



DIGITAL
TECHNOLOGY
SUPERCLUSTER

CAPACITY BUILDING STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

JULY 2020



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Strategic Initiatives

We develop strategic initiatives through competitive calls for projects. Each selected project will be both independently impactful and fit within the broader theme of the call so that the end product is a large-scale systemic solution. Our strategic Initiatives fit in the following three themes:

Skills	Leadership	Opportunity
Job-ready digital skills to support a resilient, adaptable workforce.	Diverse, creative leaders who develop ground-breaking digital ventures.	Digitally-enabled communities able to access the benefits of digital tech.

1 Skills

Rapid Skilling Initiative

Digital technology continues to change how we learn, work, play and connect, and COVID-19 has accelerated these changes both locally and globally. Going forward, nearly every business from every industry will be a technology-enabled business. This means digital skills are not only valuable, they are essential.

It is becoming clear that the workforce of the Digital Age needs a certain digital dexterity, adaptability and the capacity to acquire new skills quickly in order to thrive. Technology changes rapidly, and people need the tools to keep up with those changes. The Rapid Skilling Initiative is designed to help drive a strategic, systems-based response to the challenge of rapidly reskilling and upskilling workers to navigate digital transformation and economic disruption, such as through COVID-19.

Priority Areas:

Under the Rapid Skilling Initiative, we are seeking projects that fit within at least one of the following priority areas:

1. **Workforce transition:** Leverage technology to help people get jobs
 - a. Competency-based job matching systems that leverage technology to support un- or under- employed workers affected by COVID-19
 - b. Pre-employment tools and programs for underrepresented groups, such as mental health support or connection with mentors and peer networks in digital industries

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- c. Work-integrated learning and bridge-to-work opportunities

2. **Lifelong learning:** Help people develop digital skills

- a. Online or experiential learning opportunities that leverage technology to offer competency-based learning for mid-career workers to reskill or upskill with industry-relevant digital training and development
- b. Scalable content and tools that can be used by employers across a range of industries to provide digital reskilling or upskilling for their employees or potential employees
- c. Knowledge transfer that enriches and expands the canon of digital skills and knowledge from other backgrounds or industries, i.e. through the introduction or integration of design thinking or Traditional Knowledge

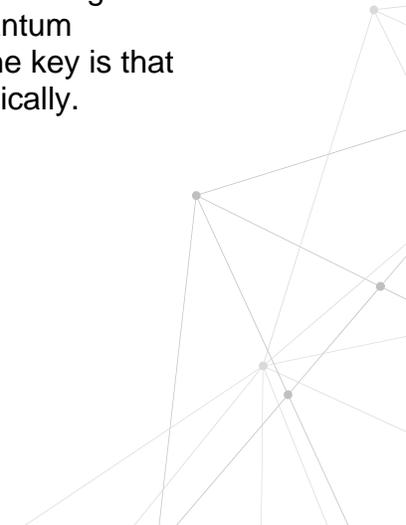
3. **Standards and tools:** Develop a sustainable skilling system

- a. Leveraging tools and technologies to serve the needs of the rapid skilling system, including secure digital IDs, experiential learning platforms, blockchain-based credential verification, applied AI and ML, AR/VR, and more
- b. Diversity and inclusion best-practices, frameworks, assessments and tools that can be used across a range of Supercluster projects and initiatives
- c. Competency frameworks that help to minimize the time and cost required to move people into new roles and utilize and inform standards to ensure relevance across industries

Adult, mid-career or employer-led training is often unregulated and lacks universal standards that are applicable across industries. In all cases, projects will work to develop common skills standards which support the quality, verifiability and portability of employee learning and development and are accessible from anywhere. This will be part of the Integration Work Package, which connects each selected project with the Rapid Skilling Initiative.

What are “digital skills”?

Digital skills enable people to leverage technology. This encompasses digital literacy, computer science, specialized technical skills such as quantum computing, or the use of digital tools to enable a non-digital job. The key is that the project proposal shows industry demand for those skills, specifically.





Exploratory Projects

These are smaller scale projects where we explore novel concepts and new approaches for developing the skills, leadership and opportunities that lead to world-class talent. We will also fund Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and bridge experiences that help people and companies explore digital technology roles associated with emerging technologies. We expect to co-invest between \$50K and \$500K over a one-year maximum period and up to 50% of the total project cost. Our current priorities are:

- Diversity and inclusion best-practices, frameworks, assessments and tools that can be used across a range of Supercluster projects and initiatives
- Exploration of new or novel approaches to developing digital skills, leadership and opportunities in rural or remote communities
- Experiential learning opportunities that extend the benefits of Technology Leadership projects to underrepresented groups and/or communities
- Strategic approaches to growing digital venture leadership including mentorship opportunities and supports for launching innovative new products

Terms

- Call opens July 2020
- Up to \$10M available for co-investment
- Continuous intake



2 Leadership

Digital Venture Leadership

Developing strong leadership is core to the mandate of the Supercluster. Building globally competitive digital platforms requires creative, resilient leaders with bold, diverse mindsets for growth.

Through the Digital Venture Leadership initiative, we aim to inclusively develop people with the skills and mindsets to advance today's organizations with creative, socially impactful digital venture development. Digital ventures can be new companies, new products or innovations within companies or new approaches that leverage technology to solve major challenges. Digital Venture Leaders are design-oriented, creative thinkers who see opportunity in challenge. They are inclusive, forward-looking and seek to make a positive social impact.

Under the Digital Venture Leadership initiative, we are seeking projects that fit within at least one of the following priority areas:

1. **Venture Design:** Design skills and resources
 - a. Tools and educational materials that leverage design thinking, innovation best-practices and digital venture design for non-digital leaders
 - b. Systems for incorporating innovation processes and best-practices at scale across industries
 - c. Collaborative learning and innovation models that develop digital venture leaders such as workshops, incubation or venture acceleration
2. **Creative Leadership:** Building a leader's mindset
 - a. Tools, training and resources that help leaders cultivate a growth mindset, develop risk tolerance and foster creativity
 - b. Mentor networks that celebrate and connect diverse leaders across industries and global markets
 - c. Support and training for people managers to foster growth mindsets in their teams and organizations
3. **Inclusive Growth:** Equitable access to leadership development
 - a. Entrepreneurship, design and leadership training and opportunities designed by and/or for people from underrepresented groups
 - b. Knowledge transfer that enriches entrepreneurship or digital leadership through the inclusion of Indigenous ways of knowing
 - c. Tools and resources that enable organizations to build more inclusive leadership pathways for employees

Terms

- For July 2020 call, open for Exploratory projects only



3 Opportunity

Regional Growth Centres

Economic development in the digital economy gets concentrated in a few high-tech cities. For example, five cities in the US are responsible for 90% of the growth attributed to the innovation economy between the years 2005 and 2017. Thus, the Regional Growth Centres strategic initiative is focused on extending economic opportunities into BC's regions through innovative digital growth centres.

Under the Regional Growth Centres initiative, we are seeking projects that fit within at least one of the following priority areas:

1. **Digital Readiness:** Helping communities attract and leverage digital investment
 - a. Digital literacy and digital skills training for internet and technology users getting access for the first time
 - b. Tools and resources for rural and remote communities to access resource by consolidating, supporting or navigating other funding opportunities
 - c. Infrastructure and tools for communities leveraging technology in innovative ways to support economic and social development in their regions
2. **Strengthening Communities:** Building resilient centres for growth based on the strengths of the region
 - a. Digital entrepreneurship training and support for individuals to build innovative digital businesses by leveraging technology
 - b. Support for industries to accelerate digital adoption as a means to achieve economic development and education/job creation opportunities
 - c. Infrastructure such as physical space, labs and structure that enable training, jobs and innovation in rural and remote communities

Terms

- Launch 2020/21
- Contact buildcapacity@digitalsupercluster.ca if you have an idea in this area that could inform our preparation and planning