



**Research and Innovation  
Process Guidelines  
For Applicants**

**2019-2020**

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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: <http://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 research and innovation LOIs; taking into consideration the criteria for evaluating proposals (Section 3.6).

### **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.

LOI and Full Proposals, including any supplementary documentation, must be submitted through the on-line proposal system at:  
<https://www.fundingconsortium.gov.ab.ca/Account>.

Signatures can be scanned and emailed or faxed to [Polly.Virdee@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Polly.Virdee@gov.ab.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 [Polly.Virdee@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Polly.Virdee@gov.ab.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: <http://www.fundingconsortium.ca>).

Proposals will be sent for external review to scientific, business and/or industrial experts, 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 3.6).

### **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 14 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 proposal is successful at LOI stage, an applicant should be cognizant of the eligibility requirements of their anticipated Funder.

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

The research and innovation 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 Locations**

Research projects can be conducted either within or outside Alberta. The following are important considerations if the applicant/proposed project are to be conducted outside of Alberta:

- a. it is strongly recommended that at least one project team member be located in Alberta;
- b. the research work proposed must result in economic, environmental or social benefit to Alberta;
- c. the benefits gained by Alberta will be equivalent to those which would accrue if the work were conducted within the province.

#### **3.3. Eligible Activities**

##### **3.3.1. Research and Innovation Themes**

3.3.1.1. Proposals should address one or more of the strategic research and innovation themes important to AFC members:

- a. Sustainable crop production;
- b. Sustainable livestock production;
- c. Development or application of smart agriculture technologies;
- d. Development of value-added products derived from Alberta crop or livestock products or by-products;
- e. Development of new production, processing or distribution technologies;
- f. Supply chain or consumer concerns associated with agriculture and agri-food production; and

g. Additional priorities of AFC members. Links to priorities can be found in Section 11, and through [www.fundingconsortium.ca](http://www.fundingconsortium.ca).

3.3.1.2. In accordance with the above-mentioned strategic areas, the outcomes of the projects asking for support should have the potential to attain one or more of the following:

- a. improve the profitability of agricultural production and processing in Alberta;
- b. adaptation or mitigation of climate change resulting in improved crop or livestock productivity;
- c. enhance the global competitiveness of Alberta farmers and processors;
- d. contribute to the safety, quality and nutritional value of Alberta food, beverage and natural health products;
- e. contribute to the conservation of agricultural resources and the preservation of a wholesome environment;
- f. promote the diversification of agricultural, food and bio industrial production and processing in Alberta; and/or
- g. grow market share or protect market access.

3.3.1.3. Please consult the individual priorities of each funding consortium member as listed in Section 11. Applicants are encouraged to contact funding organizations they consider relevant to their proposed submission for feedback prior to submission of the LOI.

### **3.4. 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 the Government of Alberta, other 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”.

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

### 3.5. 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 investigators 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 | Eligibility of “direct” or “indirect” costs will vary with the policy of the AFC member   | <p>Eligibility of “direct” or “indirect” costs will vary with the policy of the AFC member. Generally overhead” costs are considered ineligible.</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.   |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | commercialization purposes.   |  |
| Capital Assets /Equipment                        | Purchase cost of equipment directly required for the project up to a maximum of 10-15%* of total project costs.<br><br><b>NB*:</b> Different AFC members may have different policies. | Projects requiring major capital investment or commitment (purchase of land, buildings, large machinery and equipment).<br><br>Cost of office space, office rental and/or refurbishment.<br><br>Cost of heat, light and utilities. |
| Supplies   | Cost of supplies directly required for the project.   | Cost of supplies not directly required for the project.  |
| CDL (Communication, and Knowledge Dissemination) | Audio-visual and other costs to support uptake of results.<br><br>Costs relating to linkage and exchange such as costs of meetings, teleconferences, etc.<br><br>Publishing costs.    | Ongoing social media activity.<br><br>Normal operation, salary, infrastructure and facility maintenance costs, and any other expense deemed by AFC not to be an eligible expense.  |
| Overhead   | Some direct costs may be allowed; subject to individual AFC member policies.  | Indirect overhead costs.   |

### 3.6. Criteria for Evaluating Proposals

AFC members will confidentially review research proposals. Each proposal will be evaluated according to the interested Funder's strategic priorities. Criteria may include

- a. the expected significance, relevance and benefit or impact for Alberta's 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.

### **3.7. 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

| <b>Important Dates</b>          |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Jan 14, 2019 (Mon, 16:00:00)    | AFC call for letters of intent opens         |
| Mar 28, 2019 (Thurs, 12:00:00)  | Letters of intent (LOI) due                  |
| May 6, 2019 (Mon, 16:00:00)     | Invitation of selected LOI for full proposal |
| June 27, 2019 (Thurs, 12:00:00) | Full proposals due                           |
| Jan 16, 2020 (Thurs, 16:00:00)  | Announcements of award to applicants         |

## 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 <http://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 [Polly.Virdee@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Polly.Virdee@gov.ab.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 Polly Virdee, *Project Coordinator*, Strategic Research & Development

Program, Innovation Agriculture Grants Section, Alberta Agriculture & Forestry, 7000 – 113 street, J. G. O'Donoghue Building, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6; [Polly.Virdee@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Polly.Virdee@gov.ab.ca)

## **11. Funding Consortium Members links**

Alberta Agriculture & Forestry - <http://agriculture.alberta.ca/srdp>  
Alberta Barley Commission - <http://www.albertabarley.com/>  
Alberta Beekeepers Commission - <http://www.albertabeekeepers.org/>  
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/>  
Sask Barley Development Commission - <http://saskbarleycommission.com/>  
Sask Wheat Development Commission - <http://www.saskwheat.ca/>  
Western Grains Research Foundation - <http://westerngrains.com/>