



**Research and Innovation
Process Guidelines
for Applicants**

Table of Contents

1.	Overview	2
2.	Submission and Review Process	2
	2.1. Letter of Intent (LOI) Submission	2
	2.2. Full Proposal	2
3.	Eligibility	3
	3.1. Eligible Applicants	3
	3.2. Eligible Activities	3
	3.3. Funding from Other Sources (cash and in-kind)	3
	3.4. Eligible and Ineligible Expenses	4
	3.5. Criteria for Evaluating Proposals	5
	3.6. Regulatory Considerations	6
4.	Successful Proposals	6
5.	Timeframe	7
6.	Reporting Requirements	7
7.	On-site Inspection	7
8.	Acknowledgment and Communications	7
9.	Confidentiality	7
10.	Notice of Collection of Personal Information	7
11.	Funding Consortium Members links	8

1. Overview

The Agriculture Funding Consortium (AFC) is a voluntary body that has no legal standing, consisting of 20 organizations, each responsible for setting its own strategic priorities and investment mandates. Information on current priority areas can be obtained from individual organizations or accessed through the following link: <https://www.fundingconsortium.ca>.

The AFC provides a collaborative, one-window approach to coordinate and streamline the application, review and funding process for agriculture and food research and innovation projects. It also aims to encourage private and public sector participation in Western Canada's agriculture and 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 on the AFC website, as described in Section 5. The AFC members will review the LOIs; taking into consideration the criteria for evaluating proposals (Section 3.5).

LOIs, including any supplementary documentation, should be submitted through the on-line proposal system at: https://rdar.smartsimple.ca/s_Login.jsp

2.2. Full Proposal (FP)

Only successful LOIs will be invited to submit a full proposal. Applicants will be notified by the date indicated on the AFC website, regarding their invitation status. They will also be informed of the funding agency serving as the liaison between the AFC and the applicant. Full proposals must be submitted by the deadline specified on the AFC website, as described in Section 5.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring they have communicated with and obtained permission from each collaborator before listing them in the application. AFC reserves the right to contact collaborators and their institutions listed in the application to confirm or clarify their involvement in the project.

Proposals will be reviewed for completeness and may be rejected at AFC's sole discretion. AFC members will appoint a liaison for each project to facilitate communications with the Primary Investigator (PI) and other AFC members throughout the decision-making process. The liaison will relay any questions, request additional information, and will be the point of contact for any challenges related to institutional approvals for submitting the LOI or Full Proposal. If a proposal is incomplete, the liaison will notify the applicant and request the missing information by a specified deadline. Incomplete proposals will not be reviewed further.

Complete 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>).

The review process varies among AFC members. In many instances, proposals will be reviewed by external peer reviewers for scientific merit and industry relevance, as appropriate. Reviewers must sign non-disclosure agreements and disclose any potential conflicts of interest. They will evaluate each proposal based on the criteria provided by AFC members (see Section 3.5).

Given the diverse review processes of individual AFC members, it is critical that funding proposals are understandable to a wide audience with diverse skillsets/expertise but will still be able to meet a peer review evaluation (as required by most AFC members).

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 20 different member groups (Section 11). Each of the member groups (known here as the “Funder(s)”) have their own distinct terms and conditions. Applicants 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.

* Applicants outside of Western Canada are eligible if they can demonstrate that the project will have a positive impact for Western producers.

3.2. Eligible Activities

Please consult the research priorities of each funding consortium member as listed 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.

- b. **Industry Contributors** - any person, company or industry association that contributes any funding, services or intellectual property to the Activity.

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 stipends 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 commercialization purposes.</p>	Travel for marketing activities, and any other travel costs not exclusively associated with the project.
Capital Assets /Equipment	<p>A capital asset is an equipment purchase directly required for a project costing >\$10,000. The 20 different AFC members have different policies with allowable capital costs, which may be subject to certain maximums (e.g., \$25,000). It is recommended PIs inquire with likely funders on capital asset funding 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 individual Funders' strategic priorities. The review criteria may include:

- a. Alignment with the Funder(s) strategic research priorities;
- b. Expected significance, relevance and benefit or impact to the agricultural and agri-food industry. In other words, the value of the research to the end-user (note: value may be economic, animal welfare, safety, etc.; the end-user may be producers or the wider industry at large);

- c. The developmental or scientific merit of the proposal; (basic, applied, adoptive, etc.);
- d. Assessment of the methodology. It is highly recommended to include a treatment list in the LOI and FP to assist with assessment of the proposal and methodology and budget;
- e. Innovation and uniqueness;
- f. Competence of the research team;
- g. Appropriateness of the size, duration, and cost of the proposal;
- h. Feasibility;
- i. Budget requested;
- j. Effectiveness of a proposed knowledge dissemination, technology transfer, or commercialization plan;
- k. Clarification of any perceived duplication or synergies of proposals currently under consideration by AFC members through other funding calls;
- l. If required by the applicant's institution, LOIs and FPs must have internal institutional approval for submission;
- m. Applicant's reporting for projects currently funded by AFC members must be up to date. Truant reporting by an applicant may impact funding decisions for this and future funding calls.

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 receive funding from one or more of the AFC members.

If funds from AFC members are insufficient to cover the entire cost of the Project, the Project will be declined. If there are sufficient funds to cover the requested funds as outlined in the

full proposal, a research funding agreement will be developed. The Applicant acknowledges that the research funding 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 an Agreement with the Funder/s (together or separately) to be eligible to receive funding. This 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 least once per year, as outlined in the Funder(s) Funding Agreement(s). A final report and financial statement will be required upon project completion. Final payment, if applicable, will be issued based on the terms outlined in the agreement, which may include approval of the final report or a final interim report.

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 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. 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 research@rdar.ca.

11. Funding Consortium Members links

1. Alberta Beef Producers - <https://www.albertabeef.org/>
2. Alberta Beekeepers Commission - <https://www.albertabeekeepers.ca/>
3. Alberta Canola Producers Commission - <http://canola.ab.ca/>
4. Alberta Chicken Producers - <https://chicken.ab.ca/>
5. Alberta Grains - <https://www.albertagrains.com/>
6. Alberta Innovates - <https://albertainnovates.ca/>
7. Alberta Pork - <https://www.albertapork.com/>
8. Alberta Pulse Growers Commission - <https://albertapulse.com/>
9. Egg Farmers of Alberta - <https://eggs.ab.ca/>
10. Genome Alberta - <https://genomealberta.ca/>
11. Manitoba Canola Growers Association - <https://canolagrowers.com/>
12. Manitoba Crop Alliance - <https://mbcropalliance.ca/>
13. Potato Growers of Alberta - <https://www.albertapotatoes.ca/>
14. Prairie Oat Growers Association - <https://poga.ca/>
15. Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR) - <https://rdar.ca/>
16. Saskatchewan Barley Development Commission - <https://saskbarley.com/>
17. Saskatchewan Oilseeds Development Commission - <https://saskoilseeds.com/>
18. Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission - <https://saskwheat.ca/>
19. Western Dairy Research Collaboration, as represented by Alberta Milk, BC Dairy, Dairy Farmers of Manitoba, and SaskMilk - <https://albertamilk.com/>
20. Western Grains Research Foundation - <https://wgrf.ca/>