

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

DiscoveryX Conference and Tradeshow

EVENT MANAGEMENT 2027 – 2028

Issue Date: July 6, 2026

Closing Date: July 24, 2026

Ontario Centre of Innovation

For over 39 years, the Ontario Centre of Innovation has been a central pillar of Ontario's innovation community, with a mission to equip Ontario businesses with the transformative emerging technologies to keep them growing and globally competitive. Ontario Centre of Innovation is the only province-wide organization that connects and engages Ontario's innovation community for the benefit of all.

Ontario Centre of Innovation brings industry, academic, and government partners together to invest in collaborative R&D, technology development, and commercialization opportunities that generate the highest return on innovation for Ontarians. As an ecosystem connector, Ontario Centre of Innovation initiates unparalleled partnership opportunities, develops and manages successful industry-academic collaborations, supports high-potential SMEs in commercializing ground-breaking research, and provides hands-on training and skills development opportunities for the next generation of highly skilled talent. Ontario Centre of Innovation drives economic growth and job creation through investments in the development, commercialization, and adoption of advanced technologies.

Ontario Centre of Innovation is a non-profit organization funded by the Government of Ontario.

www.oc-innovation.ca

Ontario Centre of Innovation Annual Conference and Tradeshow – DiscoveryX. For the past 18 years, this dynamic event has been the place where industry and academia converge. It's where entrepreneurs, investors, students, and leaders from across the innovation ecosystem come together to spark connections and create the future.

DiscoveryX is your chance to dive into engaging panels and keynotes, get hands-on with emerging technologies, and discover new partnerships that could catapult your venture to the next level. Garnering over 2,000 attendees and 280 exhibitors in 2026, DiscoveryX is a showcase of leading-edge technologies, best practices, and collaborative research across Ontario's innovation ecosystem.

Event Requirements

The objective of this multi-year Request for Proposal (RFP) is to solicit proposals for providing event management and logistics services for Ontario Centre of Innovation's Annual Conference in 2027 and 2028. The conference will be held at the Enercare Centre, Toronto.

- Conference 2027 will be held on April 21 and 22
- Conference 2028 will be held on April 26 and 27

Details of the services required are outlined below and are subject to change.

Issuance of this RFP does not commit the Ontario Centre of Innovation to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of a response, or to procure a contract for any services, software, and/or equipment.

Event Objectives

- Build a profile for Ontario Centre of Innovation and the innovation community in Ontario, along with its stakeholders, to maximize networking opportunities and help build partnership opportunities for entrepreneurs, industry, researchers, and others.
- Provide a forum for collaboration and exchanging new ideas and critical information among government, researchers, academia, industry, entrepreneurs, students, and investors.
- Showcase Ontario's world-class research and innovative technologies, including those currently being developed with Ontario Centre of Innovation support, to a diverse range of potential partners, including small, medium, and large companies, governments, and academia, as well as foreign markets and media.
- Support Ontario's industrial growth, expansion of markets, and the creation of Ontario-based employment in Ontario Centre of Innovation-supported sectors
- Showcase entrepreneurs to investors, other companies, and academia.
- Grow the DiscoveryX annually, increasing attendee and exhibitor participation.

Our goal each year is to find new and better ways to meet the needs of our participants, increase exhibitor and attendee ROI, provide unique content to stimulate ideas and discussion, improve the delivery of our event, and maintain DiscoveryX as the "must-attend" event in the innovation space in Canada and further develop its international reputation.

Target Audience

- Industry (Owners, Presidents/CEOs, heads/members of corporate R&D teams)
- Entrepreneurs
- Investment community (Angels, VC, Financial Institutions)
- Regional Innovation Centres
- Provincial, federal government

- Academic researchers
- Post-secondary students
- Media

The audience is primarily Canadian, with the majority of attendees based in Ontario.

Key Messages/Themes

- Canada's leading innovation-to-commercialization conference.
- A destination for the brightest minds in research, innovation, and business.
- A forum for collaboration – exchanging new ideas and critical information among researchers, academia, and industry.
- Ontario Centre of Innovation is at the centre of innovation, driving economic growth and job creation through investments in the commercialization and adoption of new technologies. As host, Ontario Centre of Innovation is showcasing the best of Ontario's technology companies.

Preliminary Agenda & Specifications for 2027 (subject to change)

o Tuesday, April 20

- Supplier Load in (Show services, AV, Event management and Venue)
- Exhibitor set-up
- Rehearsals

o Wednesday, April 21

- Registration opens at 7:00 am
- Pre-meetings and workshops (TBD)
- Exhibitor Showcase opens at 10:00 am
- Opening remarks at 1:00 pm
- Keynote speaker(s)
- Programming: multiple simultaneous panels/sessions/ pitch competitions from 2:30 pm-5:30 pm
- Networking Reception 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm

o Thursday, April 22

- Exhibitor showcase opens at 9:00 am
- Programming: multiple simultaneous panels/sessions/pitch competitions from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm
- Closing ceremony – 3:00 pm
- Keynote speaker(s)
- Conference closes at 4:00 pm

Event Venue:

Energycare Centre, Halls A, B (approx. 100,000 – 150,000 sq. ft., depending on Halls utilized per year)

- Expected registrations 2027: 3,000 Expected Exhibitors: 300 Halls A&B
- Expected registrations 2028: 3,000 Expected Exhibitors: 300 Halls A&B

Potential event elements:

- Facilities for media, speaker’s green room, VIPs, and registration
- Preconference meetings and workshops
- Opening remarks and keynote addresses
- Opening networking reception
- Awards ceremony
- Panel discussions
- Pitch competitions
- Trade delegations
- Mentoring sessions
- Roundtable discussions

The conference will integrate speaker and panel sessions into the trade show, with possible modifications (if you would like to view previous show floor plans and agendas, please request them).

Concurrent programming locations:

Venues are located on the show floor for various presentations, panel discussions, and mentorship. The number of required feature areas is dependent upon programming for a given year.:

Ontario Centre of Innovation’s Role

Ontario Centre of Innovation will retain primary responsibility for the following roles:

- Conference programming
- Sponsorships
- Maintenance of the DiscoveryX website and app
- Marketing and communications for the conference
- Media relations
- Speaker selection and contracts
- Invitation and confirmation of dignitaries and VIPs
- Negotiation of all supplier contracts
- Issuing RFP for additional suppliers (i.e., AV, Show Services)

Event Management Company's Role

The following scope of services will form the basis of your proposed event management fees:

Logistical planning and onsite management

- Development and maintenance of the critical path, incorporating Ontario Centre of Innovation and event lead responsibilities, including Enercare venue and catering requirements.
- Complete management of the work plan logistics for the event.
- Provision of run-sheet and Ontario Centre of Innovation staff orientation guide.
- Work with Ontario Centre of Innovation to create and execute volunteer duty programs, meetings, and training.
- Event meetings on a bi-weekly basis throughout the planning cycle (frequency will increase to a weekly basis in the final two months before the conference).
- Record and distribute minutes of meetings, including action items.
- Alongside Ontario Centre of Innovation staff, manage onsite catering, events, meetings, and rehearsals, including room preparation, AV, décor, signage, and event execution.
- Coordinate all rehearsals, sound, and lighting checks.
- Set up and maintain the green room, VIP room, staff room (with equipment as required, i.e., printers, copiers), and media room.
- Work alongside Ontario Centre of Innovation staff to ensure first aid and security requirements are fulfilled.
- Respond to inquiries from delegates and exhibitors.

Special considerations

- Address all accessibility, dietary, and other issues.
- Ensure all applicable licenses and appropriate insurance coverage are available.

Sourcing and coordinating suppliers

- Source and coordinate suppliers as needed and meet Ontario Centre of Innovation procurement requirements for necessary services outside of the list of pre-contracted suppliers. Suppliers subject to approval by the Ontario Centre of Innovation.
- Coordinate supplier contracts (for suppliers who may be required in addition to Ontario Centre of Innovation pre-contracted suppliers) and liaise with other DiscoveryX suppliers to ensure timely and accurate delivery of services.
- Ensure venue contract terms are fulfilled.

Speaker, Sponsor, and Exhibitor support

- Develop/create an exhibitor management system for their onboarding.
- Work with Ontario Centre of Innovation staff on sponsor and exhibitor deliverables based on the sponsorship package.
- Work with Ontario Centre of Innovation staff on the on-site speaker's requirements and deliverables and ensure adequate preparation.
- Support the sponsor experience to ensure ongoing relationships for future conferences.
- Together with the Ontario Centre of Innovation, create an Exhibitor Handbook (Rules and regulations to exhibit)
- Together with the Ontario Centre of Innovation, manage the tradeshow floorplan and assign exhibitor booth numbers.
- Respond on time to exhibitor inquiries.
- Create a show services document for exhibitors.
- Create a dockmaster schedule for smooth move-in and move-out.

Registration System, Website and App - Service & Support

- Recommend supplier(s) to provide website, registration and mobile app services who can provide integration with KLIK Badging for selection and approval by the Ontario Centre of Innovation.
- **Website** - Ontario Centre of Innovation will manage the website & platform with the following requirements:
 - Existing Domain Integration: The system must seamlessly connect to our existing URL (DiscoveryX). The vendor will handle or guide the DNS mapping to ensure a smooth launch.
 - User-Friendly Website Builder: The event page/site must be built on an intuitive, no-code, drag-and-drop platform. Formatting for web and mobile versions of the website should be easy to manage.
 - Internal Autonomy & Training: Our team must be able to easily update text, schedule changes, and speaker bios without coding. The option to internally add code is an asset. The vendor must provide a brief training walkthrough upon handover.
 - Portability: When launching a website for a future event, content from previous events should be able to be easily transferred over.
 - Style: Website must be able to host photos, videos, headshots, and logos. The website should have a simple solution for uploading logos (sponsors, exhibitors, etc.) without having to format them manually.
 - Mapping: the website should be able to easily upload a map of the show floor when available.
- **Mobile App & On-Site Integration**
 - Mobile Check-In App: The system must include a reliable, native mobile app (iOS and Android). It must support rapid QR-code ticket scanning and real-time sync with the attendee database.

- Third-Party Data Integrations: The platform must natively connect (or integrate via API) with standard marketing and data tools, allowing registration data to instantly sync with our CRM (DiscoveryX website), email marketing platforms, and analytics tracking tools.
 - Interactive Floor Plan: The website/platform must feature a dynamic, interactive floor plan or exhibition map allowing attendees to view exhibitor booths, click for sponsor details, and navigate the venue layout.
 - 1-on-1 Meeting Scheduler: The system must include a native or integrated booking tool allowing attendees, speakers, and exhibitors to view availability and schedule private 1-on-1 meetings directly through the event platform.
 - KLIK Smart Badge Integration: The registration software must seamlessly integrate with KLIK smart badge technology. This ensures that attendee registration data instantly syncs with KLIK wearable devices for contact exchange, gamification, and passive session tracking.
- **Registration System** - Alongside the Ontario Centre of Innovation, manage the online registration system and the relationship with the supplier, including:
 - Integration of the registration system (name, title, company, etc.) into the DiscoveryX website, with the ability to do the following.
 - Pre-registration
 - Attendee Experience: The checkout process must be mobile-friendly and support custom form logic (e.g., dietary needs, custom questions) and tiered ticketing (VIP, General Admission, Promo Codes, etc.).
 - Automated Logistics: The system must automatically email branded confirmation tickets with calendar files and unique check-in QR codes immediately upon registration.
 - Payment & Reporting: Must feature secure, PCI-compliant payment processing (e.g., Moneris) with an easy-to-read dashboard for tracking real-time ticket sales and attendee data.
 - Supply logistical information through the registration system, including move-in/move-out schedule, floor plans, and fulfillment of booth requirements.
 - Provide Ontario Centre of Innovation admin access to the website, and the registration system will be used for other Ontario Centre of Innovation events post-DiscoveryX.
 - Please indicate how the registration process, website and mobile App will be implemented.
 - Work with Ontario Centre of Innovation to register staff, speakers, sponsors and their guests, VIPs, and other attendees for conference-related meetings and workshops.
 - Provide onsite registration support for attendees, exhibitors, and VIPs.
 - Onsite delivery of attendee, exhibitor, and speaker conference materials, badges, tickets, and parking passes (exhibitors only).
 - Working with the Show Services company to provide exhibitor desk and support for booth setup and on-site requirements.

Financial management and reporting

- Provision of quotes and pre-approval for anticipated expenses.
- Reporting on registration and finances:
 - Weekly registration reports from activation of registration to four (4) weeks before the conference
 - Daily registration reports (on business days) from four (4) weeks before conference day
 - Post-event final report within five (5) business days of the conference.
- Prepare final registration reports and analysis, as well as financial reporting and invoice reconciliation.

Proposal Format

- Provide an overview including agency background, organizational chart, key personnel biographies, account services structure, company size, current clients with length of service (identify potential conflicts), core competencies, and any relevant experience.
- Identify who on your team will be managing the various responsibilities and their experience.
- Your proposal should include an estimate for all event management services listed.

Agency References

- Provide three (3) customer references for which the Agency has done similar work.
- References to include contact, company name, email address, and telephone number.
- The Agency permits the Ontario Centre of Innovation to contact submitted references.

Pricing & Payment Terms

- Indicate the fee for a multi-year contract.
- Indicate the discount allowed for prompt payment and the period within which the invoice must be paid to qualify for the discount.
- Proposed remuneration structure and payment terms.
- Outline any potential additional costs/ mark-ups.
- Prices are to be quoted in Canadian dollars and inclusive of all costs.

Ontario Centre of Innovation Evaluation

- Event Management RFP submissions will be evaluated using the following criteria:
- Experience, expertise, qualifications, and capability to carry out work described in the Event Management Role (40%)
- Price, Payment and Pricing Terms (50%)
- Presentation of Proposal / Company Background and References (10%)

- Selected organizations will be requested to present to the Ontario Centre of Innovation committee and will be requested to provide four (4) copies of their formal presentation.

Timeline

- Submit proposals by 4:00 p.m. Monday, July 24, 2026.
- Ontario Centre of Innovation advises the top 3 shortlisted agencies the week of July 27, 2026.
- Presentations by shortlisted agencies the week of Aug 10, 2026.
- Ontario Centre of Innovation advises agencies on the decision Week of Aug 17, 2026.

Subsequent Contract Terms and Conditions

- The Ontario Centre of Innovation reserves the right to award all, part, or none of this solicitation.
- Contract renewal for 2028 is subject to performance in 2027.
- This RFP does not create an employment relationship. Individuals performing services required by the contract are not employees of Ontario Centre of Innovation. Vendor's employees shall not be considered employees of the Ontario Centre of Innovation and, as such, shall not be eligible for benefits accruing to Ontario Centre of Innovation employees.
- Any changes to the scope of services and associated costs following the execution of the contract must be submitted in writing and are subject to approval by the Ontario Centre of Innovation.
- Travel and travel reimbursement are not authorized for this acquisition.
- The vendor will be paid upon submission of proper invoices to the Ontario Centre of Innovation at the prices stipulated in the contract.
- Invoices will contain the contract number and reference number.

Response Deadline/Schedule

Responses are required via email by **4:00 p.m., Friday, July 24, 2026, to the following:**

Palak Verma

Tradeshaw and Exhibition Lead

Ontario Centre of Innovation

pverma@oc-innovation.ca

All bids will be acknowledged with a return receipt.

Proposal Retention

Proposals submitted in response to this RFP will not be returned. It is the understanding that the contents of the proposals are the property of the agency and will not be utilized in any marketing efforts unless the agency enters into a written agreement with the Ontario Centre of Innovation.

Questions / Clarifications

Questions may be addressed via email to Palak Verma.

Responses may or may not be shared with all potential bidders.