



Program Call Guide

Future of Mining & Energy

Technology Leadership

Disclaimer

This document provides information about the fit and eligibility of proposed projects that will be considered for DIGITAL's co-investment for the Future of Mining and Energy call, supported by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED). This guidance does not bind DIGITAL or ISED and is subject to change at any time based on guidance from ISED or DIGITAL's Board of Directors.

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Introduction

At DIGITAL, innovation is more than technology – it's about building meaningful partnerships that drive real-world impact. Since 2018, we have supported 185+ projects with a total investment of \$767M, bringing together over 1,000 partners across industry, academia, and government to tackle some of Canada's most pressing challenges. By bridging perspectives and cultivating collaboration, we accelerate solutions that strengthen industries, empower communities, and position Canada as a global leader in the digital economy.

At DIGITAL, we are building a future where Canadian industries and innovators lead globally, and Canadians benefit from the driving prosperity and growth for Canadians through technology products and services that create impact at home and around the world.

DIGITAL's Co-Investment Foundational Principles

At DIGITAL, we are driving industry-led, commercially focused innovation through the three core principles:

1. **Collaborative Innovation:** Partners work together to create new solutions that cannot be achieved alone, sharing knowledge, risk, financial investment, and benefits.
2. **Co-investment:** Consortium partners, including DIGITAL, share the total investment required for the project.
3. **Demand-Driven:** DIGITAL invests in technology solutions that solve market-validated problems with scaling potential in Canada and abroad.

The Future of Mining and Energy

As part of our ongoing commitment to drive innovation, economic competitiveness and sustainability, DIGITAL’s Future of Mining and Energy call for proposals provides support for the development and commercialization of novel technology solutions in the mining and energy sector.

The Opportunity

Canada has a great opportunity to lead in meeting the growing global demand for metals, minerals, and energy products. By advancing cutting-edge digital technologies, we can strengthen domestic capacity and speed up the delivery of Canadian products to global markets. With these sectors driving a significant portion of Canada’s merchandise exports, now is the time to diversify our export portfolio. Canada’s mining and energy sectors are poised to lead the global market through innovation. We are ready.

DIGITAL will **co-invest \$22 million** of funds from the federal Global Innovation Clusters program, alongside industry, that will result in more than \$60 million of new investment in innovative digital technology solutions. By co-investing in 4 to 6 bold and ambitious projects focused on unlocking the opportunities in the mining and energy sectors, Canadian innovators will seize new commercial opportunities driving toward domestic and international market adoption.

Collectively, the successful projects will contribute to building a Canadian technology innovation ecosystem through the following anticipated results:



40+
Canadian-Owned IP Assets



10
Companies Scaled



10+
Commercial Solutions



\$220M+
Revenue by 2030
(50%+ from Global Exports)



200+
New jobs in the mining and energy sectors

Areas of Investment

DIGITAL will co-invest in projects within the mining and energy sectors, prioritizing initiatives that **strengthen Canadian supply chains, boost production efficiency, and accelerate speed to market, with a commitment to fostering a sustainable energy future**. These investments position Canada as a global leader in resource development while advancing inclusive economic growth. The following areas of investment outline the specific focus for this call:

- **Enhancing Resource Efficiency and Sustainability** through innovative digital technologies that increase the efficiency of resource extraction and energy production. This could include solutions for optimizing energy consumption, asset characterization, reducing waste, improving water usage, and enhancing the sustainability of mining and energy operations including fleet management, and health and safety. The goal is to create scalable systems that support national supply chains, reduce reliance on imports, and speed up the delivery of materials to meet market demands.
- **Advancing Midstream Capabilities to Support Industrial Growth** by strengthening midstream processing infrastructure is key to enabling the re-industrialization required to support emerging technologies and the energy transition. By enhancing refining, processing, and material upgrading capabilities, the sector can improve value-added production, strengthen supply chains, and accelerate market readiness for a range of resources — including, but not limited to, critical minerals. The goal is to build a more resilient, efficient, and sustainable industrial base that meets growing global demand.
- **Accelerating Domestic Production and Export Readiness** through solutions that boost the domestic capacity for mining operations and energy production, with a focus on improving the speed and efficiency of production processes. This may involve digital innovations in extraction technologies, advanced materials processing, or renewable energy integration. The goal is to reduce production bottlenecks, shorten lead times, and strengthen local supply chains, enabling faster response to market demands both domestically and for export markets.
- **Strengthening Supply Chains Through Advanced Logistics and Digital Integration** by leveraging remote data access, data interoperability, and digital technologies like AI, blockchain, and IoT. These innovations enhance the transparency, efficiency, and resilience of Canadian supply chains in the mining and energy sectors. The goal is to streamline logistics, improve resource traceability, and utilize data analytics for predictive maintenance and inventory management, ultimately reducing delays, lowering costs, and accelerating time to market.

Planned Outcomes

The successful execution of projects within this initiative will catalyze transformative change across Canada's mining and energy sectors, delivering significant, long-term benefits. These outcomes will generate substantial value for Canadian industries and communities, while strengthening Canada's position in global markets. By fostering innovation and sustainability, the projects will enhance Canada's competitiveness, drive economic growth, and create new job opportunities, supporting a resilient and thriving future.

- **Support Canada's Energy Transition:** Drive a low-carbon energy ecosystem by adopting innovative technologies across the energy and mining sectors, reducing environmental impact while boosting economic growth and industry resilience.
- **Increased Production Efficiency:** Enhanced operational performance, reduced costs, and optimized processes, leading to greater productivity and profitability for Canadian industries.
- **Global Competitiveness:** Boosted Canada's competitive position in international markets through innovative solutions that increase export potential and market access.

Economic Reconciliation

Economic reconciliation is more than a concept – it is a necessary shift in how Canada engages with Indigenous Nations and communities to address historical inequities and build a future rooted in shared prosperity. DIGITAL is committed to ensuring that reconciliation is reflected in its values of collaboration, integrity and accountability. In alignment with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), DIGITAL is integrating Indigenous rights, governance, and knowledge systems into investment strategies and industry partnerships.

Moving beyond consultation to meaningful collaboration, DIGITAL is committed to ensuring Indigenous communities are decision-makers, partners, and beneficiaries in economic development. This is aligned with DIGITAL's core commitment to active collaboration and creating shared value, ensuring that Indigenous communities are at the table as equal partners.

Economic reconciliation is not just an obligation – it is an opportunity to create a thriving, sustainable, and inclusive economy that reflects the full diversity of Canada. By embedding these commitments into industry practices, DIGITAL stands firmly for a future where collaboration, shared growth, and responsibility are at the heart of Indigenous and non-Indigenous partnerships driving innovation, prosperity, and true reconciliation.

Scope and Eligibility

DIGITAL will evaluate and select projects that aim to develop and commercialize novel technology solutions with early adopter customers, addressing well-defined problems in the [areas of investment](#).

Project Scope

Successful projects will focus on solving meaningful, market-driven problems that address key challenges in industries, communities, or the environment. Solutions must be innovative, impactful, and designed to deliver tangible benefits, creating long-term value while meeting critical needs and opportunities. Project scope should consider the following:

- **Measurable Outcomes:** The project must demonstrate clear value aligned with strengthening Canadian supply chains, boosting production efficiency, and accelerating speed to market. It should provide measurable outcomes such as improved cost efficiency, faster delivery times, and enhanced operational performance, illustrating how the proposed innovations can drive tangible benefits for Canadian industries and enhance their global competitiveness.
- **Scalability and Long-Term Viability:** The project should consider the scalability of the solution, demonstrating its potential for growth and adaptation to meet future demands. It should also outline a clear path for long-term sustainability and ongoing value creation beyond the project timeline.
- **Data Governance Considerations:** The project must establish robust data governance practices to ensure the responsible and ethical use of data. The project must address how data use will be managed, detail data ownership and access rights, confirm consent for data use, and outline terms for data sharing and commercialization, ensuring compliance with all relevant ethical and regulatory standards.
- **Market Access and Commercialization:** Project needs to address the development of strategies and technologies that enable proposed solutions to reach national and international markets more quickly and efficiently, including reducing barriers to market entry and enhancing export potential.
- **Workforce Training and Adoption:** Projects should consider adoption and training programs that focus on equipping workforce and communities with the skills necessary to adopt and integrate the proposed solutions.
- **Community Engagement:** Projects engaging with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities must do so in a meaningful and respectful manner. The project scope should outline how these communities are being involved throughout the project lifecycle, ensuring their perspectives are valued, their rights respected, and their participation is integrated into decision-making, planning, and implementation.

Project Eligibility

Successful project must meet specific criteria that ensure they are positioned for significant growth and commercialization. These projects should demonstrate strong leadership, sector relevance, and a clear path to scaling technologies that can drive economic impact.

- Project Size:** DIGITAL will co-invest in projects with a total cost of at least \$8 million. There is no maximum project size.
 - DIGITAL Funding will be calculated on a co-investment rate of 35% of the estimated Eligible Project Costs, as defined in the [Co-Investment Guidelines](#).
 - DIGITAL reserves the right to hold back up to 25% of the DIGITAL funding till the project is completed.
 - Eligibility of costs will be finalized via the claims processing.
- Project Term:** All projects must be completed **December 31, 2027**.
- IP Ownership & Requirements:** All improvements to existing Background IP and any newly created Foreground IP arising through DIGITAL's co-investment must be owned by Canadian entities that have substantial operations in Canada.
 - DIGITAL takes no interest in or rights to any Foreground IP arising from the project or the Background IP of any project participant but has an interest in ensuring adherence to the following IP principles and requirements:
- Technology Readiness Levels (TRL):** Projects with core solutions at TRL of 6 to 9 will be prioritized for selection due to program duration.
- Incremental Project:** Projects must be incremental to the regular business of the participating organizations, meaning that the project:
 - Is not already approved or in progress and should have distinct financial commitments. Continuation of previously funded DIGITAL projects is allowed.
 - Is not approved nor in progress and that financial commitments to it are distinct from investments that would have otherwise occurred.
 - Would not be possible without the participation of consortium partners
 - Is new or would not be undertaken at the same scope or scale without the co-investment provided by DIGITAL.
- The project cannot be a “designated project” or a “project” under the applicable federal environmental and impact assessment legislation.

Consortium Eligibility

Collaborative innovation involves working together to achieve something new that cannot be done alone. It includes building trusted relationships and sharing knowledge, risks, financial investments, and benefits. This approach leverages each consortium partner's strengths to drive innovation, overcome challenges, and explore new opportunities¹.

¹ A [Non-Disclosure Agreement Template](#) is available for use by consortia who wish to have a non-disclosure agreement in place during the application and contracting stages.

All types of organizations, including those located outside of Canada, are encouraged to participate in project consortia. All projects are expected to engage diverse and inclusive teams with meaningful participation of women, Indigenous Peoples and/or other underrepresented groups.

- Consortium Size:** A minimum of three organizations (excluding DIGITAL) must participate and contribute in a meaningful way, and the contributions do not need to be equal. Each organization is expected to have clear roles and responsibilities, deliverables and financial commitments.
- Consortium Composition:**
 - **Industry-led:** The lead organization is the primary product “owner” who will operate, commercialize, and continue developing the technology solution(s) arising from the project. This organization is responsible for overall project governance and reporting.
 - **For-Profit Partners:** Include at least two Canadian organizations that are contributing financially and seeking co-investment from DIGITAL. At least one of the for-profit partners must be a Canadian Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME)².
 - **Customer Representation (demand-drive):** Include at least one organization representing a potential customer and/or distribution channel partner of the new technology solution. In the mining and energy sectors, potential customer partners play a key role in ensuring market adoption of new technology by engaging in trials, providing feedback, developing case studies, supporting procurement, validating the solution, and ensuring regulatory compliance.
 - **Academic or research institution(s)** is not mandatory but is encouraged.
- Compliance with Economic and Financial Sanctions.** All participating organizations must be compliant with all economic or financial sanctions or trade embargoes imposed, administered or enforced from time to time by the Government of Canada.
- DIGITAL Membership Requirement.** All participating organizations must be Members or Associates at the time of application submission. For more information and to join, visit [here](#).

Co-Investment Eligibility

DIGITAL’s co-investment is subject to availability of funds from ISED for the Global Innovation Cluster program. DIGITAL will co-invest up to 35% of total eligible project costs that are incurred and paid by organization that are eligible to receive co-investment.

- Eligible Organizations³:** DIGITAL provides co-investment only to Members in good standing⁴, registered in Canada with substantial Canadian operations and who meet

² A for-profit organization registered in Canada with substantial Canadian operations and 499 or fewer employees.

³ Organizations must become DIGITAL Members before their project is contracted in order to receive co-investment.

⁴ Good standing means that the organization has adhered to DIGITAL’s Charter of Values, complied with their Master Project Agreement obligations on other projects, and has no outstanding payments due to DIGITAL.

the following criteria:

- for-profit organizations;
 - not-for-profit organizations whose funding and/or revenue is primarily (more than 50%) from private-sector or industry organizations;
 - non-federal Crown corporations whose funding is derived from commercial activities; or
 - Indigenous organizations.
- Co-Investment Limits:** No single organization may receive more than 80% of DIGITAL's project co-investment.
- Project Fees:** All Projects are required to pay Project Fees to DIGITAL. This fee will be calculated at five per cent (5%) of the total eligible project costs and will be deducted from DIGITAL's co-investment payments.

While publicly funded not-for-profits, post-secondary or research institutions, federal Crown corporations, and government departments/agencies cannot receive DIGITAL funds directly, they can contribute to projects or be funded by consortium partners.

International organizations (offshore companies and research organizations without a registered business presence in Canada) may also participate in projects but are not eligible for DIGITAL co-investment unless pre-approved as a foreign cost for an eligible member.

Application, Evaluating and Contracting

A rigorous, objective, and fair project selection process is critical to meeting the desired outcomes and impacts of DIGITAL and the federal Global Innovation Clusters program supported by funds from ISED.

Application Submissions

DIGITAL has a two-stage application process for this closed call:

1. **Expression of Interest (EOI).** Applicants must express their intention to participate in this call by completing [the online form](#). A committee consisting of DIGITAL staff will review the EOIs to confirm the project eligibility, readiness and fit. Successful applicants are invited to develop a Full Project Proposal (FPP).
2. **Full Project Proposal (FPP).** Successful EOI applicants will be invited to submit FPP. DIGITAL will provide the templates and submission instructions for the FPP package to the lead organization of successful EOI applicants. The consortium partners are expected to collaboratively develop and submit their FPP package for consideration.

The FPP submissions will be reviewed and evaluated in the order they are received, until available funds are fully committed. DIGITAL will make efforts to keep applicants informed as projects are selected. Submissions are accepted on a continuous intake basis, and since funds are limited, eligible and complete FPP submissions will be evaluated on a "first-in, first-evaluated" basis.

FPP submissions are due 30 days after the FPP invitation letter is issued.

FPP Evaluation & Decision

DIGITAL is committed to maintaining a fair and objective co-investment decision-making process, guided by unbiased advice and adjudication. To achieve this, DIGITAL engages a Project Selection Committee (PSC) composed primarily of independent and external individuals.

1. **Evaluation and Recommendation Process.** Complete and eligible FPP submissions will be reviewed by the PSC, who will evaluate them against the criteria outlined in this Program Guide. Applicants will be invited to an online presentation and Q&A session with the PSC. Based on this evaluation, the PSC will recommend to DIGITAL whether or not to co-invest in the proposed project. The PSC may also suggest revisions to the proposal, which can be resubmitted and re-evaluated for consideration.
2. **Final Co-Investment Decision.** DIGITAL makes the final co-investment decision based on the PSC's recommendations and the parameters established by its Board of Directors. Additionally, a DIGITAL Board-appointed Independent Governance Advisor (IGA) will conduct a full review of the evaluation and selection process for each proposal to ensure compliance with DIGITAL's policies and procedures.

The project lead will receive a decision letter from DIGITAL within 3 weeks of the evaluation session, which will include feedback from the PSC. Decision may be:

- Approved for co-investment by DIGITAL.
- Approved for co-investment by DIGITAL, subject to specified conditions.
- Not approved for co-investment by DIGITAL.
- Not approved for co-investment by DIGITAL but invited to resubmit.

Partner Obligations and Commitments

All consortium partners are expected to work together during the application process and provide organizational signoff by an authorized signatory. By applying, each organization agrees to:

- Adhere to DIGITAL's Charter of Values, including the Diversity & Inclusion principles outlined in the Membership and/or Participation Agreement.
- Consent for DIGITAL to disclose the participating organizations, total investment, the total co-investment sought from DIGITAL along with the full or partial Executive Summary from the submitted applications.
- Not publicly disclose any information about a proposed project until we jointly agree to announce it (public releases and notices). For clarity, DIGITAL's decision can be shared in confidence with the consortium partners and their respective internal teams, Boards and investors as appropriate.

Organizations that fail to comply with these requirements could have their Membership rights terminated, project funding withdrawn and/or other proposed projects removed from consideration.

Engagement Guidelines

Applicants or related stakeholders must not engage directly with any PSC members, DIGITAL Leadership, or IGAs regarding project ideas or applications that are in development, under evaluation, or have already been decided. Organizations that fail to comply with this guideline may face termination of their membership rights, withdrawal of project funding, and/or removal of other proposals from consideration.

PSC members will not reach out directly to applicants for information or input regarding proposed projects. Any such requests will be managed by the DIGITAL team.

Contracting

As part of the FPP process, consortium partners will review the Master Project Agreement (MPA). The MPA is a multi-party agreement that outlines the roles, responsibilities, and obligations of each partner within the consortium, including DIGITAL, ensuring all parties are aligned on the terms of the collaboration. The MPA must be signed by all consortium partners within 30 days of the decision letter being issued to proceed with the project. This timeline is essential to ensure a smooth and timely project commencement.

Conflict of Interest Check

DIGITAL ensures that its investment decision and allocation is determined in fair and

objective manner and informed by unbiased advice and adjudication. An evaluator or decision maker is deemed to have a conflict of interest, taking into account the potential for the appearance of bias, if the person:

- stands to directly benefit should a specific project be accepted or rejected by DIGITAL for co-investment;
- has a family relationship or close friendship with any person representing an applicant;
- is a director, trustee, or partner of an applicant;
- has been employed by an applicant within the past two years; or
- is in any other situation that compromises their ability to evaluate the project objectively.

DIGITAL requires each project partner to disclose any potential conflicts of interest with individuals involved in the evaluation and decision-making processes.

Any Consortium partner can submit a request, in advance of submitting your FPP, for a specific [DIGITAL Team](#) member, evaluator or decision maker to be recused for your proposal. This includes any interactions or engagements with these individuals over the past two years, except those related to working with DIGITAL. Such requests are to be made in writing by email to proposal-support@digitalsupercluster.ca. All requests are to include the proposal title, the name of the evaluator/decision-maker, the rationale supporting the request for recusal as well as the requestors name, organization, title/position and contact information (email and phone number).

The following people who may be involved in the decision-making process for your proposal:

DIGITAL Team	DIGITAL Leadership and Board	Project Selection Committee	Independent Governance Advisors
Arshaan Mehra Artyom Mamzhiev Beatrice Nguyen Duy Chris Doody Iain Evans Jen Mielguj Jesse Coleman Jessica Chang Karen McClure Karima Bawa Tanya Mukherji	Sue Paish Elysa Darling Cheryl Maitland Muir Nadia Shaikh-Naeem Gina Arsens DIGITAL Board	Natascha Kiernan Marilyn Spink Cameron Burke Candice Loring	Robert Walker Hugh Stephens Lori DeCraw

Appendix A. Evaluation Criteria

Team & Management Plan | 25%

- Composition of the consortium is balanced.
- The consortium has the necessary expertise and capabilities.
- Added value through collaboration that strengthens connections between private, public and academic organizations.
- All consortium partners stand to benefit commercially, scientifically or academically from the project.
- Robust project governance structure with experienced independent project management.
- A realistic execution plan with a reasonable schedule and cost structure.
- Financial and service commitments are clear for each participating organization, and each organization can finance and deliver on their commitments.

Commercial Impact | 35%

- Commercial viability validated with sector stakeholders, both users and buyers in the target markets.
- Accelerates the scale-up of Canadian businesses by integrating into value chains, attracting investment, driving international opportunities, expanding market share, and/or growing revenues.
- Understanding of target markets and competitive landscape.
- Clear path to commercialization with robust “go-to-market” plans, a realistic revenue forecast and ROI for Canadian business.
- Usability, adoption and procurement requirements are well considered.
- Defined commercial model with preliminary commercial terms.
- Commercial entities have proven commercial success.

Technology Innovation | 25%

- Clear articulation of the new commercial products, platforms and/or services that will result from the project.
- Degree of novelty and innovation in the use or application of technology in the sector.
- The resulting technology advances on commercial state-of-the-art.
- Technical achievability, scalability and risk.
- Significant development of new Intellectual Property and a clear and compliant IP plan.
- Understanding of data sharing requirements with access to required data sources.
- Demonstrated understanding and commitment to the safe and responsible use of data and technology.

Ecosystem Impact and Sustainability (15%)

- The potential to grow and scale world-leading Canadian enterprises, including SMEs.
- Benefits to Canada beyond the participating organizations (e.g., fighting climate change, addressing supply chain disruptions).
- New job creation.
- Skills and talent development.
- Advances equity and diversity.
- Strengthens connections between researchers in industry, academia, and research institutes in Canada and abroad.