

Frequently asked questions

Background

Over the next ten years, Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster is poised to create impact across Canada and around the world.

Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster will position Canada as a global leader in today's digital economy, using big data to address the biggest productivity, health and sustainability challenges facing Canadians and the world today — and ultimately advancing economic opportunities nationwide. Within just 10 years, we anticipate that Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster will invest more than \$1.4 billion, funding over 100 collaborative projects that involve more than 1,000 organizations across Canada. Our projections indicate that during this same timeframe our efforts will generate an estimated \$15 billion in incremental GDP and 50,000 new jobs. The economic benefits of this collaboration will be felt from coast to coast.

Contents

1. Why Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster?	2
What is a supercluster?	2
What are the top sectors in BC?	3
How can startups get involved?	4
2. The Consortium	4
Who is part of Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster?	4
Why are there companies outside of the tech sector in the consortium?	6
What is the vision of the consortium?	7
How will the consortium use the funding?	7
3. Benefits	7
What are the Supercluster's economic benefits to Canadians?	7
4. General	8
What is the Innovation Superclusters Initiative?	8
Who can I contact to learn more?	8

1. Why Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster?

What is a supercluster?

A supercluster is an innovation hotbed that is home to a strong industrial cluster, or clusters, linked through their shared reliance on specialized inputs, including technologies, talent and infrastructure. Superclusters have:

- strong and numerous linkages across sectors, and between firms, public and academic research assets;
- a strong brand and competitive advantage that translates into global recognition and impact, and the ability to attract talent and investment across highly innovative industries; and
- exceptional performance, including an outsize impact on job creation and GDP.

Why BC?

BC is home to a vibrant, diverse and successful technology-enabled economy that has been building momentum since the 1960s.

- BC's technology sector generates \$26 billion in annual revenue and employs 150,000 people, making it the fastest-growing technology sector and workforce in Canada.
- BC has a significant geographic advantage. As the Canadian gateway to both Asia – one of the world's fastest-growing economies – and the Cascadia Innovation Corridor, BC enjoys access to international talent, research, capital and distribution.
- Microsoft, Amazon, Boeing, Cisco, Disney, GE, Sony and Electronic Arts are just a few of the global brands that are increasingly attracted to the province; Boeing, Finning and SAP have set up global analytics centres of excellence in BC.
- Three out of five Canadian “unicorns” (tech companies worth more than \$1 billion) call BC home. Top-grossing films (such as Star Wars) and games (like Nintendo) choose BC for their visual effects production – a testament to the province's world-class creative and digital media talent.
- BC universities produce world-class research and talent. Our province's post-secondary institutions attract over \$800 million a year in research funding; since 2001, they have been awarded over \$1.2 billion in funding for research infrastructure. BC has the potential to create a global supercluster, giving Canada a competitive advantage on the world stage by applying its strengths in digital technology to industries and creating the digital jobs of the future. To learn more, [read the full report](#).

What are the top sectors in BC?

BC is an industry leader in the following sectors, all of which play a large role in Canada's economy as a whole:

- Mining
- Forestry
- Health and Life Sciences
- Digital Technology
- Transportation and Infrastructure

This diversity of industry sectors has contributed to the economic strength of the province, which for the past three years has led the nation in GDP growth. Across these industries, the common factor is the emergence of data as a resource to drive innovation, productivity and global competitiveness.

Initially, the Digital Technology Supercluster will focus on industries with the greatest potential to leverage digital technology. These industries will build strong technology platforms that can transform

Canada's economy for the better - leading to greater sustainability, growing exports and competitive advantage.

How can startups get involved?

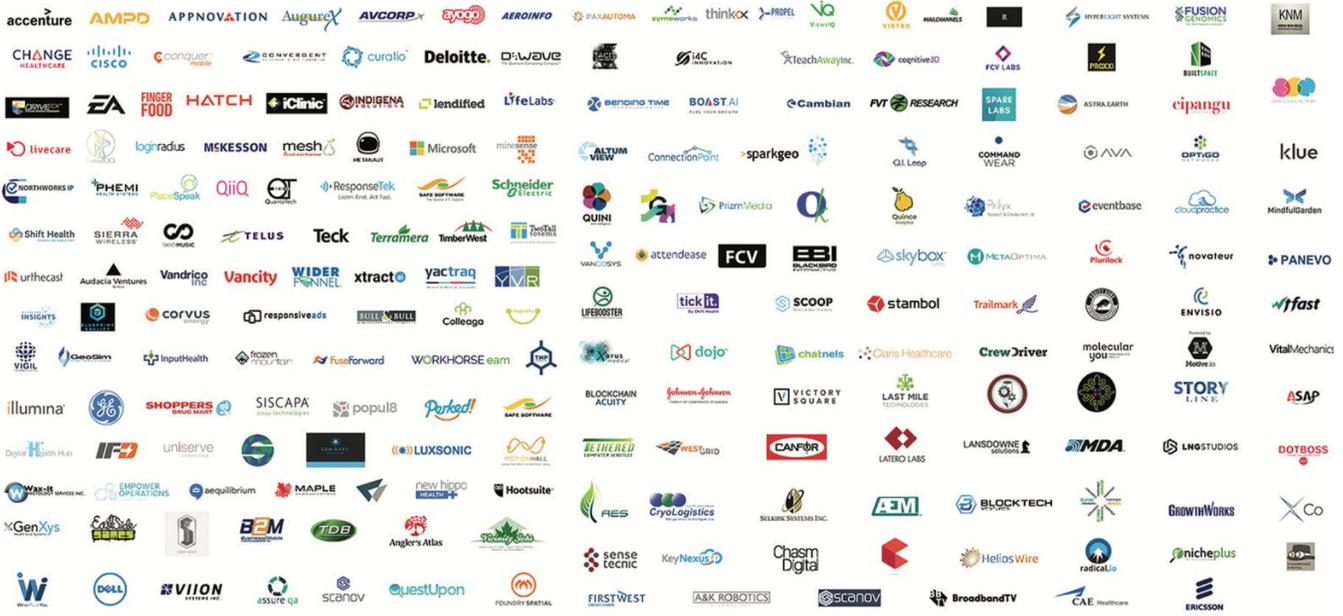
The consortium includes a number of startups. We encourage Canada-based startups to get involved in the conversation.

2. The Consortium

Who is part of Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster?

The consortium includes founding members TELUS, Microsoft, Teck, Change Healthcare, Providence Health Care, and the University of British Columbia. Since being short-listed as one of nine applicants, a number of new members have joined, including Shoppers Drug Mart, Canfor, GE Digital, The Terry Fox Research Institute, University Health Network ("UHN") - Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, SickKids and over 200 other organizations and post-secondary institutions, resulting in over \$500 million in committed funding. For a full list of supporters, [click here](#) and/or see page seven.

Private-Sector Enterprises



Post-Secondary Institutions, Public-Sector and Not-for-Profit Organizations



Why are there companies outside of the tech sector in the consortium?

Initially, Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster will focus on the following three industries: health, natural resources, and industrial applications.



Examples of companies within these sectors include:

- **Natural resources:** Teck, Canfor, Timberwest
- **Precision health:** Telus, Shoppers Drug Mart, Change Healthcare, Illumina
- **Industrial applications:** Microsoft, Avcorp, GE Digital

CROSS-SECTORAL LEADERS AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Digital Transformation for Natural Resources	Digital Transformation for Health and Biotech	Digital Transformation for Industrial
		
Data Visualization		
Data Analytics		
Data Collections		

What is the vision of the consortium?

In a world rapidly moving towards a data-centric and digital economy, data is the new critical resource. For Canada to succeed in this economy, we must be faster, smarter and more collaborative in inventing, developing and applying digital technologies. The volume and complexity of data is growing exponentially, providing opportunities for Canadian companies of all sizes to create additional value through their data and business processes.

Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster will focus on data collection, analysis and visualization to scale Canadian innovation companies and drive the competitiveness of firms through the use of data. Increasingly complex data requires increasingly sophisticated visualization tools, equipping us to better understand the data and use it to make smarter business decisions.

Starting with a focus on the west coast, the Supercluster will engage companies, innovators, and technology hubs to make the digital future a competitive advantage for Canada.

The Supercluster is anchored by more than two hundred companies including major tech players; fast-growing SMEs; start-ups, major industry players in natural resources, healthcare and transportation/industrial; all backed by twenty-five post-secondary institutions including UBC, SFU, UVic, UNBC, BCIT and Emily Carr.

How will the consortium use the funding?

The Supercluster will leverage both private funding and funding from the ISI program to invest in projects and initiatives that will further Canada's technology capabilities and industry applications in digital. By bringing together consortium players, these initiatives will spur collaboration, connect to customer applications, accelerate projects and ultimately drive export success for Canadian technology companies.

3. Benefits

What are the economic benefits of the Digital Technology Supercluster for Canadians?

Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster will have both nationwide and global impact. The goals outlined by the Supercluster align with the ISI program objectives:

- **Excellence.** The Supercluster will attract cutting-edge research, investment and talent. This portfolio of future-focused digital technologies will attract the leadership talent, intellectual property and financial capital we'll need to successfully meet industry challenges in key sectors of our economy.
- **Investment.** The Supercluster will increase investment in BC and Canada, with a special focus on business expenditures on R&D ("BERD") – ultimately contributing to Canada's innovation competitiveness.

- **Commercialization.** As digital transformation opens over \$200 billion worth of global opportunities, the Supercluster will have a strategic commercialization portfolio aimed at attractive market segments. The Supercluster will result in the establishment of new world-leading companies, and the commercialization of new products, processes and services that position firms to scale their operations, integrate into global value chains, and ultimately become global market leaders.
- **Collaboration.** Collaboration among technology solution providers will accelerate the creation of novel technologies that build competitive advantage. These synergies are initially focused around industry issues, but the solutions created will have broad applications across industries and markets. The Supercluster will foster a critical mass of ambitious, export-oriented firms, which will benefit from collaborations with other private, academic and public-sector organizations. We will have a client base of at least 500 members and associates working through the Supercluster, which will operate as a BC-based non-profit entity.

4. General

What is the Innovation Superclusters Initiative?

The Federal Government of Canada's Innovation Superclusters Initiative will allocate a small number of high-value, strategic investments in the form of non-repayable contributions to industry-led consortia through a two-phase application process. For more information, [click here](#).

Who can I contact to learn more?

For more information, please email or call the Digital Technology Supercluster Consortium.

General Information:

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Join in the conversation with #DigitalSupercluster.

Bill Tam, Co-Chair of Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster Consortium, is available for interviews upon request. Please email kreid@switchboardpr.com to coordinate.