strongly encouraged,

All applicants in the consortium agree that, by applying to this Program, each partner will:

- Adhere to Canada’s Digital Supercluster’s Intellectual Property (IP) Strategy and Data Strategy, which can be found on the [Member Resource Portal](#).
- Agree to have information about their project published following the decision to invite applicants to submit a Full Proposal (e.g., lead applicant, partners, project title, areas of focus or identified need, and potential collaboration opportunities).
- Adhere to the Supercluster Charter of Values, including the Diversity & Inclusion principles as outlined in the Membership and/or Participation Agreement.

Application and Review Process

Once your organization joins the Supercluster as a Member or Associate, there is a two-step application process for the Capacity Building Pilot program, which includes:



Expressions of Interest and Full Project Proposals must be submitted directly to the Supercluster through the following email address: buildcapacity@digitalsupercluster.ca. The lead contact for this program is available on the website.



1 *Expression of Interest*

The EOI must provide a brief outline of the proposed project which addresses the eligibility criteria. An EOI template is available on the Supercluster [Member Resource Portal](#).

During the period from the call for projects to the published EOI submission deadline, representatives from the Supercluster will be available to answer questions and help to design a potentially viable EOI.

EOIs will be reviewed by the Supercluster and external reviewers as required, to determine eligibility. The lead applicant will be provided with a notice of decision of the outcome of the EOI review and, if successful, will be invited to submit a Full Project Proposal. A notification letter inviting the submission of a Full Project Proposal does not authorize the applicant to commence developing the project. Feedback will be provided to all applicants.

2 *Full Project Proposal*

Instructions for submitting Full Project Proposals are available on the Supercluster Member Resource Portal and must be used. Detailed explanations of each section of the proposal are included with the Full Project Proposal Template. Proposals must address the Evaluation Criteria described in Appendix A of this document.

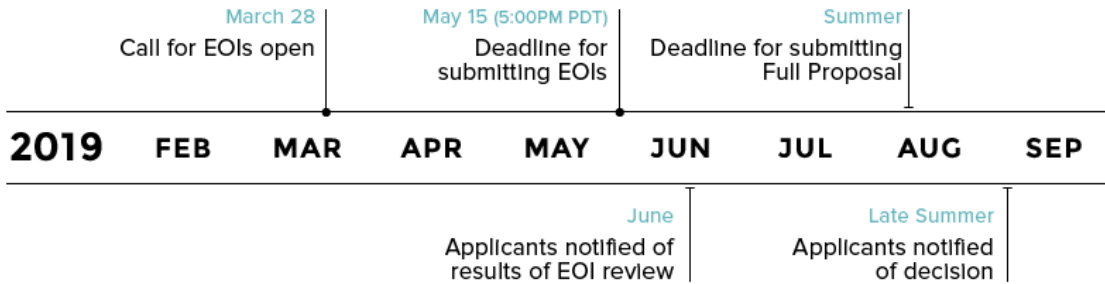
An Excel budget template must also be provided as part of the Full Project Proposal. The budget template will be provided by the Supercluster. Please see the Co-investment Guidelines for guidance on the budget and a description of eligible costs, which are available on the Member Resource Portal.

Review Process

Proposals will be assessed against Appendix A of this document (Capacity Building Pilot Program Guide). Full Project Proposals will be reviewed by a Review Panel which will be made up of independent, external reviewers and Supercluster staff. Management and financial due diligence of the budget will be done by the Supercluster. The Review Panel will evaluate the proposals. Final funding recommendations will be made by the Supercluster and ratified by the Board of Directors.

The Supercluster reserves the right to modify the review process with advice from the Program Advisory Council as needed, to ensure the program meets its objectives and that proposals are fairly assessed against the Evaluation Criteria. All applicants, whether recommended for funding or not, will receive written feedback on their proposal.

Application Timeline



Intellectual Property

In the case where Capacity Building Pilot Program projects have the potential to generate Intellectual Property (IP), including materials that may require copyrights, trademarks, or patents, a detailed IP rationale will be required in the Full Project Proposal to demonstrate how the proposed project could provide for Members, including Members who are not participating in a project, the opportunity to negotiate access to IP arising from the Project (foreground IP).

Appendix A: Evaluation Criteria

Expressions of Interest (EOIs) will be reviewed by the Supercluster and external experts as needed to determine eligibility based on the criteria outlined in the EOI template and in this Program Guide. EOIs will also be evaluated based on the potential to meet the criteria outlined below and readiness for funding.

Full Project Proposals submitted through the Capacity Building Pilot Program are evaluated by an independent peer review process. Full Project Proposals are assessed on their merit, capabilities of the team, potential benefits and impact, and on the soundness of the financial and management plan. Proposals will be evaluated against the following four equally weighted evaluation categories:



Project Proposal



Ecosystem Impact



Team and Experience



Management and Finance

Applicants must also refer to and adhere to the Co-investment Guidelines, Data Strategy and Intellectual Property Strategy which will be available on the [website](#).



Project Proposal

① *Quality of the proposed project*

- Does the project clearly articulate the rationale for addressing a current or future need for developing digital talent?
- Has the proposal demonstrated that this project complements and augments current programs and activities for developing digital talent in the innovation ecosystem?
- Is there a clear articulation of benefits to the ecosystem of this project?
- Is the timeline realistic and achievable?

② *Relevance of the proposed project to the program*

- Does the proposal clearly articulate specific, clearly defined objectives, milestones and outcomes to be achieved by the end of the project?
- Is the proposal aligned with the priorities of the Supercluster and this program?



Ecosystem Impact

③ *Job creation, skills and capacity development*

- Does the project proposal describe how it will create a sustainable approach in terms of a highly skilled talent pool, such as identifying new skills and training development opportunities?

④ *Benefits to the ecosystem*

- Has the proposal articulated how the proposed project will have positive impacts (social, environmental, commercial) on various stakeholder groups outside of the immediate consortium participants?
- If applicable, has the proposal outlined and demonstrated a sustainability plan (e.g., expansion, new partners, financial). For example, does the plan include resources and activities dedicated to ensuring the benefits from the project extend to groups outside of the consortium?



Team and Experience

Applicants must demonstrate that the project team and the consortium have the ability, experience and expertise to deliver on the project.

⑤ *Quality of the consortium*

- Does the composition of the consortium (SME, academia, customer, multi-national enterprise, etc.) represent a holistic approach to collaboration?
- Does each consortium participant have an appropriate level of engagement (role, investment, etc.) in the project?
- As a consortium, do the participants possess the necessary and complementary qualifications to meet the project objectives and results?
- Individually, do consortium participants have the necessary experience to carry out their tasks?

⑥ *Added value through cooperation*

- Does the project benefit from being done cooperatively, or better yet, is cooperation required?
- Is there material involvement from ecosystem partners that will strengthen and foster long term partnerships between innovation ecosystem participants (e.g., post-secondary institutions, not-for-profit organizations, government, industry)?
- Does the project demonstrate clear sharing of risks, costs, know-how, and benefits?
- Will the collaboration result in outputs greater than what could be achieved by any individual participant?
- Do all participants stand to benefit proportionately from the project results?



Management and Finance

The applicants must demonstrate a sound management plan and that the budgeted costs comply with the Co-Investment Guidelines, using the provided template. Note that the lead organization of the consortium or others contributing resources will undergo a financial viability assessment based on the following:

⑦ *Realistic and clearly defined project management and planning*

- Does the project plan include a realistic timeline in relation to the tasks and objectives?
- Are key issues, project objectives and outputs fully identified and formulated?
- Are the goals clearly identified and logically set out through well-described work packages?
- Are the milestones and deliverables clearly identified? Do they allow for monitoring of progress, implementation, including go/no-go decisions?
- Are the roles and responsibilities of each consortium participant clearly described and differentiated in the work plan?
- Is the project management structure well described? Is there an appropriate and capable structure for implementing the project (e.g. decision making, tracking, dispute resolution, ensuring progress, reporting, etc.)?
- Does the project manager have relevant multi-partner project management experience?
- Do all participants have a well-defined and relevant role in the project?

⑧ *Reasonable cost structure*

- Is the cost breakdown well structured and does it correspond to the tasks and activities to be implemented by each participant?
- Are the costs reasonable for the proposed work as a whole and for each of the participants?
- Are the project costs clearly justified?
- Are subcontracting costs appropriately justified?