



**Research and Innovation  
Process Guidelines  
For Applicants**

**2021-2022**

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## **1. Overview**

The Agriculture Funding Consortium (AFC) is a voluntary body that has no legal standing and is comprised of a number of organizations, each of which is responsible for establishing its own research and innovation priorities and investment mandate. Information on current areas of priority is available from each individual organization or through the following link: <https://www.fundingconsortium.ca>.

The purpose of the AFC is a collaborative one-window approach to coordinate the application, review and funding process for proposed agriculture and food research and innovation projects and stimulate private/public sector participation in Alberta's agriculture and the food industry.

## **2. Submission and Review Process**

There is a two-stage proposal process for the AFC call for proposals:

### **2.1. Letter of Intent (LOI) Submission**

Applicants are required to submit an LOI to the AFC by the date indicated in Section 5. The AFC members will review the LOIs; taking into consideration the criteria for evaluating proposals (Section 3.5).

### **2.2. Full Proposal**

Only successful LOIs will be invited to submit a full proposal. Applicants will be informed by the date indicated in Section 5 whether or not they will be invited to submit a Full Proposal and will be notified of the funding agency that will take the lead as a liaison between the AFC and the applicant. Full proposals must be submitted by the date indicated in Section 5.

LOIs, including any supplementary documentation, should be submitted through the on-line proposal system at: <https://www.fundingconsortium.gov.ab.ca/Account>.

Signatures can be scanned and emailed to [info@fundingconsortium.ca](mailto:info@fundingconsortium.ca). The applicant and their organizations' signatures will be required at the time of submission of full proposal. In circumstances where collaborators are unavailable for signatures from collaborators and collaborator's institutions may follow submission by emailing them to [info@fundingconsortium.ca](mailto:info@fundingconsortium.ca), with the expectation that every effort was made to secure all signatures by full proposal due date.

Upon receipt, proposals will be reviewed for completeness and may be rejected at the sole discretion of AFC members. The lead funder will notify applicants if their proposal is incomplete and request the completed information by a specific date. Incomplete proposals will not be reviewed further.

The proposals will be reviewed for scientific, technical or innovative excellence, relevance and applicability to the AFC member's priorities (found at: <https://www.fundingconsortium.ca>).

Proposals will be reviewed by external peer reviewers for scientific merit and industry relevance, as appropriate. Reviewers will sign non-disclosure agreements and will have to declare all potential conflicts of interest. They will evaluate each proposal

taking into consideration the criteria that will be provided to them by the AFC members (see Section 3.5).

### **3. Eligibility**

For their Application to be considered, the Applicant(s) must meet the following eligibility criteria established by the AFC member organizations.

The AFC consists of more than a dozen different member groups (Section 11). The AFC is not a legal entity; therefore, each of the member groups (known here as the “Funder(s)”) have their own distinct terms and conditions. When a LOI is successful, an applicant should be cognizant of the eligibility requirements of their anticipated Funder(s).

#### **3.1. Eligible Applicants**

The applicant and the project team may be comprised of qualified researchers from the following types of organizations:

- a. Provincial governments and their public agencies;
- b. Federal government and federal crown corporations;
- c. Non-profit research institutions;
- d. Academic institutions, including universities, colleges, and technical schools;
- e. Industry associations serving the agriculture, food and beverage industry;
- f. Existing or prospective companies and supply chain partners that can increase the value and sales of Alberta products; and/or
- g. Other research institutions, firms or enterprises approved by the members of the AFC.

#### **3.2. Eligible Activities**

Please consult the research priorities of each funding consortium member as listed in Section 11 and also available on the consortium website at <https://www.fundingconsortium.ca>. Applicants are encouraged to contact funding organizations they consider relevant to their proposed project for feedback prior to submission of the LOI.

#### **3.3. Funding from Other Sources (cash and in-kind)**

Applicants are encouraged to obtain funding from other sources to supplement the contribution of AFC members. Applicants must be transparent about additional funding requested or obtained from other organizations. Two categories of contributors are identified as follows:

- a. **Government Contributions** – Departments and agencies of provincial governments, federal governments, municipal governments, governments from other countries, and institutions/organizations which receive any type of public funding for operations and is identified in Schedules “B” and “C”.
- b. **Industry Contributors** - any person, company or industry association that contributes any funding, services or intellectual property to the Activity and is identified in Schedules “B” and “C”.

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Upon completion of the research project, the applicant may be required to provide confirmation of receipt of funding from all sources contributing to the project.

### 3.4. Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

| Category  | Eligible for funding from AFC Members   | Ineligible for Funding from AFC Members  |
|---|---|--|
| Personnel – research team                         | <p>Time for specific activities on the project, prorated at usual annual salary rates, only for investigators not already employed by the institution or the collaborating institution conducting the project.</p> <p>Salaries of scientific and technical personnel specifically required to conduct the research.</p> <p>Graduate student research bursaries at usual rates.</p> <p>Personnel hired specifically to ensure the project is delivered e.g. project manager, summer students</p> | <p>Salaries of principal investigators (project leader) already employed by universities, colleges, other academic institutions, companies or government agencies.</p> <p>Eligible time charged at rates above existing salary.</p>  |
| Personnel – consultants                           | Outside consultants justified as essential to the project.  | Consulting time from colleagues eligible to be part of the research team.  |
| Administration and Management of Project Finances | <p>Eligibility of “direct” or “indirect” costs will vary with the policy of the AFC member.</p> <p>When overhead and other administration costs are eligible, they must be presented clearly on the proposal and the calculation must be shown in the budget commentary.</p>  | <p>Eligibility of “direct” or “indirect” costs will vary with the policy of the AFC member. Please review the terms and conditions of the funder(s) to determine if overhead costs are eligible.</p> <p>Goods and Services Tax (GST), Provincial Sales Tax (PST), Harmonized Sales Tax (HST), or other similar taxes</p> |
| Travel  | <p>Travel to project sites.</p> <p>Reasonable travel to present to or discuss project with managers and/or policy makers.</p> <p>Reasonable travel for information dissemination or</p>   | Travel for marketing activities, and any other travel costs not exclusively associated with the project.   |

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|  | commercialization purposes.   |   |
| Capital Assets /Equipment                        | <p>Purchase cost of equipment <u>directly</u> required for the project up to a maximum of 10-20%* of total project costs.</p> <p><b>NB*</b>: Enquire with the respective funder if you intend to purchase equipment. Different AFC members may have different policies.</p> | <p>Projects requiring major capital investment or commitment (purchase of land, buildings, large machinery and equipment).</p> <p>Cost of office space, office rental and/or refurbishment.</p> <p>Cost of heat, light and utilities.</p> |
| Supplies   | Cost of supplies directly required for the project.   | Cost of supplies not directly required for the project.   |
| CDL (Communication, and Knowledge Dissemination) | <p>Audio-visual and other costs to support uptake of results.</p> <p>Costs relating to linkage and exchange such as costs of meetings, teleconferences, etc.</p> <p>Publishing costs.</p>   | <p>Ongoing social media activity.</p> <p>Normal operation, salary, infrastructure and facility maintenance costs, and any other expense deemed by AFC not to be an eligible expense.</p>  |

### **3.5. Criteria for Evaluating Proposals**

AFC members will review research proposals confidentially. Each proposal will be evaluated according to the Funders' strategic priorities. The review criteria may include:

- a. the expected significance, relevance and benefit or impact to the agricultural and agri-food industry.
- b. the developmental or scientific merit of the proposal; (basic, applied, adoptive, etc.);
- c. innovation and uniqueness;
- d. the competence of the research team;
- e. the appropriateness of the size, duration, and cost of the proposal;
- f. feasibility;
- g. budget requested; and
- h. the effectiveness of a proposed knowledge dissemination, technology transfer, or commercialization plan.

### **3.6. Regulatory Considerations**

- a. All applicants must ensure that all proposed activities are lawful and obtain all relevant governmental approvals prior to commencing the project, including those related to public health and safety, labour codes and standards, care and use of animals in research, wildlife habitat, and environmental protection. If approvals are not obtained at the start of a project, the applicant must contact the lead organization with dates that they are expected to be in place.
- b. Applicants must be cognizant of worksite restrictions with collaborating institutions and ensure personnel have appropriate permissions/training required to work on/with collaborating institutions and/or project sites.
- c. Appropriate certification will be required for research involving animals, biohazards, radioactive materials, or possible effects on the environment and ethics review for research involving human subjects.
- d. All applicants whose proposal involves biotechnology-related research should include statements on any adverse impacts the results of the project may have on:
  1. food safety and human health (e.g., allergic reactions); and/or
  2. environmental sustainability (e.g., creation of a new weed as a result of gene flow from transgenic plants to wild relatives).
- e. If the research involves the transfer of DNA between unrelated organisms, the researcher is required to disclose the source of the genetic material to be transferred.
- f. The applicant is required to identify steps taken to mitigate harmful effects.

## **4. Successful Proposals**

Submission of a proposal does not entitle an applicant to a grant from one or more of the AFC members.

If the grant from AFC members is insufficient to cover the entire cost of the Project, the Applicant shall be solely responsible for raising the funds required from other sources to complete these activities. The Applicant acknowledges that the grant is the only financial assistance the AFC members will provide for the project.

Upon approval of a proposal by any member(s) of the AFC, written confirmation and description of additional funding secured (cash and in-kind) will be required. Applicants will be responsible for noting any stacking issues for funding (i.e. portion of funding required for matching funds to other grants) as well.

If a proposal is approved by a member or members of the AFC, the Applicant must enter into a Project Investment Agreement with the Lead Funder and/or other funding members (together or separately) to be eligible to receive funding. This Project Investment Agreement will specify the terms and conditions governing the funding.

Submission of a proposal authorises the Funder(s) to publish the project titles and contact information, funding requested and the brief summary for communication as provided on the application form.



## 5. Timeframe

Please visit the AFC website at <https://www.fundingconsortium.ca> for updated timelines.

## 6. Reporting Requirements

The Funder(s) will require the applicant to submit detailed interim progress reports and financial statements at minimum once per year on the approved templates (found at <https://www.fundingconsortium.ca>) as per the Funder(s) Funding Agreement(s). A final report and financial statement will be required within 90 (ninety) days of completion of the project. Final payment, if any, will be awarded upon approval of the final report and financial statement.

## 7. On-site Inspection

Each of the AFC members retains the right to conduct on-site inspections of supported projects in progress. As per the Project Investment Agreement, the Funder(s) retain the right to complete an audit.

## 8. Acknowledgment and Communications

Contributions from the Funder(s) of the proposal, organization and other contributors to research projects MUST be acknowledged on appropriate signs, stickers, publications and press releases dealing with each project.

## 9. Confidentiality

For the purpose of co-funding, an applicant's LOI may be disclosed to other agricultural-based funding agencies and organizations, with the applicant's submission. If you do not want your LOI disclosed to other potential funders, email [info@fundingconsortium.ca](mailto:info@fundingconsortium.ca). Consent is implied if there is no response.

With each LOI submitted, the project title, the applicant, the funding requested, and the 'brief summary for communication' as submitted by the applicant, is considered public information and may be shared with other potential funders.

## 10. Notice of Collection of Personal Information

Personal information provided to the AFC members via the research funding proposal process may require sharing information confidentially with external reviewers to assist with the evaluation process. This information is collected under the authority of *Section 33 (c)* and *Section 34 (1)(a)(i)* of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act* and/or where applicable, the *Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)*, and is protected by the privacy provisions of these Acts. For further information on the collection and use of this information, contact *Alexis Brown, Project Coordinator, Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR)*; 250 Karl Clark Road, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T6N 1E4, or through email at [info@fundingconsortium.ca](mailto:info@fundingconsortium.ca).

## 11. Funding Consortium Members links

Alberta Barley Commission - <http://www.albertabarley.com/>

Alberta Beekeepers Commission - <http://www.albertabeekeepers.org/>

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Alberta Chicken Producers - <http://www.chicken.ab.ca/>

Alberta Canola Producers Commission - <http://canola.ab.ca/>

Alberta Innovates - <http://www.albertainnovates.ca/>

Alberta Milk - <http://www.albertamilk.com/>

Alberta Pulse Growers Commission - <http://www.pulse.ab.ca/consumers>

Alberta Wheat Commission - <http://www.albertawheat.com/>

Egg Farmers of Alberta - <http://eggs.ab.ca/>

Potato Growers of Alberta - <http://www.albertapotatoes.ca/>

Saskatchewan Barley Development Commission - <http://saskbarleycommission.com/>

Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission - <http://www.saskwheat.ca/>

Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR) - <https://rdar.ca/>

Western Grains Research Foundation - <http://westerngrains.com/>