



SmartGrowth Program

Critical Project Financing for Agri-Technology Businesses focusing
on Digital Agriculture Solutions

2022-23 APPLICANT GUIDE II: FULL APPLICATION

Round 3: Open Call for Proposals



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1. Introduction

This Applicant Guide II provides instructions for preparing and submitting a Full Application to the SmartGrowth Program and provides guidance on the information to be included.

The SmartGrowth Program invites food and agri-businesses with innovative technologies that are at or beyond Technology Readiness Level 7 (TRL 7+), to lead impactful projects that will accelerate their business growth and profitability while strengthening the regional economy for Southern Ontario's innovative agri-technology industries (e.g., agri-tech, agri-food, agri-products, cleantech, and related sectors). The Round 3 (2022-23) open call for proposals will be open to businesses that operate in the digital agriculture sector as defined in the Program Guide.

To be considered for SmartGrowth funding, applications must be complete and provide all the required information, as stated in this guide.

Applicants are advised to read the Program Guide in conjunction with this Applicant Guide II to obtain more information on the SmartGrowth Program, including program objectives, selection criteria and the application and assessment process. Applicants with additional questions are encouraged to visit Frequently Asked Questions or are invited to contact Bioenterprise at submissions@bioenterprise.ca.

2. Invitation to Submit Full Proposals, Submission Process and Deadlines

Applications for funding under the SmartGrowth Program will be accepted in a two-phase process, consisting of an open call for Letters of Intent (LOIs) and an invitation-only Full Application. This guide focuses on Phase II: Full Application.

Invitations to submit full proposals will be issued directly to short-listed Applicants, following successful review of the LOI, in the form of an email. Included in this email will be the specific dates and timelines for each intake period. Applicants are encouraged to submit their Full Application in advance of this date to ensure that applications are successfully transmitted and received prior to the deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted nor retained for consideration.

Short-listed Applicants submitting a Full Application must pay a one-time, non-refundable Application Fee of \$200 + HST. Exceptions may apply to members of The Engine in good standing.

Full Applications must be submitted online through the [SmartGrowth R3: Full Application Form](#). **Email, mail, in-person and facsimile (fax) submissions will not be accepted.** Applications must be received by the submission deadline posted on the Bioenterprise website.

Only proposals put forward by Applicants who have received an invitation to submit Full Applications will be accepted.

Upon submitting the Full Application, a confirmation email and a copy of the completed SmartGrowth Full Application Form will be provided. Applicants are encouraged to retain a copy of their completed form for ease of reference until funding decisions are made.

All Full Applications received on time will be reviewed and assessed. Funding awards under the SmartGrowth Program will be announced upon completion of the Full Application review process. Successful award recipients will enter into a Contribution Agreement with Bioenterprise.

Successful applicants will receive a one-year complimentary Access membership to [Canada's Food & Agri-Tech Engine](#) upon successful project completion.

3. Full Application Process and Requirements

3.1 Contents

Complete Full Applications must include the following elements, completed in full:

1. Electronic version of the online *SmartGrowth R3: Full Application Form* (required)
2. Full Application Workbook that contains the following sections (required):
 - a. Company and product/technology overview
 - b. Detailed project overview outlining objectives, activities, and scope.
 - c. Assessment of the projected outcomes including economic growth, industrial benefits, and business outcomes of the proposed project.
 - d. Summary of project team and partners and their involvement, as well as expected outcomes from their participation.
 - e. Implementation plan, risk assessment and proposed mitigation strategy, activity timelines, and milestones initializing activities and achieving results.
3. Budget Workbook
4. Appendices
 - a. Two (2) years of financial statements reviewed and reported on by an independent external accountant with a minimum "Notice to Reader Report" to the most recently completed year-end (required)
 - b. Internally prepared financial statements for the current fiscal year to the date of application submission (required)
 - c. Pro-forma financial statements for the balance of the current fiscal year (required)

- d. Evidence of matching funding available or accessible by the Applicant (required), such as:
 - i. Proof of available operating line of credit
 - ii. Letter of Comfort from the Applicant's bank or accounting firm
- e. Critical Letters of Support as evidence of need and/or potential for commercial adoption of technology. (recommended)

Full Applications will expand on the initial information provided at the LOI phase but will solicit a greater level of detail.

Short-listed Applicants submitting a Full Application must pay a one-time, non-refundable Application Fee of \$200 + HST. Exceptions may apply to members of The Engine in good standing.

Refer to the [Bioenterprise website](#) for a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

3.2 Templates

Templates include:

- An electronic version of the [SmartGrowth R3: Full Application Form](#)
- A Microsoft Word template is provided for the *2022-23 Full Application Workbook*
- A Microsoft Excel template is provided for the *2022-23 Budget Workbook*

Short-listed Applicants who are invited to submit a full application will be provided with the Full Application templates directly via email.

3.3 Formatting

- Document type: All applications, including the SmartGrowth Full Application Form, must be typed.
- Font: Must be easy to read (11-point minimum). Smaller type may be used in figures and tables but must be clearly legible.
- Figures, Graphs, Images and Pictures: Must be of a size that is easily readable or viewable and may be landscape orientation.
- Line Spacing: Single
- Margins: One (1) inch top, bottom, left and right.
- Page Limit for written proposal: Twenty-five (25) pages excluding the required appendices
- Paper Size: Letter (8 ½ inches by 11 inches)
- Application Language: Official Language (English or French) of choice. Applications will not be accepted in any other languages.

4. Written Proposal for the Full Application

Written proposals for the Full Application must be completed by providing information that corresponds to each of the sections listed below. The Full Application proposal template containing the required information must be submitted as an attachment to the SmartGrowth Full Application Form.

Section A) Company & Product/Technology Overview

This section provides a description of the Applicant's business and its technology innovation (including Technology Readiness Level), as well as an overview of primary customers and direct competitors.

Section B) Detailed Project Overview

The detailed project overview provides a rationale for this project, highlighting the strategic importance to the ag sector and the company's growth, an overview of the proposed project's activities, scope, and geographic location. Project title, budget, funding amount requested, and project start, and end dates should also be stated.

Section C) Projected Outcomes

An overview of the project's benefits to the Canadian agricultural sector, as well as its overall economic impact for southern Ontario and for Canada must be included. This section should highlight opportunities for job creation and retention, revenue generation, add-on or new investment opportunities, and Intellectual Property (IP).

Section D) Project Team & Partners

Project team and partners must be identified including the nature of their involvement, highlighting the capabilities, technology expertise and sector strengths. Applicants must explain how their involvement/participation strengthens the proposal and impacts expected outcomes.

Section E) Implementation Plan

Applicants must provide a detailed implementation plan, including:

- Risk assessment and proposed mitigation strategies
- Project milestone plan (activity launch and timelines) initializing activities and achieving results
- A financial plan/budget

5. Appendices for the Full Application

Required appendices must be attached, along with the written proposal template, to the SmartGrowth Full Application Form so that they are submitted simultaneously.

Financial Statements

Applicants must provide two (2) years of financial statements reviewed and reported on by an independent external accountant with a minimum “Notice to Reader Report”.

Applicants must also provide additional financial information including:

- a. Internally prepared financial statements for the current fiscal year to the date of application submission
- b. Pro-forma financial statements for the balance of the current fiscal year

Evidence of Matching Funds

Applicants must provide evidence of matching funding available or accessible, such as proof of available operating line of credit or a Letter of Comfort from the Applicant’s bank or accounting firm.

Critical Letters of Support

Applicants are encouraged to provide Letters of Support from value chain stakeholders as evidence of need and/or potential for commercial adoption of technology. Although these are not a requirement, letters of support demonstrate risk reduction and potential for success.

6. Important Considerations

When naming attachments for the SmartGrowth Full Application Form, refrain from using the following characters: “# % & *: < >? / \ | . Otherwise, the form will not submit to Bioenterprise for review.

The SmartGrowth Full Application Form will only submit successfully once the questions are completed and the required attachments have been inserted.

Applicants should clearly mark as “proprietary” any information contained in their applications that they believe is a trade secret or proprietary business information. Proprietary information also includes details of the Applicant, their financial information provided and their project. This information is to be maintained confidential and will not be shared with other Applicants nor on public sites.

Proprietary information contained in applications will be used or disclosed only for the purposes of project evaluation and assessment. Funded projects under the SmartGrowth Program are subject to the federal [Access to Information Act](#) and the [Privacy Act](#).