SMARTGROWTH PROGRAM FAQ

GENERAL QUESTIONS

What is the Bioenterprise SmartGrowth Program?

A: The SmartGrowth Program is a funding program that can provide funding, on a matching basis, up to a maximum contribution of $100,000 with access to mentoring and coaching services. The fund is targeted towards agri-businesses with innovative technologies that are at or beyond Technology Readiness Level 7 (TRL 7+).

What is the TRL scale? How do I determine the TRL of my technology?

A: The TRL scale is a nine-point scale that helps categorize development stages, which is helpful to define project scope, progress, timelines, and resource requirements. The TRL system measures a technology's maturity, from Level 1 (Concept Evaluation) to Level 9 (Successful Deployment). The SmartGrowth Program will only consider projects focused on technologies that are at TRL 7 and beyond. To determine the TRL of your technology, click here.

What is the deadline for submitting a Letter of Intent (LOI)?

A: May 6th, 2020. The application deadline for the LOI has been extended to May 15th, 2020 at 12pm.
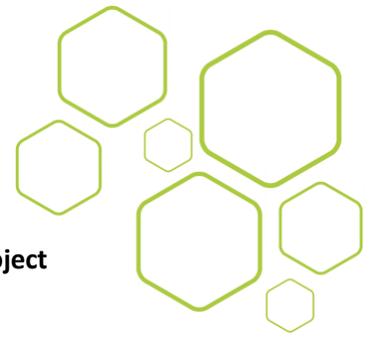
What happens after the Letter of Intent (LOI) is submitted?

A: After the LOI is submitted, it will be reviewed by the Bioenterprise team. Within 2 weeks, you will be contacted by the Bioenterprise team to either invite you to complete a full application or to notify you that your application has been declined.

If my company is approved, when will I receive funding?

A: The first round of funding is expected to be released in June 2020. Timelines are subject to change.

Is this a matching funding program?

A: Yes. Applicants can request up to 40% of the total project budget (eligible project costs), where the remaining 60% must be matched by the applicant.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Who can apply to the SmartGrowth Program?

A: Food and agri-businesses headquartered in Southern Ontario with innovative technologies that are at or beyond TRL 7 can apply to the SmartGrowth Program. The company must be incorporated in Canada and have less than 500 employees. The company must also be a member of Canada's Food & Agri-Tech Engine to access the SmartGrowth Program. Please refer to the Program Guide for a full list of Eligibility Criteria.

What is the maximum amount of funding I can apply for?

A: Applicants can request up to 40% of the total project budget (eligible project costs). The maximum contribution from the SmartGrowth Program is $100,000 on eligible projects with a total budget of $250,000 or greater. Maximum funding per project will be limited to 20% of annual revenues of the Applicant.

If my proposed project budget is below $100,000, can I still apply?

A: No. The minimum eligible project is $100,000 for which the SmartGrowth Program will contribute $40,000. Projects with a total budget of less than $100,000 will not be considered.

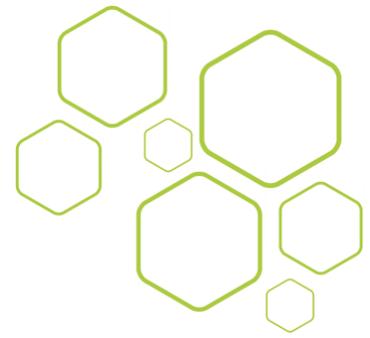If my proposed project budget is above $250,000, can I still apply?

A: Yes! Total project budgets can exceed $250,000 however, the contribution from the SmartGrowth Program will be a maximum of $100,000. Maximum funding per project will be limited to 20% of annual revenues of the Applicant.

I have already received funding from a FedDev Ontario program. Am I eligible for this funding?

A: Yes!

I'm not a member of Canada's Food & Agri-Tech Engine. Can I still apply?

A: Not until you have successfully joined Canada's Food and Agri-Tech Engine as a member. Only members have access to funding programs and services, including the SmartGrowth Program. For more information and for instructions on how to become a member, visit: Canada's Food & Agri-Tech Engine.

TYPE OF SUPPORT

What type of projects does the SmartGrowth Program support?

A: The project must be impactful and accelerate business growth and profitability while strengthening the regional economy for southern Ontario's agri-tech sectors. A wide variety of projects are eligible. Any of the following projects types or a combination of the following project types are eligible: Marketing, product demonstration, intellectual property (IP) protection, regulatory compliance, other commercialization-focused activities.

What project costs are covered under the SmartGrowth Program?

A: Please refer to page 6 of the Program Guide for a list of eligible costs.

What costs are not covered under the SmartGrowth Program?

A: Please refer to page 26 of the Program Guide for a list of ineligible expenses.

I need working capital, is the SmartGrowth Program for me?

A: No – this program will not fund working capital costs, or any costs of day-to-day business activity. All costs claimed through this program must be project specific.

APPLICATION PROCESS
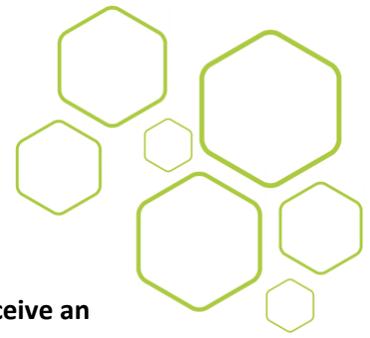
How do I apply to the SmartGrowth Program?

A: The first stage of the application process requires applicants to complete the LOI Written Proposal and the LOI Intake Form. To find these documents, visit the [Bioenterprise SmartGrowth Program](#) website and scroll down to "Application Toolkit". Please refer to [Applicant Guide I: Letter of Intent](#) for detailed instructions on how to complete the LOI.

Where do I find the LOI Written Proposal Template?

A: To find all required documents, including the LOI Written Proposal Template, visit the [Bioenterprise SmartGrowth Program](#) website and scroll down to "Application Toolkit".

What information do I need to provide in the Letter of Interest (LOI)?

The LOI is meant to give us a snapshot of your business and proposed project. It will ask for baseline information about your company, a description of your product, technology, or service, and a brief project overview. A business plan and/or pitch deck is also a mandatory requirement.

How long will it take to process the Letter of Intent (LOI)?

A: It will take approximately 2 weeks for your LOI to be reviewed before you receive an update.

Will I be notified if my Letter of Intent (LOI) is accepted?

A: Yes. If your LOI is accepted, you will be asked to complete a full application.

If I am invited to complete a full application, what information will I be asked to provide?

A: For a detailed list of what information is required in the Full Application stage, refer to page 5 of [Applicant Guide II: Full Application](#).

How do I show that I have the matching funds? What is acceptable for this?

A: Acceptable proof of matching funds includes proof of an available operating line of credit or a Letter of Comfort from the Applicant's bank or accounting firm. Other proof of matching funds may be accepted and is subject to approval by the Bioenterprise team.

Am I able to stack other funds that I've received through different federal and/or provincial funding programs to use towards my proposed project?

A: In some cases, yes. Stacking of government funding programs are subject to review and approval by the Bioenterprise team.

I have questions about my application. Can I get in touch with a Bioenterprise employee to discuss my proposed project?

A: Yes – The Bioenterprise team is able to assist applicants with their proposed project. Do not hesitate to reach out for assistance!

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

How is my project being assessed?

A: The project is assessed based on the benefit to local/provincial agriculture and/or the producer/processor community. It is also assessed based on expected economic impact (i.e. job creation, revenue generation, add-on investment, new products launched) to Ontario, and the ability of the product/service/technology to address Canadian or North American markets.