



CANADIAN
FOOD INNOVATION
NETWORK



TRUE NORTH SUSTAINABLE FOOD FUND

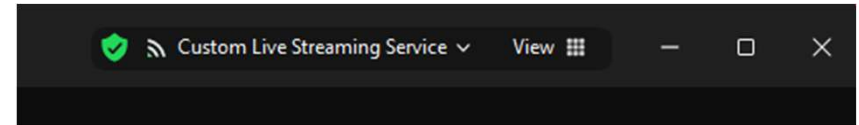
Presented by: **Alexandra Barlow**
VP Programs
Canadian Food Innovation Network

Canadian Food Innovation Network | www.cfin-rcia.ca

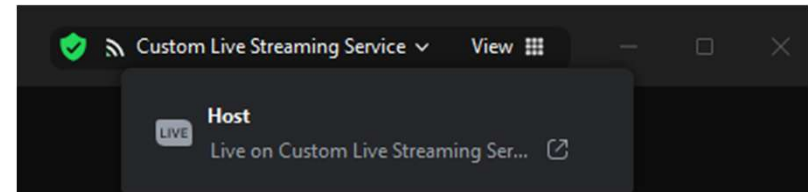
Instructions to set up translations

This info session is available with live translations into French using Wordly.
Please follow the outlined steps in your Zoom meeting window.

- 1. Hover in the top navigation bar until “Custom Live Streaming Service” appears. Click on downward arrow.



- 2. Click on **Custom Live Streaming Service** under Host.

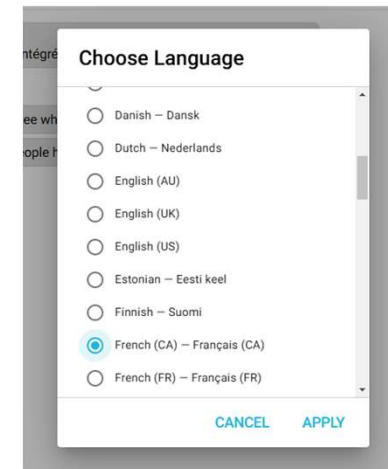
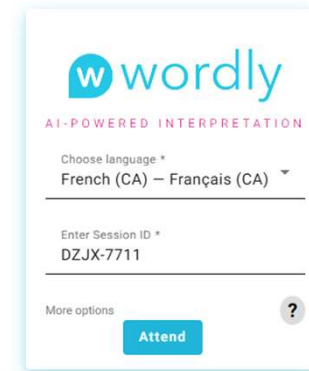


Instructions to set up translations cont'd

3. A new browser window will open the Wordly session. Click **Attend**.

4. In the top right navigation, click the **downward arrow** to show all available languages.

5. Choose the preferred language. Click **Apply**.



Who We Are



CFIN is an industry-led, not-for-profit corporation dedicated to building a thriving, productive, and innovation-driven food and beverage sector in Canada.



We fund transformative foodtech projects, stimulate collaboration, and foster a growing community of food and beverage professionals.

Three Things you need to know about CFIN



Our members care about using innovation to grow food manufacturing, foodservice and food retail businesses.



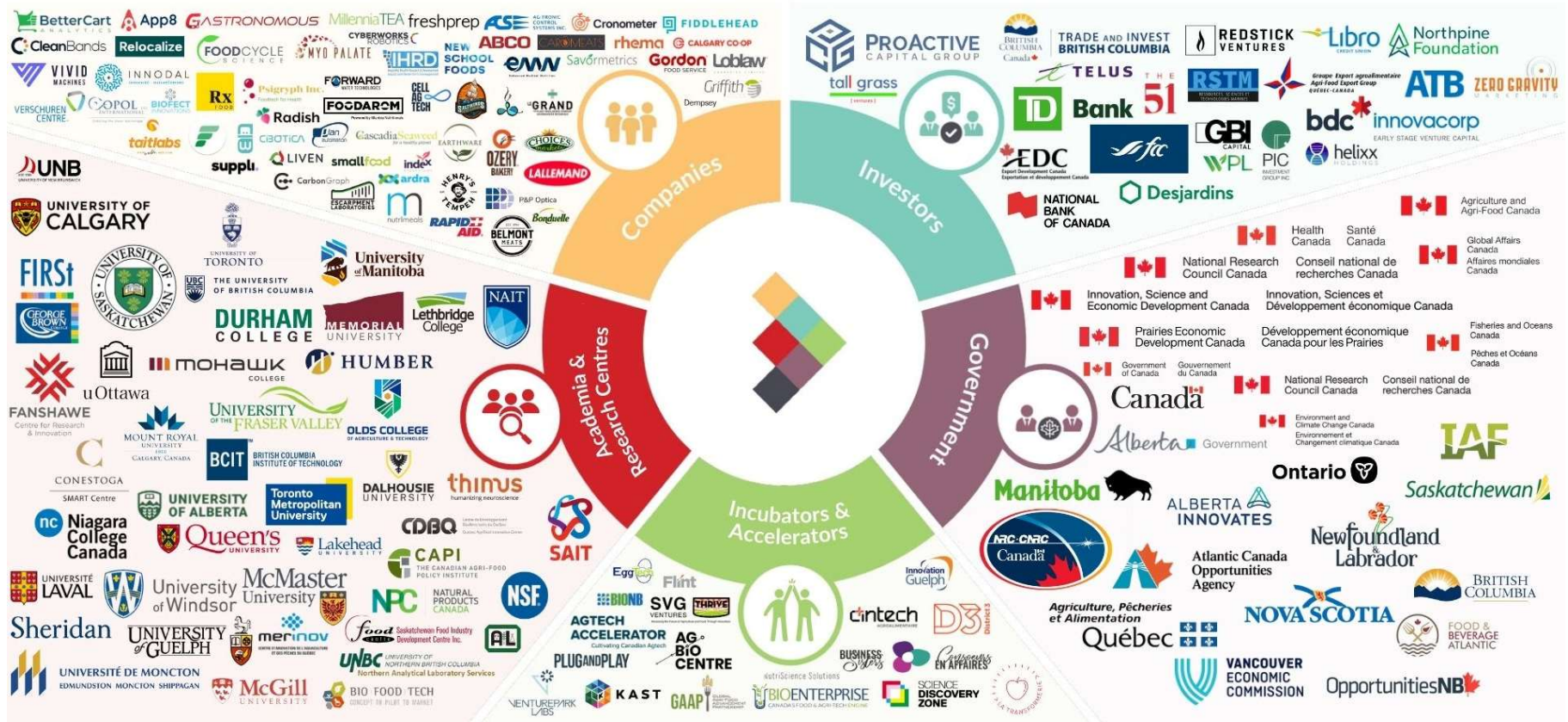
We connect our members to new ideas, opportunities, and technologies to increase collaboration and position Canada as a global leader in food innovation.



Our team is distributed nation-wide and brings innovation support to all regions, commodities and types of businesses working post farm gate to all the way to the dinner plate.



Meet Some of Our Members



The Program has been created with the support of Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada's Agricultural Clean Technology Program – Research and Innovation Accelerator Stream.

We're pleased to have their support to create this unique funding opportunity for Canadian foodtech SMEs developing novel clean technology solutions for the food manufacturing and distribution sectors.



Agriculture and
Agri-Food Canada



True North Sustainable Food Fund – Program Overview

	Spark	Impact
Funding	Up to \$100K	\$250K - \$1M (preference for \$250K-\$500K)
Process	Single phase application	Two-phase: EOI → Full Application
Timeline	Open now, accepting applications until July 15, 2026. Decisions within 60 days.	EOIs due June 26 th , 2026. Response timeline - EOI: 30-45 days; Full app: 4-6 weeks.
Project Start/End	Within 60 days of intake close, all projects must be complete by Dec. 31, 2027.	Earliest start date is Oct. 1, 2026. All projects must be complete by Dec. 31, 2027.
Funding Basis	50% grant (reimbursement basis); up to 75% stacking with other gov't sources	50% grant (reimbursement basis); up to 75% stacking with other gov't sources



Who can apply - eligibility

YOU MUST BE

- A **Canadian foodtech SME** – under \$50M revenue, under 499 FTEs
- **Incorporated for at least 1 year** at time of application
- The **developer and owner of the IP** – not a licensee, adopter, or customer of someone else's technology
- Able to **finance the project** (CFIN reimburses; you bridge 100% of costs first)
- A **CFIN member** (free to join at cfin-rcia.ca)

Pre-revenue early-stage companies are welcome to apply.

YOU ARE NOT ELIGIBLE IF

- You are currently the **lead applicant on an active CFIN project**
- You are a publicly funded not-for-profit, Crown corporation, or government department
- Your project is primarily **farm-level or agricultural** – must be post-farmgate (processing or distribution)
- Your IP is **licensed from a third party** or foreign entity

FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS REQUIRED

We are looking to see that you have min. your share of the project secured. Ideally, we receive 2 years of financial statements (audited, review engagement, or notice to reader). Alternately: term sheet, bank statement + letter demonstrating your financial position.





What kinds of things will CFIN fund?

CFIN funds research, development, and demonstration projects.

For the True North Sustainable Food Fund, we are looking to support the deployment of clean technologies in food processing or distribution operations only.

Ideal projects are led by innovators with a pilot partner who is willing to be a test site.

This means that all projects must involve research and development at Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) 4 to 7. Projects including TRL 8 and 9 components will only be considered if they are part of a project that also includes a TRL 1 to 7.

Eligible projects



PROJECTS MUST

- Begin at **TRL 4-5 minimum**, target **TRL 8** by project completion
- Demonstrate **novelty in a food processing or distribution context** – either a first commercial deployment, or first-time application of a technology proven elsewhere
- Focus on **solutions targeted at food processing and distribution only**. No agricultural, foodservice, or restaurant projects.
- Be completed by **December 31, 2027**

PRIORITY AREAS

Logistics & distribution

Novel processing technologies

Refrigeration & cold chain

Water & wastewater

Waste & circular economy

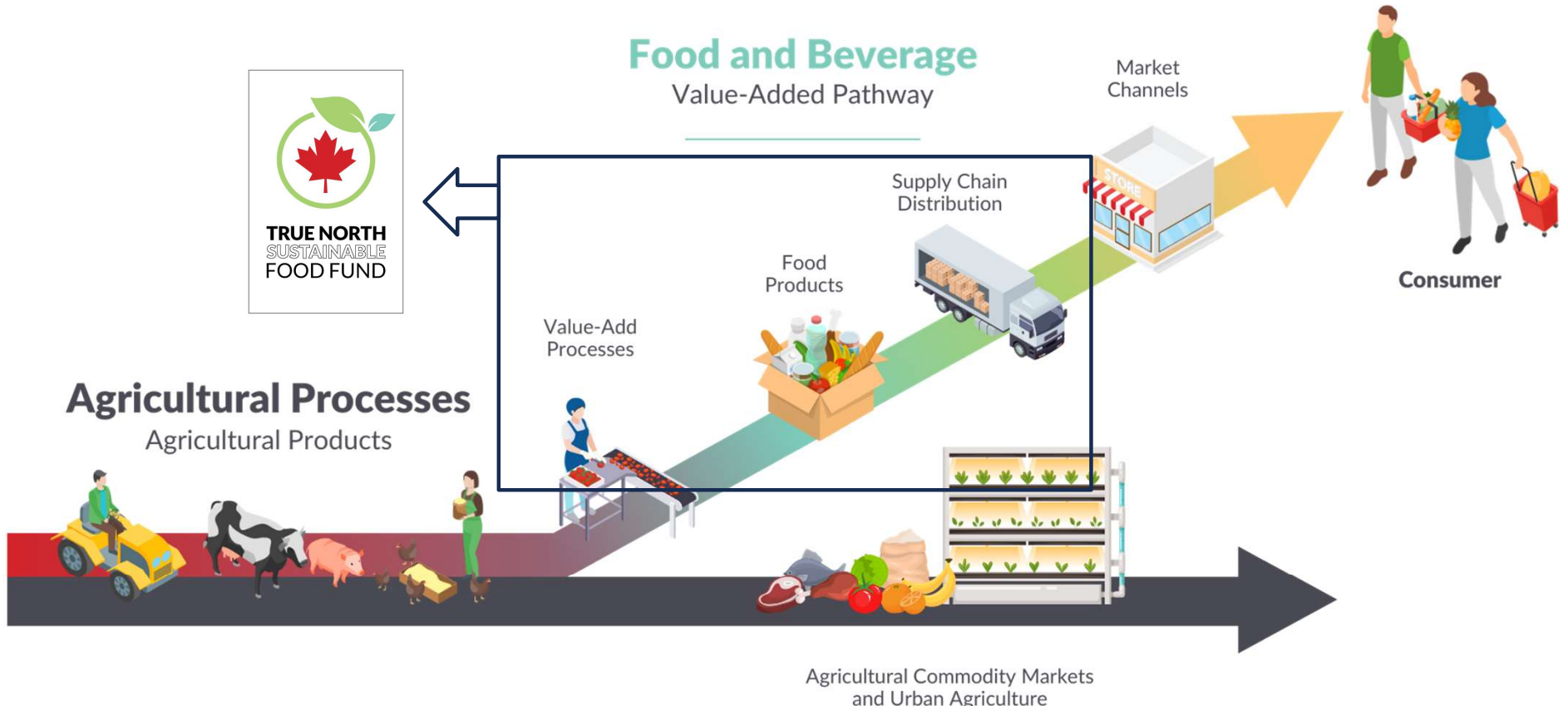
Energy & heat decarbonization

Measurement, monitoring & intelligence

Technologies already in widespread use in food & beverage (e.g. standard lighting retrofits, conventional solar) are not eligible unless integrated into a meaningfully novel system.



Food and Beverage Value-Added Pathway



Agricultural Processes Agricultural Products

Agricultural Commodity Markets
and Urban Agriculture

Agriculture Agricultural Commodity Pathway

Technology Readiness Levels

CFIN funds R&D at TRLs 4-7 – the True North Sustainable Food Fund is targeting projects that will include TRL 7 activities and hopefully end at TRL 8.

TECHNOLOGY READINESS LEVELS - TRL



Eligible & ineligible costs

ELIGIBLE COST CATEGORIES

- Direct labour (technical staff; supported by timesheets + paystubs)
- Subcontractors & consultants
- Direct materials (consumed in the project)
- Equipment (capital assets; restrictions apply post-project)
- Other direct costs – shipping, eligible travel per AAFC Travel Directive

NOT ELIGIBLE

- Sales, marketing & commercialization activities
- General admin, finance, HR labour
- Security or food safety certifications
- Entertainment, alcohol, tips
- Cost of preparing the application or claims
- In-kind costs
- Costs already fully funded by another program (>50% overlap)

CAPITAL ASSETS (>\$25K)

Capital assets (equipment) are eligible but subject to disposal/use restrictions until March 31, 2028.

CFIN's approval is required for sale or change of use within that window.

What about stacking?

Yes, stacking up to 75% of eligible project costs is allowed. However, applicants must outline what other government support programs they are leveraging for their project.

ACT RIA-funded programs cannot be stacked.

SR&ED credits do not count toward the 75% limit.

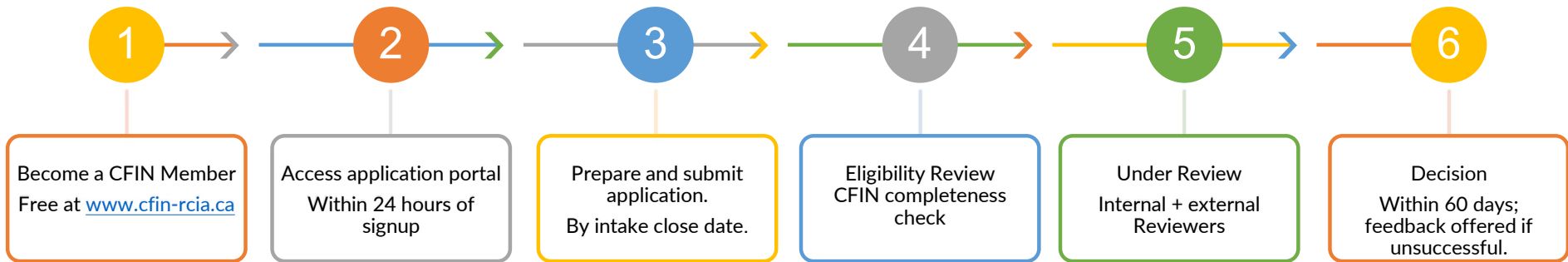
Applicants seeking to stack are encouraged to contact CFIN to discuss.





Spark Stream Application Process

Spark - Up to \$100K in funding



APPLICATION SECTIONS

- S1** – Project overview (title, dates, contact)
- S2** – Applicant overview (business profile)
- S3** – Demonstration site & facility details (500 words)
- S4** – Application questions (see slide 8)
- S5** – Environmental Impact Calculator (mandatory Excel)
- S6** – Budget, quarterly spend forecast, workplan
- S7** – Supporting documents + financial statements

Confirmed pilot site receives full marks for Section 3.
Not yet confirmed? Describe target facility type and status of discussions.

Application questions and scoring



- **The Pitch (750 words):** Problem in food processing/distribution, technical advantage, measurable improvements, customer value
- **TRL Validation (500 words):** Evidence supporting current TRL, testing results, remaining risks, path to TRL 8
- **Project Objectives (500 words):** Technical & commercial goals, milestones, success metrics, risks
- **Budget & Workplan:** Clear plan and expenses that align with the other responses
- **Pilot Location:** Type of facility targeted. Confirmed partner receives full marks.
- **Impact Calculator:** Outline your base case and project scenario and outline the environmental impacts of your solution using CFIN's tool.
- **Target Customer (500 words):** Market size, buyer profile, go-to-market strategy, how project accelerates adoption
- **IP Strategy (500 words):** IP ownership confirmation, protection status, new IP generated, risks

Spark Assessment Criteria	Scoring
The Pitch	15
TRL Validation	10
Project Objectives	10
Project Workplan	8
Budget	7
Pilot Location	5
Impact Calculator	25
Target Customer	12
IP Strategy	8
Total Score	100



Spark Intake timeline

- ❖ Applications open: May 28, 2026
- ❖ Applications deadline: July 15, 2026
- ❖ Participant notifications: September 2026
- ❖ Projects can have a start date within 60 days of July 15, 2026
 - ❖ If you choose to start before notification of the outcome, it is at your own risk.
- ❖ Projects must be complete within 12 months – with no projects exceeding December 31, 2027.

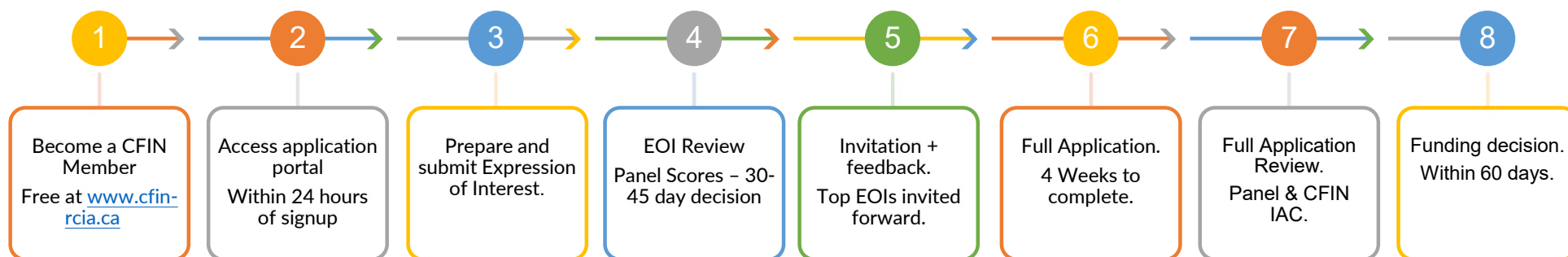




Impact Stream Application Process



Impact - Up to \$1M in funding



EOI SECTIONS (PHASE 1)

- **S1** – Project overview
- **S2** – Applicant overview
- **S3** – Demonstration site & facility (500 words)
- **S4** – The Pitch, TRL validation, Project Objectives & Technical Approach, Team Profile, Commercial Path
- **S5** – Impact estimate with supporting logic (500 words; no Calculator yet)
- **S6** – Draft budget
- **S7** – Supporting docs + financials

WHAT'S NEW AT FULL APPLICATION (PHASE 2)

- EOI responses are **unlocked for editing** – deepen, don't rewrite
- **Confirmed pilot partner letter of commitment** (mandatory) – covers site access, financial contribution, M&V participation
- **IP Strategy** question added (incl. Freedom to Operate)
- **Environmental Impact Calculator** (mandatory Excel upload)
- Full **quarterly spend forecast + sources of funds table**
- Full **project workplan** (min. 4 activities)

Impact EOI questions and scoring



- **Pilot Location:** Type of facility targeted. Partner not required to be fully confirmed at this stage.
- **The Pitch (750 words):** Operational challenge, technical advantage, performance improvements, customer value
- **TRL Validation (250 words):** Evidence, test results, remaining risks
- **Project Objectives & Technical Approach (500 words):** Goals, technical steps, challenges (installation, integration, food safety), success criteria as testable statements
- **Team Profile (500 words):** Technical and management lead experience, gaps and how you'll address them
- **Commercial Path (500 words):** Milestones to TRL 8, target customers, existing relationships, barriers to entry
- **Impact Estimate (500 words):** High-level projections (GHG, water, waste); assumptions; calculation logic. No Calculator required yet.

Impact EOI Assessment Criteria	Scoring
Pilot Partner	5
The Pitch	20
TRL Validation	10
Project Objectives and Technical Approach	10
Team Profile	10
Commercial Path	15
Environmental Impact - Projected Impact Ambition	15
Environmental Impact - Quality of Logic and Methodology	15
Total Score	100

Environmental impact is split across two criteria worth 30 points combined – ambition and quality of methodology are scored separately.

Impact full application and scoring



WHAT'S EXPECTED AT FULL APPLICATION

- Deepen and evidence your EOI – do not fundamentally reframe or pivot
- **New:** Confirmed pilot partner letter of commitment (mandatory)
- Updated Pitch + TRL validation with any new data since EOI
- Refined Project Objectives mapped directly to workplan milestones
- Updated Commercial Path showing concrete progress (LOIs, signed agreements, new customer conversations)
- **New:** IP Strategy including Freedom to Operate assessment
- **New:** Completed Environmental Impact Calculator (mandatory Excel)
- **New:** Full quarterly spend forecast and sources of funds table
- **New:** Full workplan (min. 4 activities with TRLs and expected outcomes)

Impact Full Application Assessment Criteria	Scoring
Partner Commitment	10
The Pitch	10
TRL Validation	5
Project Objectives and Technical Approach	8
Team Profile	7
Commercial Path	12
IP Strategy	8
Impact Calculator	30
Budget and Workplan	10
Total Score	100

Impact Intake Deadline

- ❖ Intake opens for Expression of Interest: May 28, 2026
- ❖ Expression of Interest deadline: June 26, 2026
- ❖ Full Application deadline: August 21, 2026
- ❖ Participant notifications: September 2026
- ❖ Projects can indicate a start date of October 1, 2026.
- ❖ All projects must be complete by December 31, 2027.



Program Requirements and Supports

Environmental Impact Calculator

WHAT IT IS

A mandatory Excel-based tool developed by Quinn+Partners on behalf of CFIN. Provides a standardized framework for quantifying expected environmental benefits by comparing a **base case** (today, without your technology) vs. **project case** (with your technology).

KEY TABS

- ❖ Project Information
- ❖ Project & Base Case Definition
- ❖ Project & Base Case Data (quantitative core)
- ❖ Data Considerations (assumptions & sources)

KEY PRINCIPLES

- ❖ Use **real operational data** from your pilot site wherever possible (utility bills, equipment specs, production records)
- ❖ **Document every assumption** explicitly in notes fields
- ❖ Base case and project case must reflect the **same facility, conditions, and time period** – inconsistencies will be flagged
- ❖ Capture only **direct impacts** – not speculative downstream effects

POST-AWARD SUPPORT

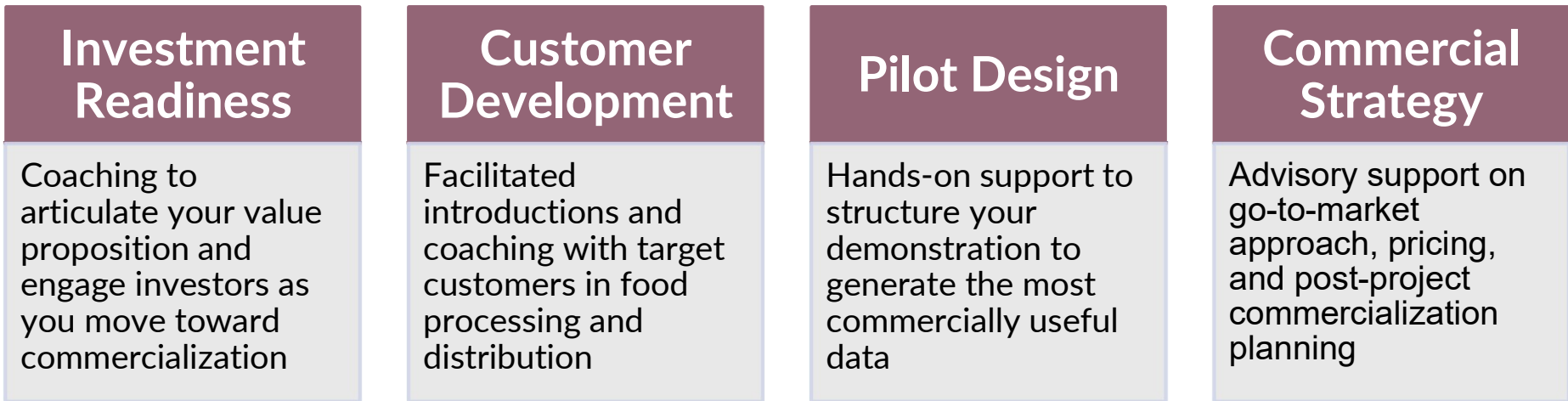
CFIN has engaged Quinn+Partners to provide third-party M&V support to all funded projects— data validation, assumption review, and independent sign-off on final GHG outcomes.



Accelerator supports



All True North recipients receive tailored accelerator-style support through **BIN Canada** (Bioindustrial Innovation Canada), provided as a program benefit at no cost.



Support is customized to each company's stage. CFIN will work with each recipient at project outset to identify priorities.

How to apply – next steps

TO APPLY

- ❖ Join CFIN for free at cfin-rcia.ca
- ❖ Portal access activated within 24 hours:
cfin-rcia.smartsimple.ca
- ❖ Complete your Organization Profile on first login
- ❖ Choose your stream: **Spark** (up to \$100K, single-phase) or **Impact** (\$250K–\$1M, two-phases)
- ❖ Submit by the intake close date (midnight local time)

Not sure which stream fits? Self-select based on project scope, funding need, and readiness to proceed. Reach out to discuss.

KEY RESOURCES

Program Guide

available at cfin-rcia.ca - indicates full eligibility criteria, cost categories, application questions, and scoring grids for each stream and step.

CFIN Programs Team & Regional Innovation Directors

Contact us at innovation@cfin-rcia.ca to discuss a project or connect regarding the application.



Regional Innovation Directors Optimize Member Outcomes

In a world increasingly dominated by algorithms and apps, **humanity and creativity are also required** to make the most of the foodtech revolution.

Food Scientist	Economist	Community Builder	Business Development	New Venture Creator
				
 Lavina Gully National Senior Innovation Director	 Hubba Khatoon Regional Innovation Director (Prairies)	 Abigail Van Riesen Regional Innovation Director (Ontario)	 Julie Daigle Regional Innovation Director (Quebec)	 Tyson MacInnis Regional Innovation Director (Atlantic)

Our **Regional Innovation Directors (RIDs)** optimize the CFIN experience because they are **credible, insightful, strategic, and connected** nationally and within their markets. These problem solvers work together to unpuzzle innovation problems and convert our diverse members into collaborators.

How to use our Platform - Demo

Applications are submitted on CFIN's Application Portal:
<https://cfin-rcia.smartsimple.ca/>

Eligibility pre-screening questions are included in the online Application Portal to ensure projects meet the basic eligibility requirements.

Refer to the Program Guide for guidance on completing each section of the application.





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THANK YOU

Contact innovation@cfin-rcia.ca
to be put in touch with us to
discuss your project!

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