



DIGITAL
TECHNOLOGY
SUPERCLUSTER

PROGRAM GUIDE



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COVID-19 Program

The Government of Canada is committed to mobilize Canadian industry in support of the health and safety of Canadians by addressing COVID–19 effects through Canadian innovation. COVID–19 has created an exceptional situation in Canada and around the world, calling for exceptional responses and innovation. The Digital Technology Supercluster welcomes the opportunity to deliver innovative solutions through an expedited delivery of projects developed and actioned by our Members.

Through the COVID-19 Program, the Digital Technology Supercluster (‘the Supercluster’) will invest up to \$60 million to improving the health and safety of Canadians and Canada’s ability to address issues created by the COVID-19 outbreak, as well as building expertise and capacity to address and anticipate issues that may arise in future health crises.

Through the COVID-19 Program, the Digital Technology Supercluster, will invest in projects that support the development, deployment, scale-up and adoption of products, services or technologies that help governments, communities, employers and individual Canadians address exceptional needs created by, and effects of, COVID-19. We will build on Canada’s pre-existing strengths and bring together new teams to solve the most critical problems we are facing at this pressing and unprecedented time.

The Supercluster will align investments with critical needs identified by the Government of Canada and work to coordinate funding with other federal and provincial funding programs so that, together, we deliver digital solutions in this extraordinary environment.



1 Areas of Focus

The Program will focus on six pressing areas of need:

1. **Health system.** Technologies that support our health systems, hospitals and healthcare workers to effectively manage resources to provide high quality care to patients. Examples may include clinical decision support tools, human resource and supply chain management and first responder supports.
2. **Community health.** Technology solutions that enable Canadians, their families and friends to access care in their communities, in their homes and/or in remote locations, and to connect and support each other. Examples may include virtual care and digital solutions for rapid screening, testing, monitoring and delivery of care to remote communities.
3. **Safe Living.** Enabling technologies for Canadians to live safely and securely, and to access the support and resources they need, whether at home or at work. Examples may include secure messaging, virtual health programs for both physical and mental health needs, specialized resources for those struggling with substance abuse, work safe programs or delivery of food, medication and supplies.
4. **Diagnostics and Therapeutics.** Platforms that support sharing of data, research and scientific developments and for support clinical trials in the drive to discover and deploy new vaccines, diagnostic tests and therapies for COVID-19.
5. **Emergency Response:** Tools and technologies that can be used to predict, plan and respond to any subsequent COVID-19 waves and other crises situations. Examples may include population level predictive analytics, modelling tools and simulations using virtual and augmented reality with data from multiple sources.

We will also accept other technology solutions that can address the effects of COVID-19.

The Program will focus on projects that will deliver immediate impacts (< 6 months) and time horizons up to 18 months. These opportunities are expected to be a combination of impactful technology development and deployment initiatives.



2 Eligible Projects

Who is eligible to apply?

The Supercluster will invest in projects that align with the Areas of Focus described above, namely projects that will deliver digital technology solutions to improve the health and safety of Canadians and Canada's ability to address the COVID-19 outbreak, as well as future health crises.

1. Any Member or Associate of the Supercluster may submit an idea for consideration.
2. A Project Proposal for the COVID-19 Program must be led by a Supercluster Member or Associate who will become a Member upon selection of the project.
3. Projects must have experienced and capable project management.
4. Collaboration is core to the Program. However, in some exceptional situations, the Supercluster may invest in single company initiatives. Potential partners and/or sub-contractors who will be involved in the execution of the project should be identified. The Supercluster will help organizations identify potential partners.

How does funding work?

1. Successful projects will receive funding under the Program. In most cases, funding will be provided to the lead organization.
2. Program funds are limited.
3. Refer to the [COVID-19 Co-investment Guidelines](#) for information on eligible costs (only eligible costs can be funded). These guidelines may change as the Program evolves.

Due to the extraordinary nature of the COVID-19 environment, calling for extraordinary measures to support organizations who can deliver effective solutions, the Supercluster may apply special measures to expedite the delivery of project outcomes and /or to enable organizations to participate in the Program.



3 Application Process

The proposal development, review and selection process will be fast, expedient, balanced and diligent. We want industry proposals that demonstrate the strongest likelihood of delivering meaningful outcomes, to advance quickly and deliver results to Canadians.

Here are the first steps:

1. Any Member or Associate of the Supercluster may submit a project idea through [this link](#) on the Supercluster website.
2. There will be a continuous intake of project ideas. There is no specific call date to due date for submissions.
3. Funds are limited and so the best proposals that arrive earliest will be reviewed first.
4. The Supercluster will conduct an initial review of every idea and work with the proponent to determine if the idea can be developed into a proposal. Only those ideas that meet these first steps can be invited to submit a proposal and supporting budget.

What are the next steps?

1. Members or consortia with qualifying ideas that meet the first steps noted above will be invited to submit a proposal and budget in the format established by the Supercluster for the Program. The link to the proposal and budget templates will be provided upon invitation.
2. By submitting a proposal, all organizations involved in the proposed project agree to:
 - adhere to the Supercluster's [Intellectual Property \(IP\) Strategy](#) and [Data Strategy](#) found here;
 - allow the Supercluster to disclose the list of participants, project investment, keywords and a summary of the project; and
 - adhere to the Supercluster Charter of Values outlined in their Membership and/or Participation Agreement.



4

Evaluation

After a Proposal has been submitted using the templates noted above, the Proposal will be reviewed and evaluated subject to due diligence through the following steps:

1. **Project Selection Committee:** Proposals will be evaluated by a Project Selection Committee (PSC) with a majority representation of at least three experts who are independent of the Supercluster.
 2. **Proposal Evaluation:** The PSC will meet on a regular basis, and as needed, to review and evaluate the submitted Proposals. Reviews will be prioritized based on impact and time sensitivity. The PSC will evaluate and score Proposals against the criteria outlined below. Additional information may be requested from the Proposal team. The PSC will make selection recommendations to the Supercluster.
 3. **Selection.** The Supercluster makes the final decision on selected projects.
 4. **Contracting.** Proposals selected are required to enter into a simplified COVID-19 Master Project Agreement which sets out the terms and conditions related to funding, including reporting and compliance obligations. In most cases, the Master Project Agreement will be between the Supercluster and the lead organization and funding for the project will be provided to the lead organization.
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Evaluation Criteria (Refer to Appendix A for details)

1. **COVID –19 Impact and Jobs (40%):** applicability to the COVID-19 environment, sustaining and growing SMEs and jobs.
2. **Team and Execution Plan (40%):** quality of the project team, clear and realistic project plan, reasonable cost structure.
3. **Technology Solution (20%):** technical achievability, data management plans and clarity of Intellectual Property required.



Appendix A: Evaluation Criteria

COVID-19 Impact and Jobs (40%)

Impact

- The project has a strong rationale for addressing a substantive current or future need to address the impacts of COVID-19.
- The project will deliver solutions to the intended customers with a clear value proposition.

Jobs

- The project will create and/or sustain jobs.
- The project provides opportunity to sustain and/or grow SMEs..

Team and Execution Plan (40%)

Quality of the project team

- The team has the required skills, experience, capacity and drive to execute successfully.
- Each participant has an appropriate level of engagement and benefit/risk sharing in the project.

Clear and realistic project plan

- The proposal articulates achievable deliverables and outcomes during and after the project.
- The costs, including subcontracting arrangements, are reasonable and justified.

Technology Solution (20%)

- The proposed approach is technically sound making use of appropriate technologies and established standards.
- The proposed technical developments are achievable within the defined budget and timeframe.
- The necessary background and foreground IP considerations are outlined for use during and after the project.



Appendix B: Feasibility Assessments

The purpose of a feasibility assessment is to test and/or evaluate if a technology or idea is appropriate for a large-scale project. Through a feasibility assessment the Supercluster staff, will support and guide industry partners in the evaluation of the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of the technology solution contemplated by a project, including the scalability of the technology and its application to specific customer or user group(s), or other elements of a proposal such as the size and scope of a potential market to further understand and anticipate the commercial outcomes of project.

Feasibility assessments must be industry-led and may be carried out by a single organization or a consortium. Academic institutions and not-for-profit organizations may be part of the consortium.

Feasibility assessments will be considered on a continuous basis.

Evaluation and Selection

At any stage of the development or evaluation of a project concept or proposal, Supercluster management, the proposal support specialist or the Project Selection Committee can identify a gap (in technology readiness, market scalability or other success factors) and determine that a feasibility assessment will help close the identified gap in making the proposed project more feasible or ambitious.

- The Supercluster CEO will be asked to closely examine the opportunity for a feasibility assessment against the following criteria:
 - alignment of the project's outcome to the purpose of the relevant program;
 - strength and reliability of the project team;
 - strength of the project plan; and
 - relevance of a feasibility assessment to the overall success of the proposed project.
- The CEO, in consultation with other members of the Supercluster leadership team and external advisors as may be appropriate, will approve, reject and/ or set the terms of a feasibility study.
- A feasibility assessment may be pre-approved as a step toward a bigger project proposal.
- The maximum funding for a feasibility assessment is \$250,000. Funding will be provided to the lead organization.
- The Chair of the Program Investment Committee will provide guidance to Supercluster management in respect of feasibility assessments.