



CANADA'S DIGITAL
TECHNOLOGY
SUPERCLUSTER



Capacity-Building Program Guide

December 2018

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 other 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, driving economic growth and enhancing 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.

Capacity Building Program Objectives

The Capacity Building program is focused on developing digital talent and scaling companies with the following specific objectives:

- a. 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.
- b. Scale SMEs by providing the resources for growth and increasing supply chain links among key actors to enhance access to global markets for Canadian companies with technology capabilities.

Pilot Program Parameters

- o Up to \$2M available for the Pilot
- o Co-investment of at least 25% is required from project partners and/or other sources; the investment from the Supercluster will be up to 75% of the total project costs
- o Total project budgets are expected in the range of \$100,000 - \$500,000 for the Pilot

- Project term is expected to range between 6 - 24 months
- Projects are incremental and are not currently resourced or supported by other mechanisms

Eligibility

We select projects for using a competitive process. In order to be eligible for this program, projects must demonstrate the following:

- The lead applicant of the consortium ‘championing’ the project must be a Member or an Associate of the Supercluster
- 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

Application Process

There is a two-step application process for the Capacity Building Pilot program, which includes:

1. An Expression of Interest (EOI) outlining the project concept to help assess the eligibility of the proposed project; and
2. A Proposal providing further details on the project plan and team with an accompanying budget.

Expressions of Interest and Proposals must be submitted directly to the Digital Technology Supercluster through the following email address:

xx@digitalsupercluster.ca.

1. Expression of Interest

Expressions of Interest must provide a brief outline of the proposed project which addresses the eligibility criteria. An EOI template is available on the Digital Technology Supercluster website (www.digitalsupercluster.ca) or by contacting xx@digitalsupercluster.ca.

During the period from the call for projects to the published EOI submission deadline, a subset of the Supercluster team will be available to answer questions and help you elaborate a potentially viable EOI.

Expressions of Interest will be reviewed by the Digital Technology Supercluster to determine eligibility.

2. Proposal

Instructions for submitting proposals are available on the Digital Technology Supercluster website and must be used. Detailed explanations of each section of the proposal are included with the form. Proposals must address the evaluation criteria described in Appendix 1 of this Proposal Guide.

An Excel budget template must also be provided as part of the proposal. The template will be provided by the Digital Technology Supercluster. Please see funding guidelines for guidance on the budget and a description of eligible costs.

3. Review Process

Proposals will be assessed against Appendix 1 of this Program Guide. Proposals will be sent for external review by reviewers with expertise relevant to the proposal. Management and financial due diligence of the budget will be done by the Supercluster. The Review Panel evaluates and ranks the proposals. Final funding recommendations will then be made by the Digital Technology Supercluster and ratified by the Board of Directors. The Digital Technology 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 proposals are assessed against the evaluation criteria. Following the full decision process, all applicants, whether recommended for funding or not, will receive written feedback on their proposal.

Appendix 1: Evaluation Criteria and Guidelines

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals submitted through the Capacity Building program are evaluated by an independent peer review process. Proposals are assessed on their quality, potential for building talent or creating larger companies, and on the soundness of the financial and management plan. Proposals will be evaluated against the following four equally weighted evaluation categories:

1. Project proposal
2. Ecosystem impact
3. Team and experience
4. Management and finance

Applicants must also refer to and adhere to the Funding Guidelines, Data Strategy and Intellectual Property Strategy which are available on the website.

Please see the proposal form for a description of the requirements for each section.

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 and scale companies?
- Has the proposal demonstrated 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?

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 Digital Technology 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?

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?
- 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 'actors' (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?
- Does one participant stand to benefit disproportionately from the project results?

Management and finance

The applicants must demonstrate a sound management plan and that the budgeted costs comply with the funding guidelines. A budget for the project is required using the template be provided. Note that the lead organization of the consortium or others contributing resources will undergo a financial viability. Assessment will be based on the following questions:

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?