

B.C. On-Farm Technology Adoption Program

Program Guide



**Sustainable Canadian
Agricultural Partnership**



innovate BC



**BRITISH
COLUMBIA**

Canada

Led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the program is funded under the Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership, a five year (2023-2028) federal-provincial-territorial initiative to strengthen the competitiveness, innovation, and resiliency of Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector and delivered through Innovate BC.

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Program Guide

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Program Overview

Background

The B.C. On-Farm Technology Adoption Program (the Program) is a competitive program, funding is not guaranteed. Applicants are encouraged to submit projects focused on the adoption of labour-saving technologies on-farm that are innovative and first of their kind in British Columbia (B.C.) or represent novel use within a commodity sector.

The Program is led by the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Food (the Ministry) and is funded under the *Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership* (Sustainable CAP), a five year (2023-2028) federal-provincial-territorial initiative to strengthen the competitiveness, innovation, and resiliency of Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector. Innovate BC, through its Integrated Marketplace Initiative, is delivering this program on behalf of the Ministry.

The primary focus of the Program is to provide cost-shared funding to eligible applicants to adopt new technologies on-farm that will enhance their profitability, productivity, and/or efficiency. The third intake of the Program, launching on March 17, 2025, will focus specifically on new technologies that address labour-intensive tasks.

The Ministry understands that high upfront costs are a primary hurdle for producers to explore or trial new tools, and that accessing large amounts of capital needed to implement new tools and technologies can be prohibitive.

This Program aims to strengthen B.C.'s agriculture sector through adoption of new technologies on-farm. New technology could include, but is not limited to, a newly created technology that differs significantly from existing technologies in-use, an existing technology that is modified to meet different requirements, or an existing technology that is implemented in different situations. These technologies or equipment must be viable and commercially available for purchase.

Applicants

Eligible Applicants

To be eligible, applicants must:

- be based in B.C.
- be appropriately registered, licensed and/or certified to conduct business in B.C.
- have a minimum of two years in operation
- made no less than \$50,000 in annual revenue during the previous two years from the production (farm, grow, raise) of primary B.C. agriculture commodities (e.g., fruit,

vegetables, grains, livestock. The Ministry reserves the right to waive the minimum farm revenue requirement for Indigenous applicants.

- For farmers who have experienced crop loss due to weather or other factors beyond their control that has impacted their revenues in the two years prior to applying, exceptions to these revenue requirements will be made if they can demonstrate they have reached the \$50k threshold for two of the past five years. If so, the funding cap will be applied based on the revenue value prior to crop loss.

The following applicant types are eligible for this Program:

1. **Agriculture producers** (i.e., farmers, growers, or ranchers) of primary agriculture commodities.
2. **Indigenous businesses or entrepreneurs** that are majority-owned by Indigenous individuals or communities (at least 51%) and produce primary agricultural commodities or engage in traditional food production practices.

Ineligible Applicants

The following applicants are ineligible for this Program:

- Operations that produce or process health or nutrition supplements, or pet food;
- Food and beverage processors, wholesalers, distributors, farm input suppliers, restaurants, and other food service establishments
- Unlicensed, unregistered, or uninspected facilities
- Food packing operations located off-farm
- Aquaculture and seafood production/processing businesses
- Any other business that does not fall within the scope of eligible applicants in this Program Guide

Expenses and Activities

Eligible Expenses and Activities

Funding Ratio

Up to 65% can be covered by the Program with at least 35% cash contribution from the Applicant; Applicants must not use other government funding sources to cover the minimum Applicant contribution amount.

Min/Max Funding Amounts

\$1,000 - \$100,000 per distinct business and production location per funding call.

Innovative Labour-Saving Technologies

This program supports the adoption of commercially available, labour-saving technologies on farms. These technologies should be new to Canada, B.C., a region, or a specific commodity sector. The goal is to enhance farm profitability, productivity, and/or efficiency.

This program aims to support the ability of farming agriculture businesses to grow, raise, harvest, pack, or store crops and animals more profitability, productivity, and/or efficiently through labour-saving technologies.

Labour-saving technology for this program means:

- Technology that reduces the hours spent on a particular task; and/or
- Technology that increases the productivity per worker (e.g., implementing a new piece of equipment that has advanced capabilities to speed up the pace of the worker or increase the output from the worker by streamlining specific actions that the worker takes, such as how an autonomous picking platform works).

Eligible Technology Examples

Here are some examples of technology that may be eligible for funding if they are also new to Canada, B.C., a region, or a commodity:

- Autonomous Equipment/Robotics: Technologies that operate independently and adapt to their environment. For example:
 - Autonomous transplanting systems
 - Autonomous weeding equipment
 - Autonomous supply delivery systems
 - Autonomous harvesters
 - Autonomous sorting at harvest
- Machinery: Technologies that perform specific tasks with minimal human interaction. For example:
 - Automated grading and sorting machines
 - Automated pruning and tying equipment

- Automated stacking and dumping equipment
- Smart Sensors and Monitoring Equipment: Devices that collect and analyze data in real-time to optimize agricultural processes, enable faster decision making, remote control or management, or otherwise result in labour savings. For example:
 - Smart camera-guided systems
 - Smart temperature sensing
 - Health monitoring for livestock via sensors
 - Virtual fencing collars and GPS ear tags for livestock
 - Sap flow sensors
- Artificial Intelligence (AI): AI and machine learning technologies enable systems to adapt and make decisions as well as predictions or otherwise result in labour savings. For example:
 - AI systems for optical sorting
 - AI systems for monitoring of livestock
- Farm Business Management Tools: Technologies that assist in planning, analyzing, and optimizing the operational aspects a farm and result in labour savings. For example:
 - Software that helps track farm activities
 - Decision support systems to optimize farm operations
- Other Technologies: New and emerging technologies that do not fall under the categories above, but that would result in substantial labour savings when implemented.

Ineligible Expenses and Activities

Before you apply, check that the technology and costs you want reimbursed by the Program are not ineligible. The lists below are not exhaustive, and Applicants are encouraged to contact Program Management to confirm if a technology and/or expense is eligible: integratedmarkets@innovatebc.ca

Ineligible Costs

The following costs are not eligible:

- Leasing costs
- Maintenance and repair costs
- Fees for permits, approvals, or legal activities
- Costs of ongoing activities
- Financing charges, loan interest payments, bank fees, and charges
- Extended warranties on equipment, electronics, or technology purchases
- Expenses related to aquaponic food production, or to aquaculture, seaweed, fish and seafood production and processing
- Purchases made before application is approved, or expenses after the project completion date unless consent is received from the Program
- GST on the technology purchase

Ineligible Purchases

The following purchases are not eligible:

- Items that are commonly used for recreational or non-agricultural purposes (e.g., iPads, TVs, and recreational drones)
- Activities related to aquaponic food production, or to aquaculture, seaweed, fish and seafood production and processing
- New building construction including sheds, barns, or storages (for products or by-products)
- Drones for spraying pesticides
- Infrastructure such as closed environment structures, greenhouses and poly tunnels
- Lighting, aeroponics technology, or irrigation systems (e.g., piping)
- Plant propagation and growing media
- Subscriptions for management software or apps after the first year
- Used equipment
- Technologies that would be funded through the activities outlined in the Beneficial Management Practices Program
- Technology that is non-compliant with all federal and provincial laws and regulations

Many technologies are not funded through this Program, but they are funded by the [Beneficial Management Practices Program](#):

- [Pest management equipment](#): alterations to sprayers, new sprayers, pest information collection and monitoring, precision guidance applications of pesticides/residuals
- [Fuel efficient motors and equipment](#): replacement of fossil fuel driven equipment or motors with electrical equipment or motors, replacement or transition to fuel-efficient equipment
- [Nutrient, fertilizer, and waste management equipment](#): composting structures, specific equipment components for land application of fertilizer, fertigation (including perennial and annual crops), precision guidance applications – GPS nutrients, low disturbance placement of seed and fertilizer, land application of agricultural by-products
- [Water management and irrigation equipment](#): irrigation system management and irrigation scheduling (incl. automation equipment and software; water meters, backflow prevention devices, or other flow-measuring devices)

In addition to the Beneficial Management Practices Program, other technologies can be funded by Specialized Programs:

- [Traceability](#) systems, infrastructure and technologies
- [Employee Training Grant](#)
- For new businesses: Business planning and cost-shared purchasing of commercial farm infrastructure and equipment for farm businesses that have not reported farm income for more than 5 years ([New Entrant Farm Business Accelerator Program](#))

Common Sector Technologies

In addition to the technologies listed as ineligible above, the following purchases are not eligible because they are already widely used in their specific sector; This approach supports the goal of this Program to help farms adopt new labour-saving technology. **However, do apply if the technology you want to purchase offers significantly novel features or functionalities that innovatively address repetitive and labour-intensive tasks, and presents a new labour-saving solution specific to one of: Canada, B.C., a region, or a specific commodity.**

General Agriculture:

- Conventional accounting software such as QuickBooks

Crops:

- Machine harvesters (Berries)
- U-tunnels/high tunnels (Berries, Grapes)
- Human tractor-driven cultivation/transplanters (Field Vegetables)
- Climate control automation, HVAC systems, LED lighting (Greenhouse Vegetables/Floriculture/Cannabis)
- Carbon dioxide supplementation systems (Greenhouse Vegetables/Cannabis)
- Basic and conventional mechanical transplanters, harvesters; trimming, and drying equipment (Greenhouse Vegetables/Cannabis)
- Basic and conventional equipment related to sorting and packing (Cannabis)
- Basic equipment for washing, sorting, or freezing (Berries/Tree Fruits)
- Fogging systems, evaporative cooling systems such as cooling walls/towers (Greenhouse Vegetables/Floriculture/Cannabis)
- Frost fans/wind machines (Grapes, Tree Fruits)
- Wind machines (Tree Fruit)
- Reflective material for colour development, roof and curtain walls (Tree Fruit)

Livestock:

- Walk-in freezers (Beef)
- Milking robots, non-AI animal behavioural analysis/monitoring technology (Dairy)
- Feed pushers, misters or soakers, mattresses that contain water to reduce heat (Dairy)
- Conventional cow monitoring collars, ear tags, pedometers (Dairy/Beef)
- Non-AI climate monitoring/control, ventilation, cooling, heat exchangers, improved insulation (Poultry)
- Automated feeders, egg collection, manure systems (Poultry)
- Autonomous manure collection systems (Dairy)

Applications

Application Process

Applicants for all technology categories will be required to submit a funding application through the application portal during the call period (March 17 to April 28, 2025). All applicants will be required to provide:

- Annual organization revenues from the previous two years, from the production (farm, grow, raise) of primary agriculture commodities (e.g., fruit, vegetables, grains, livestock). Organization revenues related to other activities must not be included;
- Quote(s) from the technology supplier for the purchase to substantiate the funding request amount and delivery timeline(s);
- Confirmation of the proposed delivery date(s) for the items to be purchased, once an application is approved (note: approval decisions will be communicated to applicants in June); The latest acceptable date for delivery is March 20, 2026;
- An estimate of the hours that the technology will save for your business operations;
- An estimate of the service life of the technology from the company; and
- An estimate of the anticipated payback period for the investment.

Adjudication and Assessment

Submitted applications will be received and reviewed by Innovate BC. All applications received will be evaluated based only on the information submitted and will not be considered if they do not meet application eligibility criteria or are incomplete.

Fully completed applications submitted by April 28, 2025, will be reviewed in May and June to ensure they meet basic eligibility criteria and will be further assessed against criteria set out by the Ministry to allocate available cost share funding to projects best aligned with the Program objectives. Applications will be assessed based on their:

- Impact on labour savings, productivity, profitability, and/or efficiency;
- The type of technology/innovation being purchased (with a higher emphasis on applications that will result in technologies/innovations being purchased and installed that are entirely new to B.C. and/or a specific commodity sector); and
- The project budget and timeline.

If an application is approved, the Applicant will be informed of the details of the decision and any associated terms and conditions via email within a target six-to-eight-week period post-call close (e.g., June 2025). The Applicant will then be invited to enter into a Funding Agreement with Innovate BC which outlines the obligations of each party for the approved project.

If an application is not approved, the Applicant will be notified of the decision by email and will be provided an opportunity for additional feedback should they wish to request it.

Project Award & Outcomes Reporting

Contracting and Awards

Applicants with an approved funding request will be invited to enter into a Funding Agreement with Innovate BC; no funding will be released without the successful execution of a Funding Agreement. After execution, amendments to a project, its corresponding activities, or budget are generally not possible. Innovate BC reserves the right to review Funding Agreements on a case-by-case basis in extenuating circumstances without obligation to agree to proceed with modifications or amendments.

Funding is provided on a reimbursement basis for eligible expenses incurred, subject to submission of expense claims including invoices and proof of payment for the technology purchase, and photographic confirmation the technology has been received on location. **For this funding call, confirmation of purchase and delivery of the technology will be required by no later than March 20, 2026.** Payments will be issued within three to four weeks following a complete project claim submission.

Outcomes Reporting

Applicants will be required to complete both a progress and final outcomes survey within the following 12 months. These surveys will gather important information regarding technology performance, with specific interest around changes in productivity, efficiency, and/or profitability to help inform the Ministry and the sector about how and what technologies support labour savings, efficiency, productivity, or profitability for farms in B.C.

Data Privacy

Innovate BC is committed to respecting your privacy. Innovate BC's Privacy Policy identifies what information is collected about you and how it's used by Innovate BC when you visit innovatebc.ca (the "Site"), apply to one of our programs, or communicate with Innovate BC. Please visit the [Innovate BC Privacy Policy](#) to learn more.