

# SMARTGROWTH PROGRAM FAQ

## GENERAL QUESTIONS

What is the Bioenterprise SmartGrowth Program?

**A: The SmartGrowth Program is a southern Ontario focused program that provides non-repayable funding, on a matching basis, up to a maximum contribution of \$100,000 with access to mentorship and coaching services. Round 3 (2022-23) of the SmartGrowth Program is targeted towards agri-technology businesses focused on digital agriculture solutions 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: Friday January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at 12pm EST.**

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

**A: The first round of funding is expected to be released in March 2022. 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: Agri-Technology Businesses with a focus on innovative digital agriculture solutions that have technologies that are at or beyond TRL 7 and are headquartered in southern Ontario can apply to the**

**SmartGrowth Program.** The company must be incorporated in Canada and have less than 500 employees. Please refer to the [SmartGrowth R3 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 working capital raised by the Applicant. See the [SmartGrowth R3 Program Guide](#) for more details.

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

**A: No.** The minimum eligible project budget is \$100,000 to 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 funding contribution from the SmartGrowth Program will be a maximum of \$100,000.

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

**A: Yes!** Unless you have already received funding through previous rounds of the SmartGrowth Program.

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

**A: Yes!** All companies are welcome to apply to the SmartGrowth Program. Successful applicants will receive a one-year complimentary membership to Canada's Food & Agri-Tech Engine upon successful project completion. For more information and for instructions on how to become a member, visit [our website](#).

## PROJECT TYPE

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 project activities, or a combination of the following, are eligible: marketing, product demonstration, intellectual property (IP) protection, regulatory compliance, other commercialization-focused activities.

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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 24 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 [SmartGrowth Program](#) webpage and scroll down to “Application Toolkit”. Please refer to [Applicant Guide I: Letter of Intent](#) for detailed instructions on how to complete the LOI.**

Is there an application fee to apply to the SmartGrowth Program?

**A: There is no fee to submit an LOI to the SmartGrowth Program. However, short-listed Applicants invited to submit a Full Application will be required to pay a one-time, non-refundable Application Fee of \$200 + HST. Exceptions may apply to members of The Engine in good standing.**

**Applicants with approved projects will enter into a Contribution Agreement with Bioenterprise and will be required to pay Bioenterprise a Program Management Fee (PMF) of 4% of the total approved Eligible Project Costs with a minimum fee of \$4,000 and a maximum fee of \$10,000.**

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](#) webpage 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 required for submission.**

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 invited to submit 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 6 of the [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 are 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: Yes, as long as the funds are not being used towards the same activities for which you are seeking SmartGrowth funding. 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: The Bioenterprise team can assist applicants with determining their eligibility for the program at the LOI Stage. For short-listed applicants invited to the Full Application stage, additional coaching and mentorship can be provided upon request. Please note, detailed application feedback will not be offered. For any questions or assistance, please contact [submissons@bioenterprise.ca](mailto:submissons@bioenterprise.ca).**

## 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.**

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