CIT

Development and Commercialization Program (DC)

Program Guidelines

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Program Overview and Objectives

The Development and Commercialization (DC) Program supports the development and commercialization of Ontario made products and services that integrate/adopt Critical Technologies (5G and advanced networks, AI, blockchain, robotics, quantum, cybersecurity) related to four key sectors: Advanced Manufacturing, Agri-Food, Construction and Mining.

The DC program enables Ontario based, standalone small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to access technology facilities and capabilities across the province to develop, test, validate and showcase their products and services, helping disruptive innovations hit the market faster.

The CIT-DC program contributes funding from $50,000 minimum up to a maximum of $200,000 in reimbursement funds. SMEs must provide at least a 1:1 funding match.

The Development and Commercialization (DC) Program is part of the Critical Industrial Technologies Initiative (CIT) delivered by OCI (Ontario Centre of Innovation) on behalf of the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

Benefits to the **Applicant**
• Accelerate adoption of new commercialized Critical Industrial Technologies, through access to sector/Critical Technology facilities and capabilities • Modernize and enhance the competitiveness of your products and services • Release products to the market faster and reach the right customers • Access to the latest knowledge, expertise and training • Referrals, exposures, and connection to CIT partners and potential customers in the ecosystem • Opportunity to **showcase your** product/service and gain increased market exposure • Third –party validation and support • Increase productivity, revenue, and jobs

How Funding Works

CIT Contribution	**Reimbursement** of 50% of total eligible project costs, up to a maximum of $200,000, with a minimum of $50,000.
Matching Requirement	50 per cent (minimum) of total eligible project costs (i.e., minimum 1:1 match to CIT contribution) • Contribution match may come from *Applicant* and/or *Partners* • Contribution match MUST be in the form of **private** sector contributions, and be unencumbered from other government grant sources
Example	Total eligible project costs: $400,000 • Maximum OCI contribution: $200,000 • Minimum applicant contribution $200,000
Funding Recipient	SME Applicant Company

Eligibility Requirements

Applicant

- A small- and medium- sized enterprise (SME) with fewer than 500 global full-time employees.
- Must have registered operations (R&D, manufacturing, product management, etc.) in Ontario and a valid CRA business number.
- *Applicants* who have received over $500,000 of funding from OCI administered programs in their lifetime (excluding TalentEdge) are required to obtain OCI approval before a new application for funding is initiated. Your Business Development Manager can guide you through the process.
- Has the intent and potential to apply, exploit and/or commercialize the results of the project for the economic benefit of Ontario.
- Has the necessary expertise and resources to put the project into effect within an appropriate time frame.
- In good financial and reporting standing with OCI.
- Adoption of critical technologies is part of their long-term product roadmap.

Strategic Partner

- SME applicant companies may choose to apply in collaboration with a strategic partner company. This is not mandatory, but preference will be given to SME applicants with strategic partners involved in their project outcomes.
- A strategic partner could be a private industry partner and/or public sector organizations such as but not limited to a municipality, a healthcare facility, or a public utility.
- The strategic partner company should represent a significant potential commercial partner/strategic client for the proposed innovative product/service.
- The SME and strategic partner must have an arm's-length business relationship.

- Strategic Partner must agree to complete the required OCI reporting.

Project

- Projects must support Critical Technology integration, adoption, demonstration, prototyping, testing by the SME.
- Projects must involve the utilization of at least one of the Technology Development Sites for a minimum of 2 hours per test bed. If applicable to the project a SME can leverage multiple sites.
- Solution should involve the acceleration, development, or integration of at least one of the six Critical Technologies (5G and Advanced networks, AI, blockchain, robotics, cybersecurity and quantum).
- Projects should result in the development of a new solution, product, or service with strong commercial opportunity in one or more of the four Key Sectors.
- Project activities are carried out in Ontario.
- Minimum 1:1 contribution match by Applicant.
- Projects must be a maximum of 6 months in duration.
- Solution MUST already have all necessary certifications, if required, for a project to be executed.
- Project MUST be the basis for a highly competitive business and MUST offer good return on investment and benefits to Ontario (e.g., new revenues, job creation/retention, new customers, follow on investment and productivity improvement).
- Intellectual Property (IP) arising from the project will be managed by the Applicant, OCI does not claim or manage IP rights. Successful applicants and if applicable, Project Partner(s), must execute OCI's funding agreement, including an executed Intellectual Property Statement, where the IP agreement between all the project partners will be outlined.

Note: Technology Development Sites and offerings are subject to change. For the latest information and updates please contact your BDM (Business Development Manager) or Sector Manager and/or refer to the CIT webpage.

How to Apply

Program Status: Open for applications (accepted on a rolling basis)

Application Process and Timelines

1. Applications MUST be initiated in AccessOCI by a OCI Business Development Manager (BDM) or CIT Sector Manager (SM).

   Companies that wish to be connected with an OCI Business Development Manager or Sector Manager should submit an OCI Company Intake Form.

   Please note completion of this form does not constitute an application for funding. A BDM/SM will contact you within two business days to discuss the opportunity. If you are already working with a BDM/SM, please indicate this in the form.

2. Once the BDM/SM confirms that the opportunity is suitable for the program, the Applicant will receive login information to OCI's online application system, AccessOCI, to begin completing the application.

3. Complete the online application form and upload the required supporting documents:

    - Resumes/CVs from relevant team members
    - Letter of support from strategic partner company (to be included only if a Strategic Partner is engaged with the project)
    - Company profile from strategic partner company (to be included only if a Strategic Partner is engaged with the project)

4. Request your BDM to provide an endorsement of the application. **The endorsement must be requested at least one week prior to submission.** Once the endorsement is provided, a submission button will become visible, and the applicant or BD will then be able to submit the application.

5. All submitted applications will undergo an initial internal review for eligibility, completeness, and financial compliance. A list of any deficiencies will be sent to the applicant for revision.

6. When the application is endorsed as eligible and complete by OCI's internal team, the application will be sent for review to the external committee compromising of, subject matter experts as well as the CIT Review Committee.

7. Successful Applicants will be notified by OCI and provided an outline of conditions and additional information necessary to activate the project. Applicants who are not selected will be notified by OCI. Feedback on the decision can be provided by their BD.

Reference Documents

- Eligible Expenditures Guide
- OCI Funding Agreement
- Proposal Questions - (Note: this sample application template is for informational purposes only. Applications are only accepted through OCI's online system where full application requirements are listed).
- Letter of Support Template - (Note: Letter of Support is only required if an application includes a strategic partner. Applications with no strategic partner are not required to submit a Letter of Support).

Assessment Process and Criteria

The Development and Commercialization (DC) program is a discretionary, non-entitlement program with limited funding. OCI will fund qualified projects with the potential for the greatest economic benefits and contribution relative to the set DC program objectives. Not all eligible applications can be funded.

All eligible projects are assessed on their merit and undergo a review process against program objectives and assessment criteria.

Applications are internally reviewed for eligibility, completeness, and financial compliance, prior to evaluation by independent external reviewers with domain and sector expertise. All reviewers are bound by Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs). The final funding decision is made by OCI.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated against assessment criteria including, but not limited to:

- Clarity of the company challenge, significance of the opportunity, and expected economic benefit to the company and Ontario (e.g., new revenues, job creation/retention, productivity improvements).
- Demonstrate applicability and benefit of one or more Critical Technologies leading to novel, newly adapted or adopted processes, products, and/or services.
- Clarity of the role Critical Technologies will play in the SME's long-term roadmap and development across one or more of the Key Sectors.
- Ability of the innovation to address the underlying challenges the applicant SME faces.
- The incremental role and benefit of the CIT test site(s) and expertise will play in the SMEs proposed project.
- Demonstrate appropriate skills, resources, and methodology to complete the project. Including clarity of roles and responsibilities, feasibility and appropriateness of the project plan and budget.
- Evidence of next steps, and clear strategy and capacity to bring the results to market and/or implement at the company.
- Anticipated tangible deliverables in the form of new technologies, new processes, significant skills transfer, job creation, or other benefits to society.
- If a receptor/strategic partner is involved, their role and impact on accelerating the innovation's path to market will be evaluated.
- Overall quality and completeness of the application.

Project Activation, Funds and Reporting

Project Activation

The Applicant and strategic partner if applicable must execute the OCI Funding Agreement, within 30 days of the announcement of award.

The executable agreement with schedules specific to the approved proposal will be generated through our online management system and sent to all contracting parties.

Flow of Funds

- OCI funds flow only to the Applicant.
- Reimbursements are triggered by the submission and approval of claims and reports.
- Reimbursement claims from the Applicant to OCI are made when submitting interim and final

reports and paid following approval.

Use of Funds

OCI funds can only be used for eligible expenses per the eligible project expenditures document.

Project Reporting

Reporting instructions and templates will be sent to successful parties at the time of reporting. Reports must be received and approved by OCI prior to release of funds for eligible claims.

Please note that to receive funding from OCI, the applicant MUST complete all required reports as a contractual obligation.

Note: **Applicants MUST *retain all proof of purchase, receipts, and other relevant documentation relating to eligible expenses. These should be included in the Final Report.***

The following project reports will be required.

Final Report

A final report, including progress, project metrics, data and information requirements, claim form, proof of expenditures and partnership contributions (if applicable), financial attestation, and a request for reimbursement is required at the end of the project. Forty-five (45) days prior to the scheduled completion date, the Applicant will receive an email notification of the project end date from the AccessOCI system, with a link to the Final Project Report, should the Applicant wish to begin entering data.

- Applicants can request early reporting by emailing the Program Manager.
- On the scheduled project completion date, the Applicant will receive another notification and a link to complete a Final Project Report the AccessOCI system.
- Applicants must submit their Final Reports within 30 days of project completion to be reimbursed for eligible expenses, release the holdback and maintain good financial standing with OCI.
- If an extension to complete the project is required, the Applicant must request it prior to the scheduled project completion date, using the Project Administration tab in their AccessOCI project file. OCI must approve all extensions in advance. If approved, a maximum extension of three months will be allowable.

Annual Metrics

If the project continues past a fiscal year end (March 31), the Applicant will be required to complete an annual Metrics survey each April, for the part of the project that has been completed since the previous March 31. This annual report is mandatory for OCI to fulfil its contract with its funding Ministries. Required metrics reports from all partners must be submitted in order to maintain good financial standing with OCI.

Retrospective Survey

At one, two, and three years after project completion, the project partner will be sent a link to complete a retrospective survey to collect data on commercial outcomes from the project. This information is required by OCI for assessment of program impact and continuous improvement.

Project Changes

If required, Applicants MUST request project extensions, milestone variances, and/or variances to the project partners, scope of work or budget exceeding 10% of any budget category value, using the Project Change Request form in the Project Administration tab in their AccessOCI project file. Such requests must be made at the earliest possible opportunity and approved before any planned changes are implemented.

Contacts

For further questions regarding program guidelines, eligibility, and submitting the online application, please contact your OCI Business Development Manager or CIT Sector Manager.

For other inquiries, please contact:

CIT Program Manager: Stephanie Sim
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