

ACCELERATING AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION
SOIL HEALTH AND FERTILITY STREAM
PROGRAM TERMS AND CONDITIONS

SOIL HEALTH AND FERTILITY STREAM

1.1 PURPOSE

This call for proposals is a stream of the **Accelerating Agriculture Innovation 2.0 program** supported by the **Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP)**. The Accelerating Agricultural Innovation Program is a program under the Science, Research, and Innovation Priority Area of Sustainable CAP. This program is administered by Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR) under a Program Administrator Agreement with the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation (AGI).

Alberta's producers are stewards of soil health. Producers understand soil's role in sustainable and responsible agriculture and its influence on productivity, profitability, and competitiveness.

Soil health has significant potential to address the challenges farmers and ranchers face as they combat the effects of erosion, soil organic matter and nutrient imbalances.

Improving and sustaining soil health can make the land resilient to future challenges, including extreme weather conditions such as flooding, drought, etc. These benefits have led to increased adoption of practices that improve soil health.

RDAR is committed to supporting producers in their ongoing efforts to advance the stewardship of Alberta's soils and is opening a **Call for Letters of Intent focused on Soil Health and Fertility**.

The primary goal of this targeted stream of proposals is to support **research and research extension activities** including the development of beneficial management practices (BMPs) that improve soil health and resiliency of agricultural land in Alberta.

Priorities include:

Soil Health

- Five Principles
 - Soil cover
 - Living roots year-round
 - Minimum soil disturbance
 - Integration of livestock
 - Maximizing crop diversity
- Soil salinity and soil acidity
- Soil microbiome and soil genomics
- Soil-plant interactions
- Increasing organic matter content in soils

Soil Fertility

- Nutrient availability and utilization
- Soil microbiome and root function
- Nutrient use efficiency
- Nutrient Cycling
- Crop Rotation
- Root Structure

Projects funded through the stream will advance soil health metrics, tools and awareness of the function of soil and the links between healthy soils, nutritious and safe food and a healthy environment.

Projects will encourage farmers, ranchers, policy-makers, industry, consumers, and society at large to work together and take effective action on soil health across sectors and land uses. The best available science will inform these improvements.

1.1 FUNDING AND TERM

This Program is a stream of the Accelerating Agriculture Innovation 2.0 program supported by the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP).

Eligible non-capital expenses will be cost-shared:

- a) at 60% grant and 40% eligible applicant if the eligible Applicant is a post-secondary institution or a for-profit legal entity; and
- b) at 80% grant and 20% eligible applicant if the eligible Applicant is not a post-secondary institution or a profit legal entity.

Eligible minor equipment expenses must be cost-shared at 25% grant and 75% eligible applicant.

In-kind contributions are not payable under the Program, but RDAR may consider in-kind contributions part of the Applicant's required contribution.

Priority will be given, but not limited to, projects with a two-to-three-year completion timeline

1.2 ELIGIBILITY

RDAR invites Eligible Applicants (see Terms and Conditions) to submit Letters of Intent (LOI) that support research projects that **demonstrate and accelerate the on-farm adoption** of agricultural innovations and processes for Alberta's livestock and crop industries. Applicant eligibility is defined in the terms and conditions.

A clear **research extension** plan must be included to show how outcomes will reach Alberta's producers on-farm either directly or indirectly through service providers must be included.

1.3 Timelines

Item	Date
LOI's Open	April 1, 2024
Closing Date – Intake 1	May 15, 2024
Closing Date – Intake 2	July 15, 2024

ACCELERATING AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION - PROGRAM TERMS AND CONDITIONS

2.0 DEFINITIONS

In these Program Terms and Conditions, the following terms have the following meanings:

- 2.1 **Applicant:** means a Legal Entity that submits an Application and meets the eligibility criteria in section 3.1.1;
- 2.2 **Application:** means an application for funding under the Program, which includes the Proposed Project;
- 2.3 **Eligible Applicant:** means an Applicant that is approved for funding under the Program;
- 2.4 **Eligible Activity:** means the parts of the Application that have been approved for funding under the Program;
- 2.5 **Eligible Capital Expense:** means a capital expense described in section 3.5.2 that is eligible for funding under the Program and listed in the Grant Agreement;
- 2.6 **Eligible Expenses:** means Eligible Capital Expenses and Eligible Non-Capital Expenses;
- 2.7 **Eligible Non-Capital Expense:** means a non-capital expense described in section 3.5.1 that is eligible for funding under the Program and listed in the Grant Agreement;
- 2.8 **Federal Crown:** means His Majesty in Right of Canada;
- 2.9 **Fiscal Year:** means the 12-month period beginning April 1 of any year and ending March 31 of the following year;
- 2.10 **Grant Agreement:** means the signed agreement between RDAR and an Eligible Applicant governing the payment of a grant under the Program for the purposes of an Eligible Activity;
- 2.11 **In-Kind Contribution:** means a non-monetary contribution that defrays the total cost of a project, such as the provision of goods, equipment use, or labour;
- 2.12 **Industry Organization:** means a not-for-profit corporation or society:
 - a) whose membership includes individuals or businesses involved in crop, bee or livestock production in Alberta, including marketing boards and commissions established under the *Marketing of Agriculture Products Act* (Alberta); or
 - b) whose objects include supporting crop or livestock production;
- 2.13 **Legal Entity:** includes any individual, company, business, or organization that can legally enter into a binding contract with another legal entity;
- 2.14 **Knowledge Translation and Transfer (KTT):** means the transformation of knowledge into use through synthesis, exchange, dissemination, dialogue, collaboration and brokering among agriculture industry stakeholders;
- 2.15 **Minister:** means the Minister of AGI and the Minister's authorized representative(s);
- 2.16 **Municipal Government:** means a municipality as defined in the *Municipal Government Act* (Alberta), with the exception of summer villages;

- 2.17 **Post-Secondary Institution:** means a college, institute, or university established or continued under the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* (Alberta); or a public post-secondary institution, private post-secondary institution, or independent academic institution as defined in that Act;
- 2.18 **Primary Producer:** means a Legal Entity that is:
- a) operating in Alberta;
 - b) responsible for input costs for a crop or livestock operation that produces at least \$25,000 of annual farm cash; and
 - c) responsible for the day-to-day management and work on the farm;
- but does not include a landlord whose only interest in the crop or livestock operation is ownership of the land;
- 2.19 **Program:** means the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership Accelerating Agricultural Innovation Program;
- 2.20 **Program Term:** means the period for the Program, being April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2028;
- 2.21 **Program Terms and Conditions:** means these terms and conditions for the Program, as may be amended;
- 2.22 **Proposed Project:** means the Applicant's proposed activities under the Program, as described in the Application;
- 2.23 **Provincial Crown:** means His Majesty in Right of Alberta;
- 2.24 **RDAR:** means Results Driven Agriculture Research;
- 2.25 **Sector:** means the agriculture, agri-food, and agri-based products sector, including value-added and processing, and Indigenous agriculture and food systems; and
- 2.26 **Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (or "Sustainable CAP"):** means the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership.

3.0 ELIGIBILITY

3.1 Eligible Applicants

- 3.1.1 To be an Eligible Applicant, an Applicant must be one of the following, and not ineligible under section 3.2.1:
- a) an Industry Organization;
 - b) a Municipal Government or an agency of a Municipal Government;
 - c) a Post-Secondary Institution;
 - d) a Primary Producer;
 - e) a for-profit Legal Entity, including research companies and businesses offering custom services, consulting, or general services to agricultural clients; or
 - f) an Applicant approved by RDAR under section 3.1.2.
- 3.1.2 RDAR may approve an Indigenous applicant as an Eligible Applicant even though the Applicant does not meet the requirements under section 3.1.1. The Program is committed to supporting the success of Indigenous businesses in the agriculture and food sector. It is understood that Indigenous businesses may have distinct characteristics reflective of regulatory, operational, cultural, and other factors affecting their business history and operation. The Program aims for

flexibility in its delivery in order to reduce barriers and ensure its accessibility. In this section, "Indigenous" means First Nations, Inuit, and Metis.

3.2 Ineligible Applicants

3.2.1 The following may not apply to the Program and may not be an Eligible Applicant:

- a) the Federal government and its agencies and institutions;
- b) religious organizations, churches, and similar organizations; and
- c) any other Applicant deemed ineligible by RDAR.

3.3 Eligible Activities

3.3.1 To be an Eligible Activity, a Proposed Project must support the purpose of the Program outlined in section 1.1 and be approved by RDAR.

3.3.2 All Applications under the Program:

- a) may include one or more of the research and development activities listed in section 3.3.3; and
- b) must include one or more of the KTT activities listed in section 3.3.4.

3.3.3 Subject to s. 3.3.1, activities that support the purpose of the Program may include, but are not limited to:

- a) investing in research that is closely aligned with the provincial needs of the Sector;
- b) producer-public-private collaboration on research and research priority-setting;
- c) helping demonstrate and evaluate new agricultural practices and technologies at the local level;
- d) sharing and disseminating research knowledge, including through events such as workshops and symposia;
- e) targeting support for farms and firms to accelerate the adoption of new or improved products, processes or practices that add value;
- f) accelerating the adoption of transformative technologies in collaboration with the Sector;
- g) supporting farms and firms to develop or adapt new or improved products, processes or practices that add value;
- h) investing strategically in the use and development of clean and sustainable technology and processes;
- i) developing highly qualified personnel with a direct benefit to the Sector, within colleges, universities, and research institutions;
- j) facilitating public-private partnerships for the development of innovation facilities for producers and processors;
- k) providing commercialization support through the establishment or expansion of commercialization and other risk-sharing activities; and
- l) other activities related to research and development and knowledge transfer.

3.3.4 Subject to s. 3.3.1, one or more of the following KTT activities must be part of the Proposed Project:

- a) organizing, hosting, facilitating, attending, or presenting at KTT events such as:
 - (i) group, in-person events such as workshops, seminars, or classes;
 - (ii) web-based events such as webinars;
 - (iii) on-site activities such as field tours, demonstrations, demonstration sites; and
 - (iv) conferences/tradeshows specifically for KTT and not for sales/marketing; and
- b) developing and distributing KTT products such as factsheets, videos, publications, and podcasts.

3.3.5 In conducting its Eligible Activity, an Eligible Applicant must:

- a) comply with all applicable laws and regulations; and
- b) obtain all required governmental approvals prior to commencing the Eligible Activity, including those related to public health and safety, labour codes and standards, animal care and use of animals in research, animal welfare, wildlife habitat and environmental protection.

3.3.6 The provision of funding under this Program does not obligate the Provincial Crown or Federal Crown to issue licenses or approvals under any legislation.

3.4 Ineligible Activities

3.4.1 The following are not eligible for funding under the Program and may not be an Eligible Activity:

- a) Normal and ongoing operating and maintenance activities;
- b) Activities that do not provide a direct benefit to the Sector;
- c) Activities related to aquaponic food production, or to aquaculture, seaweed, fish and seafood production and processing (except international marketing and traceability activities for fish and seafood);
- d) Activities which provide tax credits or rebates;
- e) Development and enforcement of regulations;
- f) Activities that do not comply with all applicable laws and regulations or where any required federal-provincial-territorial governmental approvals have not been obtained, including but not limited to those related to public health and safety, labour codes and standards, animal care and use of animals in research, animal welfare, wildlife habitat, and environmental protection.
- g) Activities beyond pilot studies (e.g., production of product for commercial sale);
- h) Commercial marketing activities for products and technologies created through Project activities;
- i) Ongoing website updating and maintenance;
- j) New builds or expansions for structure and structural modifications; and
- k) Any other activity deemed by RDAR to be ineligible.

3.5 Eligible Expenses

3.5.1 The following expenses may be approved by RDAR as an Eligible Non-Capital Expense for an Eligible Activity:

- a) Cost of supplies, equipment rentals and land rentals directly required for the Eligible Activity;
- b) Salaries and benefits of scientific and technical personnel who conduct the Eligible Activity;
- c) Stipends and benefits for students (in such amounts as outlined on RDAR's website) who conduct the Eligible Activity;
- d) Costs for fee-for-service providers or contributors that are essential for the conduct of the Eligible Activity, e.g., engineering costs;

- e) Costs for the development and delivery of KTT activities for the Eligible Activity, e.g., event registrations for a project team member; cost of communications with Alberta agriculture industry stakeholders (e.g., social media, publications, promotional advertising); costs for materials, supplies, and inputs required for the design, development, implementation, and extension of the Eligible Activity's applied research activities;
- f) Reasonable travel-related expenses incurred directly for the Eligible Activity, provided they are in accordance with the Alberta Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership Travel Expense Policy posted on the RDAR website, as may be amended (excluding RDAR staff);
- g) Cost of surveys related to gathering data required for reporting on the Eligible Activity;
- h) Commercialization expenses, e.g., patenting and other protection of intellectual property;
- i) Cost of assessments necessary for the legal or technical requirements applicable to the Eligible Activity (e.g., risk, welfare, economic, environmental); and
- j) If the Eligible Applicant is a Post-Secondary Institution, indirect overhead expenses up to a maximum of 15% where the Eligible Applicant can demonstrate that indirect overhead funds are going to the department completing the Eligible Activity and are utilized to deliver research and development activities.

3.5.2 The following expenses may be approved by RDAR as a Minor Equipment Expense for an Eligible Activity:

- a) Purchases of minor equipment and technology under \$25,000, inclusive of all associated costs, directly required for the Eligible Activity (e.g., currency exchange, brokerage fees, shipping, installation, modifications, commissioning, validation, certification for use in Alberta).

3.6 Ineligible Expenses

3.6.1 Expenses that are not eligible for payment under the Program and may not be an Eligible Expense include:

- a) Goods and Services Tax (GST), Provincial Sales Tax (PST), Harmonized Sales Tax (HST);
- b) Costs of In-Kind Contributions;
- c) Costs incurred outside of the Project Term;
- d) Expenses paid to a Government of Canada department or agency;
- e) Expenses for hosting, food, alcohol, and non-alcoholic beverages;
- f) Expenses for commercial marketing materials;
- g) Expenses for commercial product development;
- h) Active costs associated with complying with assurance programs;
- i) Normal and ongoing administrative, management, maintenance and operating costs not directly related to the Eligible Activity;
- j) Costs of common items that can be used for multiple purposes (e.g., digital cameras, GPS, smartphones, measuring tapes);
- k) Website hosting/domain registration;
- l) Travel expenses not related directly to the Eligible Activity, including travel expenses to view or pick up equipment/technology;
- m) Travel expenses for individuals who are not Project team members;
- n) Costs for the lease of office furniture, space, and equipment;
- o) Costs of equipment attached to a building, such as sinks, walls, doors, plumbing, framing, and flooring;
- p) Costs of repair/maintenance of existing infrastructure; and
- q) Any other expense deemed by RDAR to be an ineligible expense.

4.0 REVIEW PROCESS

- 4.1 Applications will undergo a confidential review process, which will include internal review, and/or scientific (peer) and/or industry review, or external review committees/panels for recommendations for funding decisions and funding amount.
- 4.2 Applications will be evaluated based on the Proposed Project's potential to transform the Sector using the following Program assessment criteria:
- a) Alignment with the purpose of the Program, as set out at section 1.1;
 - b) Impact and benefit to Alberta producers and the broader agriculture and food industry;
 - c) The Project timelines and deliverables are achievable and appropriate;
 - d) Effective KTT and communication plan in place;
 - e) Team capacity and collaboration potential;
 - f) Adoption and/or commercialization potential of the innovation;
 - g) Leveraging Sustainable CAP's investment; and
 - h) Budget items are clear and justified.

5.0 APPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There is limited funding for the Program. Applications completed to the satisfaction of RDAR will be considered for approval on a case-by-case basis subject to the Program eligibility criteria, assessment criteria, and funding constraints. Submission of an Application does not entitle an Applicant to a grant under the Program.
- 5.2 RDAR has the absolute discretion to determine the eligibility of any Applicant or Application under this Program, and any payment due under the Program. The decision of RDAR is final.
- 5.3 Applications must be submitted to RDAR in such form, manner and time as determined by RDAR.
- 5.4 RDAR may reject any Application that is inaccurate, ineligible, or incomplete, at the sole discretion of RDAR.
- 5.5 Submission of an Application does not entitle an Applicant to a grant under the Program.
- 5.6 The Applicant acknowledges that the grant may not be sufficient to cover the project's entire cost and that the Applicant shall be solely responsible for raising funds from other sources to complete its project. The Applicant acknowledges that the grant shall be the only financial assistance RDAR will provide under the Program.
- 5.7 Eligible Applicants will be required to enter into a Grant Agreement with RDAR before any payment is made to the Applicant. These Program Terms and Conditions will be attached as a Schedule and form part of the Grant Agreement. A copy of the Grant Agreement is available from RDAR.
- 5.8. An Applicant may indicate on their Application that they would like to be considered for funding under the RDAR Research Program if their Application is ineligible under this Program. If an Applicant so indicates, their Application will be considered for funding under the RDAR Research Program without a further submission being required.

6.0 FUNDING LEVELS

- 6.1 Eligible Non-Capital Expenses may be cost-shared:
- a) at 60% grant and 40% Eligible Applicant if the Eligible Applicant is a Post-Secondary Institution or a for-profit Legal Entity; and
 - b) at 80% grant and 20% Eligible Applicant if the Eligible Applicant is not a Post-Secondary Institution or

a for-profit Legal Entity.

- 6.2 Eligible Capital Expenses may be cost-shared at 25% grant and 75% Eligible Applicant.
- 6.3 In-Kind Contributions are not payable under the Program, but RDAR may consider In-Kind Contributions as part of the Applicant's required contribution under s. 6.1, subject to the following:
- a) In-Kind Contributions are subject to the same financial review procedures as other Eligible Expenses and must be adequately documented to the satisfaction of RDAR; and
 - b) RDAR has the absolute discretion to reduce or reject any In-Kind Contribution if RDAR is not satisfied that the In-Kind Contribution is reasonable and adequately verified.
- 6.4 Funding received through any other Sustainable CAP programs may not be used toward the cost-share requirements of the Program.
- 6.5 Funding received through federal, provincial, and municipal governments cannot exceed 100% of the Eligible Expenses claimed by the Eligible Applicant and paid under the Program. The amount of the grant shall be adjusted so that the total government funding for Eligible Expenses does not exceed 100% of these expenses.
- 6.6 In the event that federal or provincial funding levels are changed to the extent that the money available to RDAR to make the grant is reduced or eliminated, RDAR may, in its sole discretion, cancel or reduce the amount of the grant.

7.0 PAYMENTS

- 7.1 Payments to Eligible Applicants will be made in accordance with the payment schedule set out in the Grant Agreement.

After submitting the Final Report, if the sum of all previous grant payments exceeds the total Eligible Expenses claimed by an Applicant multiplied by the applicable funding levels, no final payment will be made, and the Applicant shall immediately pay the unused grant funds to RDAR.

- 7.2 An Eligible Activity and Eligible Expenses qualify only once for payment under the Program.
- 7.3 Eligible Applicants cannot assign or defer any payment under this Program.

9.0 FALSE OR MISLEADING INFORMATION

- 9.1 An Applicant who provides false or misleading information under this Program forgoes all rights to benefit from this Program.

10.0 CHANGES TO THE PROGRAM

- 10.1 The Program may change or terminate at any time without notice. Any revisions to the Program, the application form, or the Program Terms and Conditions will be posted on the RDAR website.
- 10.2 Applications are subject to the Program Terms and Conditions as posted on the RDAR Website as of the date RDAR received the Application.

11.0 RDAR DISCRETION

- 11.1 RDAR may determine the eligibility of any Applicant or Application under the Program. The decision of RDAR is final.

12. REPRESENTATIONS AND WARRANTIES

12.1 By submitting an Application, the Applicant represents and warrants that:

- a) The Applicant is an eligible applicant pursuant to section 3.1 of the Program Terms and Conditions;
- b) The person signing the Application is duly authorized to make the Application to the Program on behalf of the Applicant;
- c) No Application has been made for the same activities by any other person, including, without limitation, a person who is not arms-length or a related person as defined by the Income Tax Act (Canada) or by a shareholder, member or partner who is actively carrying on farming or business on behalf of a corporation;
- d) The Applicant has made full, true and plain disclosure to RDAR of all facts relating to the activities that are material to its Application, including without limitation all sources of funding from federal, provincial and municipal governments;
- e) The Applicant has the necessary financial resources to complete the activities listed in the Application;
- f) No member of the House of Commons or the Senate shall derive any financial advantage from the grant that would not be permitted under the Parliament of Canada Act;
- g) No current or former federal public office holder or federal public servant to whom the Conflict of Interest Act (Canada), the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons, or the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector and the Policy on Conflict of Interest and Post-Employment applies shall derive any advantage or benefit from the grant unless the provision or receipt of such advantage or benefit is in compliance with such legislation, codes and policies;
- h) Any person lobbying, as that term is defined in the Lobbyists Registration Act (Canada), on the Applicant's behalf is registered pursuant to that Act;
- i) The Applicant is not aware of any discussions to effect a sale, transfer, assignment, or pledge of interest which would result in a change of the control of the Applicant or of the disposition of all or substantially all the assets of the Applicant;
- j) The Applicant has adequate human resources, experience, and skills to carry out the activities described in the Application;
- k) There is presently no action, suit, or proceeding being brought or pending or threatened against or affecting the Applicant which could result in the expropriation of any property of the Applicant, or which could affect its operations, properties, financial condition, or its ability to complete the activities described in the Application;
- l) If activities described in the Application require authorization by an agency, the Applicant has obtained such approval prior to the commencement of the activities;

- m) The Applicant is in compliance with all laws, orders and authorizations which relate to or affect the Applicant, and is not subject to any order of any court or other tribunal affecting the Applicant's operations;
- n) The Applicant has the power and authority and all necessary licenses and permits to own and operate its properties and carry on its operations, to make the Application, and to complete the activities described in the Application; and
- o) The execution of the Statement of Certification has been duly and validly authorized by the Applicant in accordance with applicable law and shall constitute a binding legal obligation of the Applicant.

Revised April 2nd, 2024