Overview:
The University of Guelph’s Food from Thought (FfT) Program, funded by the Canada First Research Excellence Fund (CFREF), is inviting eligible U of G faculty to submit proposals for financial support from the 2019 Commercialization Grant research fund. This $215,000 research fund for 2019 was created specifically to advance opportunities to commercialize research and technologies developed from, or aligned with, the Food from Thought Missions.

Eligible projects must support at least one of the following Food from Thought Missions:

1. Develop tools, approaches and technologies to leverage big data to improve food production and sustain ecosystems;
2. Transform agriculture’s impact on biodiversity at the global scale;
3. Sustainably intensify food production at the landscape scale; or
4. Enhance food safety and livestock health at the micro-scale.

Eligible projects must focus on developing commercially viable and useful products and services for the real world. Projects must be multidisciplinary, include one or more graduate students, and strive to have a direct and lasting benefits for Canadians.

Eligibility and Award Allocation:
In order to apply for a 2019 Food from Thought Commercialization Grant, researchers must hold a faculty or adjunct faculty position at the University of Guelph and be eligible for Tri-Agency grants.

This Call for Proposals is open to all University of Guelph faculty. Priority may be given to projects that build on previously funded Food from Thought projects.

Eligible researchers may participate in and receive funding for more than one project; and they may act as Principal Investigator on more than one project.

Award Amount, Duration and Timing:
Projects should be no more than one year in duration and many will be much shorter. Projects may delay starting for up to 6 months to align with unique project constraints. Projects will be awarded a maximum total amount depending on the main objective of the project. Projects may only seek funding for one objective at a time.
Projects may start as early as 1 December 2019 but must be completed by 31 March 2021. Most projects should take less than one year to complete.

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<th>Objective</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
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<tr>
<td>Market Validation:</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prototype Development:</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
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<td>Product Market Launch:</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
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Applicants may request more than the maximum award amount, if an only if, the proposal demonstrates very strong partner engagement with significant cash contributions and the project has a very high probability to generate highly impactful results.

**Pre-Application Consultation:**

It is strongly recommended that applicants discuss their proposal with the Program Coordinator or another team member from the Research Innovation Office to determine the suitability of the project, goals, focus and budget.

**Review Process:**

Research proposals will be reviewed by a review panel of internal experts and/or industry or government representatives who have extensive experience commercializing research and mentoring start-up companies to bring new products to market. All proposals will be evaluated against the review criteria listed and described in this document.

Through consensus, the review panel will provide a recommended and priority ranked list of the projects to be funded, to the Food from Thought Strategy and Management Committee in the Office of the Vice-President (Research).

The Strategy and Management Committee will make the final decision on all project funding, which may include strategic considerations; program-level considerations, equity, diversity and inclusivity goals; and the distribution of funds across colleges.

**Review Criteria:**

All proposals will be reviewed using the following criteria:

1. **Product-Market Fit and Quality of the Work Plan:** The proposed Minimum Viable Product (MVP) upon which the project is based, must clearly demonstrate a strong value proposition, be highly original/innovative and likely to have a strong impact on the commercial market, if or when, launched into the market. The quality of the work plan to advance the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of your MVP is clear, appropriate and cost effective.

2. **Equity, diversity and inclusivity:** Project proposals must include a plan for how Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) will be enhanced and promoted during the project, and be reflected in the project’s team, Highly Qualified Personnel recruitment, dissemination and knowledge
3. **Support for Food from Thought Objectives and the Agri-food Sector**: Project objectives must clearly support one or more of the Food from Thought Missions and the agri-food sector more broadly. Projects should include the development and testing of commercial concepts, Minimum Viable Products, or commercial prototypes to accelerate the commercialization of the underlying technology.

4. **Quality of Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP) Training**: HQP training plans should include innovative, unique, and multi-disciplinary opportunities focused on entrepreneurship, commercialization of research and business leadership for students, researchers and technical staff. Training plans should be clearly defined and expected to deliver a high-quality experience.

5. **Dissemination and Knowledge Mobilization**: Proposals should include details on how the results will be disseminated to industrial partners who are responsible for bringing a new product to market. Knowledge mobilization plans should include specific objectives and methods to accelerate moving your proposed MVP or optimized commercial product closer to a market launch by a committed industry partner.

6. **Strength of the Project Team**: The project team should be composed of highly accomplished researchers, graduate students, entrepreneurs and industrial professionals who are leaders in their fields or are demonstrably progressing towards leadership positions. Project teams should be multidisciplinary and reflect the necessary expertise required to address the proposed scope of accelerating commercialization of your technology.

7. **Benefit to Canadians**: The project outcomes and the MVP should clearly result in real social, economic and/or environmental benefits for Canadians.

8. **Partner Contributions and Leveraging**: In-kind contributions from an industry partner (startups included) are the required minimal level of commitment. Proposals should include clear evidence of partner engagement, as demonstrated through Letters of Support (LOS) documenting cash and/or in-kind contributions\(^1\). Proposals should also include a plan (next steps) to seek follow-on funding to support future commercialization activities needed to eventually take the MVP to market.

9. **Management Plan and Appropriateness of Budget**: Proposals must have a clear work plan to ensure the project proceeds on time and on budget. Plans should maximize the integration of researchers (with each other) at UofG and of researchers with industry representatives. Projects should have a well justified budget that is cost appropriate for the proposed project.

### Additional Guidance

Your MVP should
- Be a tangible, physical or engineered product or a well-defined service that is different from other competing technologies that currently exist
- Have the potential to be scaled to leverage a large commercial opportunity
- Addresses a large social, environmental or economic problem
- Have a clear positive impact on Canada (social, environmental and/or economic)
- Have a plausible path for commercialization
**Application Instructions and Proposal Deadline:**
All documents, aside from the Project Budget form (in Excel), should be submitted as a single searchable PDF. Complete applications for a Commercialization Grant must include:

1. Grant Application (template provided)
2. Recent Common CV or Form 100 for the Principal Investigator and all Co-investigators
3. Letters of Support signed by the industry partner(s) committing cash or in-kind
4. OR-5 Form for each project, signed by PI, Chair and College.
5. Budget spreadsheet (in Excel – template provided)

**Complete applications** must be submitted electronically to the Research Innovation Office at accel@uoguelph.ca and copy Michelle Ebling ebling@uoguelph.ca and David Hobson dhobson@uoguelph.ca.

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<th>Due Dates</th>
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<tr>
<td>Submission Deadline</td>
<td>Noon on Wednesday 9 Oct 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notification of Award</td>
<td>1 November 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Start Date</td>
<td>1 December 2019 at earliest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project End Date</td>
<td>No later than March 31, 2021</td>
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**Responsibilities of the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigators:**
Upon acceptance of the award, the Principal Investigator (PI) for each approved Food from Thought research project must submit to the Food from Thought Office the following in order to initiate the accounts setup for the award:

1. Data Management Plan
2. An updated project budget and its distribution across eligible project investigators.
3. Signed delegation of authority forms for the PI and all Co-Investigators receiving funding (if applicable).
4. Conflict of Interest Declaration & Management Plan – if applicable/requested
5. Additional data describing the Project - as requested

After issuance of the award, the PI and Co-Investigators (CI) will be asked to sign a Food from Thought funding agreement before their trust accounts are opened. Investigators must ensure that all necessary certifications are in place for the duration of the project.

This grant is governed by the Tri-Agency Institutional Programs Secretariat (TIPS) of the Government of Canada, which has specific rules and requirements for its use to which all
project investigators must adhere. The PI and each CI must ensure that project expenses budgeted and charged to the Food from Thought award are eligible and in accordance with CFREF rules and requirements, as outlined in the CFREF Administration Guide. Any ineligible expenses charged to the Food from Thought award will not be covered by Food from Thought and the investigator will be responsible for the payment of ineligible expenses from other sources.

PIs are required to provide annual reporting on the overall project and associated results of the research to the Food from Thought Project Office by the end of each fiscal year (ending March 31st) during which CFREF funds are held. This reporting must include information and results of all project investigators, and will be in a format determined by the Food from Thought Project Office for the purposes of supporting institutional reporting requirements on the CFREF grant to TIPS. All project CIs will be required to provide relevant project information and results to the Principal Investigator to ensure reporting requirements are met. In addition, all project investigators will be required to provide project information to the Food from Thought Communications Coordinator for the purposes of showcasing and sharing project information and results on the Food from Thought website, social media, and other communications for both internal and external audiences.

All project investigators will be expected to participate in the Food from Thought Annual Meeting, which may include, as appropriate, a presentation of the research project in the form of oral and/or poster presentation, as determined by the Food from Thought Project Office.

1 Eligibility and valuation of in-kind contributions to a project should be based on tri-agency guidelines.
2 Cash and in-kind contributions must be pro-rated to match the project term (e.g. between start and end dates).
3 Letters of support should be on organizational letterhead and signed by an authorized signing officer. If in-kind is being provided the valuation details should be included in the letter.
4 Each PI and CI will be provided with a separate trust account in accordance with the approved budget.
5 A detailed template and support to complete the Data Management Plan will be provided to those approved for funding.

Questions:
For a copy of the Grant Application, additional information or guidance please contact:
David Hobson at x58859 or dhobosn@uoguelph.ca.