



SmartGrowth Program

Critical Project Financing for Food & Agri-Tech Businesses

R4 APPLICANT GUIDE I: LETTER OF INTENT

Round 4: Open Call for Proposals



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1. Introduction

This Applicant Guide provides instructions for preparing and submitting a Letter of Intent (LOI) 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 4 (2022-23) open call for proposals will be open to businesses that operate in the food and agri-technology sectors 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 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](#) and invited to contact Bioenterprise at submissions@bioenterprise.ca.

2. Calls for 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 I: Letter of Intent.

Calls for proposals will be announced on the Bioenterprise website detailing the specific dates and timelines for each call, including the submission of LOIs. Applicants are encouraged to submit their LOI 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.

LOIs must be submitted online through the [SmartGrowth R4: Letter of Intent Form](#) accessible on the Bioenterprise website. **Email or facsimile (fax) submissions will not be accepted.** Applications must be received by the submission deadline posted on the Bioenterprise website.

Upon submitting the LOI, a confirmation email and a copy of the completed SmartGrowth Letter of Intent Form will be provided. Applicants are encouraged to retain a copy of their completed form for ease of reference, should they be invited to participate in Phase II: Full Application.

All LOIs received on time will be reviewed and assessed. All Applicants will be informed of decisions in writing. Only short-listed LOI applicants will be invited to submit a Full Application. 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.

3. Eligible Applicants

The SmartGrowth Program supports SMEs in activities related to scale-up and/or expansion of their businesses and innovative agri-technologies.

Eligible Applicants are:

- For-profit SMEs with technologies at or beyond Technology Readiness Level 7 (TRL-7+) stage of development only
- Businesses that operate in the food and agri-technology sectors (as defined in the Program Guide) and provide a benefit (directly or indirectly) to local and provincial agriculture and/or the producer/processor community
- Businesses that have less than 500 employees
- Businesses have raised a minimum of \$200,000 in Working Capital in the 2021 calendar year
 - Working Capital is defined to include:
 - Sales revenues (minimum of \$100,000) plus
 - Non-Arm's Length Equity Investments raised
- Incorporated in Canada and headquartered in southern Ontario (regions are outlined in the Program Guide in *Appendix B: Eligible Catchment Area*)

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

The Applicant must declare other government sources of funds received within the 12-month period prior to the application process. Stacking of government funding programs are subject to review and approval.

4. LOI Application Process and Requirements

4.1 Contents

Complete LOIs must include the following elements, completed in full:

1. [SmartGrowth R4: Letter of Intent Form](#) (required)
2. Completed *SmartGrowth R4: LOI Written Proposal template* that contains the following sections (required):
 - a. Company and product/technology overview
 - b. High-level project overview outlining objectives, project team, outcomes, and project economic impact (e.g., job creation, revenue generation and/or add-on investment)
 - c. High-level project budget
3. Appendices
 - a. Business plan and/or pitch deck (required)
 - b. Other relevant supporting documents and reports such as feasibility studies, market research, etc. (recommended)

LOIs will provide a high-level overview of the Applicant's intended proposal that will accelerate their business growth and profitability.

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

4.2 Templates

Templates include:

- An electronic version of the [SmartGrowth R4: Letter of Intent Form](#).
- A Microsoft Word template for the *2022-23 Letter of Intent Written Proposal*. Refer to Section 5 below for information to be provided in the written proposal

All templates are accessible in the [Application Toolkit](#).

4.3 Formatting

- Document type: All applications, including the SmartGrowth Letter of Intent 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: Ten (10) pages excluding budget pages and 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

5. Written Proposal for the Letter of Intent

Written proposals for the LOI must provide information corresponding to each of the sections listed below. The written proposal must be submitted as an attachment to the SmartGrowth Letter of Intent Form.

Section A) High-Level Project Overview

The high-level project overview provides an overview of the proposed project's requirements, deliverables and outcomes. It should outline objectives, activities to be done, when and by whom, without getting into the details of particular tasks.

This plan will outline and briefly describe:

- A clear overview of the scope and required resources to achieve the desired outcomes
- How the proposed project will create a competitive advantage or improve productivity
- How the proposed project will have a positive impact on the region's economy with focus on job creation, revenue generation and potential for add-on investment

Section B) Overview of Project Team

The project team must be identified including the nature of their involvement highlighting their capabilities, technology expertise and sector strengths.

Please note that project partners must be at arm's length from your company.

Section C) High-Level Project Budget

Applicants must provide an overview of how funding will be used and highlight any support that is expected from other sources, making note that stacking of government funding programs are subject to review and approval by the Bioenterprise team.

Applicants must also provide a high-level project budget in the LOI written proposal template that includes an overview of the funding requested through the SmartGrowth Program and the anticipated financial commitment from the Applicant.

6. Appendices for the Letter of Intent

Required appendices must be attached, along with the written proposal template, to the SmartGrowth R4: Letter of Intent Form so that they are submitted simultaneously.

Business Plan and/or Pitch Deck (required)

Applicants must submit the most recent copy of their business plan and/or pitch deck in order to demonstrate business focus and plans for growth.

Supporting Documents and Reports (optional)

Applicants are encouraged to submit any other relevant reports or documentation to support their proposed project. Examples include, but are not limited to feasibility studies, engineering plans, risk analysis, etc.

7. Important Considerations

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

The SmartGrowth Letter of Intent 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](#).