



## Program Guide

May 2026

The True North Sustainable Food Fund is a Program from the [Canadian Food Innovation Network, funded in part by the Government of Canada.](#)



## Canadian Food Innovation Network

The Canadian Food Innovation Network (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 empower Canadian food and beverage businesses to reach their full potential by investing in and accelerating the adoption of innovation – driving competitiveness, productivity, and long-term resilience across the sector. Through funding programs, strategic connections, and capacity-building tools, CFIN works alongside industry to make innovation the primary engine of growth for Canadian food and beverage. CFIN's program goals are to:

- Accelerate the development and adoption of foodtech innovations across the Canadian food and beverage sector, including processing, distribution, foodservice and grocery retail;
- Connect innovators and foster collaboration across enterprises and organizations of all sizes, disciplines, sectors, roles, and geography to enable discovery, development, and commercial deployment of innovation outcomes for Canada's benefit; and
- Drive the utilization of Canada's innovation capacity for economic advantage and higher returns on public and private investment.

CFIN Members can leverage YODL™, an interactive online platform designed to help Canadian food and beverage professionals from all sectors of the industry connect, learn, and grow their businesses. YODL is a place for entrepreneurs to discover cutting-edge technology and solutions, meet new business partners throughout the Canadian supply chain, and access government funding opportunities.

On YODL members can find:

- Unique daily content;
- Access to CFIN's innovation challenges and members-only events;
- Access to direct mentorship from CFIN's five Regional Innovation Directors;
- Opportunities to network and collaborate with other food and beverage professionals from across Canada; and
- Business resources, including original research and information on best business practices, consumer trends, R&D, training and much more.

Membership with the Canadian Food Innovation Network is free, and can be accessed at [www.cfin-rcia.ca](http://www.cfin-rcia.ca)



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## True North Sustainable Food Fund

The **True North Sustainable Food Fund** is a unique funding opportunity for Canadian foodtech firms developing novel clean technology solutions for the food manufacturing and distribution sectors. It is designed to support industrial demonstration projects that validate emerging technologies in operational environments.

The overarching goal of the fund is to accelerate the adoption of clean technologies within the Canadian food processing and distribution sectors. CFIN will fund projects that achieve tangible environmental impacts, specifically targeting a reduction in GHG emissions through the deployment of these novel solutions.

To better manage the diverse needs of the sector and the available funding pool, the program is divided into two distinct streams:

- **True North – Spark:** Designed for rapid, smaller-scope pilot projects requiring up to **\$100,000** in funding. This stream utilizes a single-stage application process for faster turnaround.
- **True North – Impact:** Designed for major industrial demonstrations requiring between **\$250,000 and \$1,000,000** in funding. *Note: To maximize the portfolio's impact across the sector, preference may be given to projects in the \$250,000–\$500,000 range.* This stream utilizes a two-stage application process (Expression of Interest followed by Full Application).

**Eligibility Criteria:** To qualify for funding, all project proposals for any stream must be:

- **Submitted by a Canadian foodtech SME:** Defined as a firm generating under \$50M in annual revenue and employing fewer than 499 full-time equivalents (FTEs).
- **Incorporated for at least 1 year:** Applicants must be incorporated at the time of application and demonstrate the ability to finance the project.
- **Demonstrating clean technology innovation:** Projects must target innovations starting at a minimum Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of 4–5, with the goal of reaching TRL 8 (operational readiness) by project completion.
- **Focused on post-farmgate solutions:** The innovation must apply to food processing or distribution, rather than agricultural (farm-level) activities.

CFIN will consider cleantech innovations across the food processing and distribution system – from the facility floor to the delivery truck. Our priority areas span energy and heat decarbonization, refrigeration and cold chain, water and wastewater management, waste valorization and circular economy, logistics and distribution, novel processing technologies, and digital monitoring and intelligence tools. Whether you are developing a first-of-kind technology or applying a proven solution in a food context for the first time, this program may align. See [1.2.1 Priority Areas](#) for more information.

**Funding Details:** The total eligible project costs must be supported by a maximum matching funding from CFIN of **50% of total eligible project costs**. Funding will be provided on a reimbursement basis.

The program will run intake cycles in 2026–2027 to allocate the full budget, see our website for the upcoming dates. All projects must be complete by December 31, 2027.



# 1. Eligible Submissions

## 1.1 Eligible Applicants

Eligible Applicants include:

- **The developers and owners of the intellectual property to be demonstrated throughout the project.** Applicants must hold original ownership of the core IP underlying their proposed technology. Projects where the applicant holds a license to IP developed by another firm or foreign entity are not eligible, nor are projects led by a technology adopter or demonstration site host rather than the technology developer. In other words, the entity applying for funding must be the same entity that created and owns the technology – not a customer, partner, or licensee deploying someone else's innovation.
- **Businesses who have been incorporated for at least one year at time of application.**
- **Small and medium sized enterprises incorporated in Canada** (under 499 FTEs and \$50M in annual sales).
- **Early-stage enterprises who are still pre-revenue are welcome to apply**, provided they meet the incorporation and IP ownership requirements above.
- **Applicants may not apply if they are currently the lead applicant on an active CFIN project.** An active project has a signed Master Project Agreement, activities are underway, and a final report has not been filed and accepted by CFIN.

Other publicly funded not-for-profit organizations, federal Crown corporations, and government departments or agencies are not eligible to receive CFIN funding.

## 1.2 Eligible Projects

CFIN supports industrial research and demonstration activities, focused on the food sector from farm-gate to consumer's plate. Agriculture or primary production focused projects are not eligible for our funding.

To qualify for funding, all projects must:

- **Demonstrate clean technology innovation:** Projects must target innovations starting at a minimum Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of 4–5, with the goal of reaching TRL 8 (operational readiness) by project completion.
- **Demonstrate novelty in application or deployment:** Eligible projects must be doing something that has not been done before in the food processing or distribution context. CFIN recognizes two forms of eligible novelty: (1) **first commercial deployments**, where a technology is crossing from pilot or demonstration stage into its first real-world, revenue-generating application; or (2) **first-time applications of proven technology in food or distribution settings**, where a technology established in another sector is being adapted and applied to food processing or distribution for the first time. In both cases, the deployment should generate learnings, data, or a replicable model that advances the broader sector. Technologies already in widespread use within the food and beverage industry – such as standard lighting retrofits or conventional solar installations – are not eligible unless integrated into a meaningfully novel system configuration.
- **Focus on post-farmgate solutions:** The innovation must apply to food processing or distribution, rather than agricultural (farm-level) activities.
- **Be completed by December 31, 2027.**

All applicants to CFIN programs must demonstrate their financial capacity to undertake the project. As a requirement, we request 2 years financials (audited, review engagement, or notice to reader) to be



submitted with your application. If you cannot meet this requirement, a term sheet, a bank statement, or other documentation demonstrating your financial position, and letter outlining how this documentation demonstrates that you have the balance of your request is the bare minimum.

CFIN Programs are competitive and are reviewed on a merit-based approach per intake; meeting the requirements outlined above does not guarantee approval.

CFIN requirements for successful recipients are outlined in [Appendix A – CFIN General Requirements](#).

## 1.2.1 Priority Areas

Applicants must propose to demonstrate innovations that align with one of the following priority areas. The examples listed under each area are intended to illustrate the types of technologies CFIN is interested in supporting – they are not an exhaustive list. Applicants working on innovations that fit the spirit of a priority area but are not explicitly listed are encouraged to apply or reach out to discuss eligibility.

### Energy & Heat Decarbonization

Electrification and fuel-switching technologies that reduce or eliminate combustion-based energy use in food processing and distribution facilities. Examples include:

- Electrified process heat – electric boilers, heat pumps, and infrared/microwave/radio-frequency heating replacing gas-fired systems in cooking, pasteurization, drying, and sterilization.
- Industrial heat pump integration – recovering waste heat from refrigeration or processing for reuse in heating applications.
- Green hydrogen for high-temp processes – replacing natural gas in applications where electrification is impractical (e.g., very high-temperature industrial drying).

### Refrigeration & Cold Chain

Technologies that reduce the greenhouse gas impact and energy intensity of refrigeration and cold chain operations. Examples include:

- Vacuum insulation panels & advanced thermal packaging – dramatically reducing cold chain energy demands and spoilage.
- Dynamic cold chain optimization – AI-driven systems that reduce refrigeration energy while minimizing food loss.

### Water & Wastewater

Technologies that reduce water consumption, recover value from wastewater, or eliminate harmful effluent from food processing operations. Examples include:

- Zero-liquid-discharge (ZLD) systems – eliminating wastewater effluent from high-water-use facilities (meat, dairy, beverage).
- Anaerobic digestion of food processing effluent – converting high-BOD wastewater into biogas for on-site energy.
- Closed-loop water recycling – facility-level water recirculation with real-time quality monitoring.

### Waste & Circular Economy

Technologies that divert food processing waste from landfill, recover value from byproducts, or close material loops within the food system. Examples include:

- Food waste valorization – converting processing byproducts (peels, pulp, whey, spent grain) into ingredients, biomaterials, or bioactives.



- Precision fermentation of side streams – upcycling agricultural waste into high-value proteins or fats.

### Logistics & Distribution

Technologies that reduce the carbon footprint and resource intensity of food distribution and fulfillment operations. Examples include:

- Electric fleet and route optimization software – for last-mile and mid-mile refrigerated distribution.
- Autonomous/robotic micro-fulfillment – reducing facility footprint and energy intensity in distribution.
- Demand forecasting AI – reducing overproduction and distribution waste at the system level.

### Novel Processing Technologies

Emerging processing methods that deliver equivalent or superior food safety and quality outcomes at lower energy intensity than conventional approaches. Examples include:

- Pulsed electric field (PEF) processing – energy-efficient cell disruption for extraction, preservation, or texture modification.
- Ultrasound-assisted processing – low-energy alternative for mixing, extraction, and emulsification.
- Membrane filtration & separation – replacing energy-intensive evaporation in dairy, juice, and brewing.

### Measurement, Monitoring & Intelligence

Digital and sensor-based tools that enable food facilities to identify, quantify, and reduce their environmental footprint. Examples include:

- Digital twin technology for facilities – modeling energy and resource flows to identify decarbonization opportunities.
- IoT-enabled predictive maintenance – reducing energy waste from degraded equipment (compressors, motors, conveyors).

If you are unsure whether your project aligns with one of these areas, we are happy to connect with you to discuss – please email [innovation@cfm-rcia.ca](mailto:innovation@cfm-rcia.ca).

## 1.3 Eligible Activities

CFIN funds activities that advance clean technology innovations from proof-of-concept through to operational demonstration in a food processing or distribution environment. Eligible projects must begin at a minimum of TRL 4 and must target TRL 8 by project completion. Projects that include TRL 8 or 9 components are only eligible where the project also includes substantive TRL 4–7 activity. The following describes the types of activities CFIN supports at each stage of the readiness journey.

- **Technology Development and Validation (TRL 4–5)** Activities that test and validate a technology's core products or processes, first in a laboratory environment and then in a simulated or relevant setting. At TRL 4, this includes bench-scale testing to confirm that basic technological components work as intended. At TRL 5, integrated products or processes are tested in a simulated environment representative of food processing or distribution conditions, increasing confidence in reliability and performance prior to real-world deployment.
- **Prototype Development and Demonstration (TRL 6–7)** Activities that advance a validated technology into prototype form and demonstrate its performance in increasingly operational settings. At TRL 6, prototypes are tested in a relevant environment that closely simulates real food processing or distribution conditions. At TRL 7, a near-final prototype is demonstrated in an actual



operational environment – such as a working food processing facility or distribution operation – generating the performance data needed to support full-scale development.

- **System Integration and Operational Demonstration (TRL 8)** Activities that bring a fully developed technology to operational readiness, demonstrating the completed product or process under expected real-world conditions in a food processing or distribution environment. At TRL 8, the technology has been proven to work in its final form, and the project generates the validated performance data, techno-economic evidence, and operational learnings needed to support broader commercial adoption across the sector.
- **Knowledge Development and Dissemination (All Eligible TRL Bands)** Across all stages, CFIN expects projects to capture and share the learnings generated through their research and demonstration activities. Eligible knowledge activities include techno-economic analysis, life cycle assessment, performance benchmarking, and the development of replicable models or deployment guides that advance sector-wide understanding of the technology. These activities must be conducted in direct connection with the core technology development or demonstration work.

All eligible activities must be conducted in the context of food processing or distribution and must be directly connected to the development or demonstration of applicant-owned clean technology IP. Activities focused solely on adopting or installing a third-party technology at a facility – without a substantive research, development, or demonstration component led by the IP owner – are not eligible.

Applicants should refer to [Appendix C](#) for a full list of technical readiness levels and their definitions.

## 2. Eligible Costs

Eligible Project Costs include:

- Costs incurred and paid for by the Lead Applicant, which are necessary to carry out the approved project activities;
- Costs that are generally non-recurring and incremental to the ordinary business activities of the Lead Applicant;
- Costs that are reasonable, such that the nature and the amounts do not exceed what an ordinary prudent person would conduct in a similar business context;
- Costs that can be directly attributed to the completion of the approved project activities included in the Master Project Agreement; and,
- Costs that must be determined in accordance with the Lead Applicant's cost accounting practices as accepted by CFIN and applied consistently over time.

### 2.1 Cost Categories

Eligible project costs must fall under one of these Eligible Cost Categories:

- Direct Labour
- Subcontractors and Consultants
- Direct materials
- Equipment
- Other Direct Costs

Direct Labour
The portion of gross wages or salaries incurred and paid by the applicant for direct technical labour on approved project activities which can be specifically identified and measured as having been performed for the project and which is so identified and measured consistently by the applicant's cost accounting system. Direct Labour claims are supported by a timesheet clearly identifying the project tasks, hours



spent on the project per pay period and signed by the employee and their superior. Timesheets are further supported by paystubs.

General administrative, clerical, human resources, finance, business development, or project reporting time are not considered eligible direct labour costs.

Overtime and bonuses are not considered eligible direct labour expenses.

#### **Subcontractors and Consultants**

The costs of Subcontractors or Consultants incurred and paid for approved project activities are the costs for work or services performed by an external third party, which can be specifically identified and measured as having been incurred and paid for the approved project activities. The applicant cannot be a recipient of CFIN funding and a Subcontractor for the same project.

Subcontractor or Consultant invoices must clearly indicate the scope of work and activities performed.

#### **Direct Materials**

The cost of materials which are incurred and paid and can be specifically identified and measured as having been processed, manufactured, and used in the performance of the approved project activities, which are measured consistently by the applicant's cost accounting system.

- i. Materials purchased solely for the approved project activities shall be at the net laid down cost to the applicant, net of any sale taxes and after any discounts offered by the suppliers.
- ii. Materials issued from the applicants' general stocks shall be measured in accordance with the material pricing method consistently used by the applicant.

Direct Materials include but are not limited to any raw material that is "used up" by completing approved project activities.

#### **Equipment**

The capital cost of Equipment, which are incurred and paid and can be specifically identified as having been purchased for approved project activities and measured consistently by the applicant's costing system. Significant Equipment required to complete the approved project activities must be detailed in the project work plan. See below scenarios for clarification of costs related to Equipment:

- i. If an applicant has built the equipment themselves, the costs would be allocated to the appropriate cost categories (Direct Material, Direct Labour, etc.);
- ii. If an applicant has equipment built by a third party, the costs would be allocated to the equipment category if readily identifiable, otherwise the equipment could be reported in Subcontractors category; and
- iii. If an applicant outright purchases a piece of equipment, the costs would be allocated to the Equipment category.

Equipment costs include but are not limited to, the purchase of equipment necessary for the approved project activities, costs to alter or modernize the equipment, costs to get the equipment into working order, and shipping costs.

Capital equipment acquired for the project may be subject to CFIN and approval for disposal or sale, which will be outlined in the Master Project Agreement.

#### **Other Direct Costs**

These are eligible direct costs, not falling within the categories of Direct Costs mentioned above, but which are incurred and paid, and can be specifically identified and measured as having been incurred



and paid by the applicant for approved project activities and which are so identified and measured consistently by the applicant's costing system. Shipping costs are an Other Direct Cost.

Travel and Outreach Costs meaning those eligible direct costs incurred and paid by the applicant that are directly related to approved project activities. Travel expenses shall be appropriate, economical, reasonable, and available to most of the employees of the applicant. Travel costs can be claimed, to the maximum allowance, as per [Appendix B: CFIN Travel Policy](#).

## 2.2 Ineligible Costs

Ineligible Costs incurred and paid by the applicant are not eligible for CFIN funding, regardless of whether they are reasonably and properly incurred and paid in the carrying out of the approved project activities.

Ineligible Costs include:

- i. any form of interest paid or payable on invested capital, bonds, debentures, bank or other loans together with related bond discounts and finance charges; the interest portion of the lease cost that is attributable to cost of borrowing regardless of types of lease;
- ii. legal, accounting and consulting fees in connection with financial reorganization (including the set-up of new not-for-profit organizations), security issues, capital stock issues, obtaining of licenses, establishment and management of agreements with the applicant and prosecution of claims against CFIN or Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. *Such legal costs associated with obtaining patents or other statutory protection for project intellectual property are considered eligible;*
- iii. losses on investments, bad debts and expenses for collection charges;
- iv. losses on other projects or contracts;
- v. federal and provincial income taxes, goods and services taxes, value added taxes, excess profit taxes or surtaxes and/or special expenses in connection with those taxes, except duty taxes paid for importing is Eligible Cost;
- vi. provisions for contingencies;
- vii. premiums for life insurance on the lives of officers and/or directors where proceeds accrue to the applicant;
- viii. amortization of unrealized appreciation of assets;
- ix. depreciation of assets paid for by CFIN;
- x. fines and penalties;
- xi. expenses and depreciation of excess facilities;
- xii. unreasonable compensation for officers and employees;
- xiii. product development or improvement expenses not associated with the work being performed under the project;
- xiv. advertising, except reasonable advertising of an industrial or institutional character placed in trade, technical or professional journals for the knowledge transfer activities of the project;
- xv. entertainment expenses (including but not limited to, catering, alcohol, non-travel expenses);
- xvi. donations;
- xvii. dues and other memberships other than regular trade and professional associations;
- xviii. extraordinary or abnormal fees for professional advice in regard to technical, administrative or accounting matters, unless approval from CFIN is obtained;
- xix. selling and marketing expenses associated with the products or services or both being developed under the Master Project Agreement;
- xx. in-kind costs; and,
- xxi. recruiting fees.



## 2.3 Service Providers

A service provider intends to bill the applicant for services throughout the course of the project. Service Providers cannot be project partners. The service provider must be independent of the Lead Applicant and have no conflict of interest in providing services for the project.

## 2.4 Affiliated Persons Clause

Affiliated Persons are to be understood and treated as defined in the Income Tax Act, which includes but is not limited to; two or more entities that have similar ownership personnel; or entities that have a working business relationship.

In the case of Eligible Costs for goods or services incurred and paid with an Affiliated Person, the amount of the costs incurred and paid must:

- not exceed their Fair Market Value;
- in the case of a good or service for which there is no Fair Market Value, the amount must not exceed the Fair Market Value of Similar Goods; or
- in the case of a good or service for which there is neither a Fair Market Value nor Similar Goods, the amount must not exceed the sum of the applicable Direct Costs with Indirect Costs (Overhead) at the rate stipulated by the Master Project Agreement, plus 5% profit.

*Note: It is important for the applicant from the outset, to self-identify any related parties or Affiliated Persons who will be contracted to provide goods or perform services for completion of approved project activities.*

For wholly owned subsidiaries of the Lead Applicant completing approved project activities, its Eligible Costs incurred and paid will be claimed by the Lead Applicant on their behalf and costs are to be treated as if the wholly owned subsidiary is the Lead Applicant.

## 3. Program Streams and Application Process

The True North program is offered in two streams, designed to support clean technology innovations at different stages of development and scales of ambition.

The **True North – Spark** stream is built for speed and accessibility – offering up to \$100,000 per project through a single-phase application. Spark is intended for applicants who are ready to move quickly and have a well-defined, focused scope of work.

The **True North – Impact** stream is designed for larger, more complex demonstrations – offering between \$250,000 and \$1,000,000 per project, with a preference for projects in the \$250,000–\$500,000 range. Impact follows a two-phase process, beginning with an Expression of Interest before moving to a full application.

Both streams target the same priority areas and eligibility requirements, and applicants should self-select into the stream that best reflects their project's scope, funding need, and readiness to proceed. The sections that follow provide stream-specific detail on timelines, application process, questions, and scoring criteria for each.

**You must be a CFIN member to apply.** Become a CFIN Member: <https://www.cfin-rcia.ca/>

Within 24 hours of your membership sign up, we will activate your account on our grant platform at <https://cfin-rcia.smartsimple.ca/>.



On your first login to the application platform, applicants are encouraged to complete their Organization Profile with their address and other contact information.

### 3.1 Spark – Up to \$100,000 in Funding

Spark is a single-phase application where applicants can apply for support on 12 month late-stage development and demonstration projects. Applications are reviewed and responded to within 60 days.

#### 3.1.2 Spark Application Questions

##### Section 1: Project Overview

- **Project Title and Description.** This information will be used to communicate your goals to a wider audience, if successful.
- **Start and End Date.** The earliest start date for projects will be 60 days after the intake close date. This will be outlined in the Master Project Agreement with CFIN.
- **Primary contact for the project** – Provide a name, title, email and phone number for an individual, who will be the primary for CFIN to use for any communications related to the Lead Applicant and project.

##### Section 2: Applicant Overview

- Legal Business Name and Operating Name;
- Provide your address, city/town, province and postal code, website URL, 9-digit business number and date and location of incorporation;
- Business Profile – provide a short description of what your business does;
- Business Type – select from the drop-down menu;
- Percentage Canadian Ownership – indicate the percentage of the company that is ultimately owned by Canadians or by firms incorporated in Canada (as determined by voting shares);
- List of Shareholders – indicate the name and portion of ownership of majority shareholders for the applicant.
- Primary NAICS Code – The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) is an industry classification system developed by the statistical agencies of Canada, Mexico and the United States. For more information, visit the Statistics Canada [website](#);
- Applicant Ownership Demographics – please respond to the demographic questions regarding business ownership.
- Please indicate any legal proceedings, if any, that may adversely affect your business;
- Applicant Fiscal Year Data: Please complete the data for your most recent completed fiscal year.
  - Revenues from the Canadian Operation, including domestic and export sales;
  - Gross Canadian expenditures on research and development and capital expenditures;
  - Total number of full-time equivalents (FTE)s in your business in the past calendar year

##### Section 3: Project Partners

- ❖ **Demonstration Site and Facility Details.** Describe where the proposed work will be carried out. (500 words) Your response should address:
  - The type of facility or environment where the technology will be demonstrated (e.g. food processing plant, cold storage facility, distribution centre).
  - Whether a pilot site has been confirmed, and if so, the name and location of the facility.
  - Why this location is appropriate for demonstrating the technology at the proposed TRL
  - Any site-specific conditions or constraints that are relevant to the project design.



*Note: Applications with a confirmed pilot site appropriate to the project scope receive full marks for this question.*

#### **Section 4: Application Questions**

##### **The Solution**

- ❖ **Priority Area (select one)** - select the priority area that best describes your technology.
- ❖ **The Pitch - Describe the operational challenge your technology addresses and explain its technical advantage over current industry practice. (750 words)** Your response should address:
  - What specific problem exists in food processing or distribution, and why existing solutions fall short.
  - How your technology works, and what makes it technically distinct from conventional approaches.
  - What measurable performance improvements your solution delivers (e.g. energy reduction, emissions avoided, water saved, waste diverted) compared to an industry baseline.
  - How your solution creates productivity or competitiveness improvements for your target customers – including cost savings, operational efficiencies, or new capabilities they would not otherwise have.
- ❖ **Technology Readiness Level - select your current TRL from the menu**
- ❖ **Describe the evidence that supports your selected TRL, and summarize the testing or prototype work completed to date. (500 words)** Your response should address:
  - What testing, trials, or prototype development has been completed, and under what conditions
  - What the results of that work demonstrated, including any quantitative performance data
  - What technical risks or uncertainties remain, and how your proposed project will address them
  - How your current TRL positions the project to reach TRL 8 by project completion

##### **The Project Plan**

- ❖ **Project Objectives - Describe the specific technical and commercial goals your project will achieve by December 31, 2027. (500 words)** Your response should address:
  - What technical milestones will be reached, and how success will be defined and measured
  - What the project will demonstrate that has not been demonstrated before in a food processing or distribution context
  - How project outcomes will advance the technology toward broader commercial adoption
  - Any key risks to achieving your objectives, and how you plan to manage them

##### **The Future**

- ❖ **Target Customer - Describe the market opportunity for your technology and your strategy for reaching customers after project completion. (500 words)** Your response should address:
  - The size and characteristics of your target market, including the types of food processing or distribution operations most likely to adopt your technology.
  - A profile of your primary buyer, including their typical decision-making process and the factors that drive technology adoption in this segment.
  - Your strategy for entering the market, including any early customers, partnerships, or distribution channels already in place or under development.
  - How the outcomes of this project will accelerate your path to commercial adoption.
- ❖ **IP Strategy - Confirm ownership of the intellectual property underlying your technology and describe your plan for protecting it. (500 words)** Your response should address:
  - Who owns the core IP and confirm that it was developed by the applying organization (not licensed from a third party).



- The status of any IP protection measures in place (e.g. patents filed or granted, trade secret protocols, confidentiality agreements).
- Your strategy for protecting new IP generated through this project.
- Any risks to IP ownership or exclusivity, and how you plan to manage them.

### **Section 5: Project Benefits**

A link to the CFIN Environmental Impact Calculator will be available for download.

Complete the Calculator and upload it to this section.

Complete all relevant fields in the CFIN Environmental Impact Calculator template.. Use real operational data from your confirmed pilot site wherever possible (utility bills, equipment specs, production records) and document every assumption explicitly in the notes fields provided. Reviewers will verify that your base case and project case reflect the same facility, operating conditions, and time period – inconsistencies between the two scenarios will be flagged and will affect your score.

Your application should also demonstrate a credible, practical plan for collecting and reporting environmental performance data once your technology is installed. Describe what data will be collected, how and where it will be captured, and who in your organization will be responsible – keeping in mind that funded applicants will report actual pilot data with support from CFIN's external M&V advisors, Quinn+Partners. Plans grounded in existing operational systems and a clear division of responsibilities will score higher than general commitments to track performance.

### **Section 6: Budget & Workplan**

#### **❖ Budget, Quarterly Spend Forecast, and Sources of Funding Table.**

- Your budget needs to be detailed enough for assessment. For direct labour resources, outline the job title and number of hours on the project. For consultants, outline the vendor's name if available, and the scope of work (i.e. Testing Services, Outsourced Engineering, etc.).
- Refer to [2.1 Cost Categories](#) to determine which cost categories your project costs will fit under. You can add rows if you need to add more costs. The costs must be outlined based on the Fiscal Year in which they are incurred.
- Based on your costs inputted into the budget, the spreadsheet will calculate the Total Eligible Costs, Total Project Costs Eligible for CFIN funding and the Total Costs to be financed by Lead Applicant, Partners & Other Government Funds.

#### **❖ Forecast by Quarter**

- Complete the Forecast by Quarter to forecast the amount of CFIN reimbursement funding that you will be requesting in a fiscal quarter (based on the government fiscal year from April 1 - March 31). This will be based on the invoice date for the expenses incurred.

#### **❖ Sources of Funds**

- The purpose of this spreadsheet is to provide a further breakdown about the sources of funding from the Lead Applicant and Partners, along with any sources of government funds that will be used (50%);
- The Business/Organization Name will populate from the Project Profile tab;
- Indicate with a Y/N if the funding partners are a Small or Medium Enterprise (SME), a business with 499 or fewer employees and less than \$50 million in gross revenues;
- Indicate with a Y/N if any of the project partners are affiliated to each other, as defined in the Program Guide;
- Outline the industry cash coming directly from the Lead Applicant and Partner(s).



- If the cash contribution from the Lead Applicant or Partner(s) is sourced from other municipal, provincial or federal Government funding programs, outline the total funds, the Government/Program Name and the Government Level; and,
- Indicate with a Y/N if your Industry Cash Contribution is sourced from outside Canada (i.e. any of the Lead Applicant or Partner cash is directly from an international source).

❖ **Project Workplan Table**

- Complete a detailed project work plan with activities, milestones, timelines. A minimum of 4 activities are required.
- Select the appropriate fiscal year associated with the activity start date from the drop-down menu;
- Activity Description should outline the planned activities in chronological order and include any project milestones;
- Expected Outcomes are the benefits or results that will occur during the project and their achievement is a measure of success. These might include items such as new products, practices, processes, and systems that are developed:
  - New products are goods and services that differ significantly in their characteristics or intended uses from products previously produced and used. Examples could include equipment, software, novel foods or consumer goods;
  - New practices are new techniques or methods that can be applied
  - New processes are the set of operations performed by equipment in which variables are monitored or controlled to produce an output in labs or processing facilities; and,
  - New Systems are the set of detailed methods, procedures and routines created to carry out a specific activity, perform a duty, or solve a problem.
  - Select the appropriate TRL that represents the achievement of the Expected Outcomes. If no TRL is associated with the Expected Outcome, then select “\_”.

**Section 7: Application Files**

- ❖ Supporting Documentation
- ❖ Financial Statements

**3.1.3 Project Assessment Criteria**

Each application that meets the eligibility requirements will be assessed using the following criteria:

Spark Assessment Criteria	Scoring
<b>The Pitch:</b> Be specific about the problem you are solving and name the types of facilities or operations affected. Quantify your technical advantage – use data from your own testing or published industry benchmarks as your baseline. Clearly connect your solution's performance to tangible outcomes for your customers, including cost savings, energy reductions, or operational improvements.	15
<b>TRL Validation:</b> Reference specific tests, trials, or prototype results that justify your current TRL. Include quantitative data where available. Be honest about what remains to be proven – reviewers will discount overstated TRL claims. Show a clear, step-by-step logic for how your project activities will advance the technology to TRL 8 by December 31, 2027.	10
<b>Project Objectives:</b> Write objectives that are specific enough to be tested – avoid generic language like "validate the technology." Define what success looks like in measurable terms (e.g. a specific efficiency threshold, a volume of waste diverted, an energy intensity reduction). Acknowledge the real risks your project faces and explain concretely how you will manage them.	10



<b>Project Workplan:</b> Ensure each activity has a clear purpose that connects to a project objective. Show that your timeline accounts for realistic lead times, testing cycles, and any dependencies between activities. Minimum four activities are required – reviewers will assess quality, not just quantity.	8
<b>Budget:</b> Budget line items should be detailed to assess their alignment with the workplan. Reviewers will flag budgets that appear misaligned with the scope or timeline of the proposed work.	7
<b>Pilot Location:</b> A confirmed pilot site receives full marks. If your site is not yet confirmed, describe the type of facility you are targeting and explain why it is appropriate – and indicate the status of your site discussions. Reviewers understand that not all applicants will have a signed agreement at time of application.	5
<b>Impact Calculator:</b> Complete all relevant fields in the CFIN Environmental Impact Calculator – blank fields in applicable sections will reduce your score regardless of the quality of other sections. Ensure your base case and project case are drawn from the same facility and operating conditions and document every assumption explicitly in the notes fields provided. For your monitoring plan, describe what data will be collected, how it will be captured, and who in your organization will be responsible. Plans built around existing operational systems and clear accountabilities will score higher than general commitments.	25
<b>Target Customer:</b> Ground your market size in credible data – avoid generic industry statistics that don't speak to your specific customer segment. Be specific about who your buyer is: what kind of operation, what size, what drives their purchasing decisions, and what barrier your technology removes for them. If you have early customer conversations, letters of intent, or pilot partners, reference them – demonstrated commercial interest will strengthen your score significantly.	12
<b>IP Strategy:</b> Confirm clearly that your organization developed and owns the core IP – do not assume this is implied by your application. Describe what protection is already in place and what steps you will take to protect new IP generated during the project. If you are relying on trade secrets rather than patents, explain the protocols you have in place. Reviewers are also looking for awareness of IP risks – address them directly rather than omitting them.	8
<b>Total Score</b>	<b>100</b>

Once you have submitted your Spark application, CFIN will review it for completeness and eligibility before passing it to a panel of internal and external reviewers for scoring. Applications are assessed on a merit basis and you can expect to receive a decision within 60 days of the intake close date. If your application is successful, CFIN will be in touch to discuss next steps and initiate the Master Project Agreement process. If your application is not successful, you will have the opportunity to receive feedback on your submission. CFIN runs multiple intake cycles – applicants with eligible projects who are not successful in one cycle are encouraged to incorporate feedback and reapply in a future intake.

### 3.2 Impact - \$250,000 - \$1M in Funding

The Impact stream is designed for larger, more complex demonstrations and follows a two-phase process, beginning with an Expression of Interest before moving to a full application. Completed Expressions of Interest will be responded to within 30-45 days. Those invited forward will have 4 weeks to complete the full application stage, with final decisions following 4-6 weeks after submission.

#### 3.2.1 Impact Expression of Interest Questions

##### Section 1: Project Overview

- **Project Title and Description.** This information will be used to communicate your goals to a wider audience, if successful.



- **Start and End Date.** The earliest start date for Impact stream projects will be **October 1, 2026**. This will be outlined in the Master Project Agreement with CFIN.
- **Primary contact for the project** – Provide a name, title, email and phone number for an individual, who will be the primary for CFIN to use for any communications related to the Lead Applicant and project.

## Section 2: Applicant Overview

- Legal Business Name and Operating Name;
- Provide your address, city/town, province and postal code, website URL, 9-digit business number and date and location of incorporation;
- Business Profile – provide a short description of what your business does;
- Business Type – select from the drop-down menu;
- Percentage Canadian Ownership – indicate the percentage of the company that is ultimately owned by Canadians or by firms incorporated in Canada (as determined by voting shares);
- List of Shareholders – indicate the name and portion of ownership of majority shareholders for the applicant.
- Primary NAICS Code – The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) is an industry classification system developed by the statistical agencies of Canada, Mexico and the United States. For more information, visit the Statistics Canada [website](#);
- Applicant Ownership Demographics – please respond to the demographic questions regarding business ownership.
- Please indicate any legal proceedings, if any, that may adversely affect your business;
- Applicant Fiscal Year Data: Please complete the data for your most recent completed fiscal year.
  - Revenues from the Canadian Operation, including domestic and export sales;
  - Gross Canadian expenditures on research and development and capital expenditures;
  - Total number of full-time equivalents (FTE)s in your business in the past calendar year

## Section 3: Project Partners

- ❖ **Demonstration Site and Facility Details.** Describe where the proposed work will be carried out. (500 words) Your response should address:
  - The type of facility or environment where the technology will be demonstrated (e.g. food processing plant, cold storage facility, distribution centre).
  - Whether a pilot site has been confirmed, and if so, the name and location of the facility.
  - Why this location is appropriate for demonstrating the technology at the proposed TRL.
  - Any site-specific conditions or constraints that are relevant to the project design.

*Note: A confirmed pilot partner is not required at the EOI stage. However, applicants must identify a clear target and demonstrate that meaningful site discussions are underway. Confirmed partners will be evaluated more favourably.*

## Section 4: Application Questions

### The Solution

- ❖ **Priority Area (select one)** - select the priority area that best describes your technology
- ❖ **The Pitch - Describe the operational challenge your technology addresses and explain its technical advantage over current industry practice, including the productivity and competitiveness improvements it delivers to customers (750 words).** Your response should address:
  - What specific problem exists in food processing or distribution, and why existing solutions fall short.
  - How your technology works, and what makes it technically distinct from conventional approaches.



- What measurable performance improvements your solution delivers (e.g. energy reduction, emissions avoided, water saved, waste diverted) compared to an industry baseline.
- How your solution creates concrete productivity or competitiveness improvements for your target customers – including cost savings, operational efficiencies, or capabilities they would not otherwise have.

❖ **Technology Readiness Level *Dropdown to select current TRL (minimum TRL 4).***

❖ **Describe the evidence that supports your selected TRL and summarize the testing or prototype work completed to date (250 words).** Your response should address:

- What testing, trials, or prototype development has been completed and under what conditions.
- What the results of that work demonstrated, including any quantitative performance data.
- What technical risks or uncertainties remain, and how your proposed project will begin to address them.
- How your current TRL positions the project to advance meaningfully within the project window.

**The Project Plan**

❖ **Project Objectives and Technical Approach - Describe what your project will achieve and how you plan to achieve it. This question is your opportunity to show reviewers that you have a clear-eyed understanding of both the goals you are pursuing and the technical path to getting there (500 words).** Your response should address:

Objectives:

- The specific technical and commercial goals your project will achieve by December 31, 2027.
- What this project will demonstrate that has not been demonstrated before in a food processing or distribution context.
- How the outcomes of this project advance your technology toward broader commercial adoption.

Technical approach and challenges:

- The key technical steps involved in taking your technology from its current TRL to operational demonstration in a food processing or distribution environment.
- The most significant technical challenges you anticipate – including installation, integration, food safety, or regulatory constraints – and how you plan to address them.
- Any dependencies on third parties, equipment suppliers, or facility conditions that are critical to your technical approach.

Success criteria:

- What a successful project looks like in specific, measurable terms.
- How you will know at project completion that the objectives have been met.

❖ **Team Profile - Describe the experience and qualifications of the key team members who will lead this project, and explain why your team is well-positioned to execute a project of this scope (500 words).** Your response should address:

- The relevant experience of your technical lead(s) in developing, testing, or scaling clean technologies – including specific examples of industrial pilots or demonstrations they have led or contributed to.
- The relevant experience of your management lead(s) in delivering funded R&D projects, managing budgets, and coordinating multi-stakeholder work.
- Any gaps in team capacity and how you plan to address them (e.g. through partners, contractors, or advisors).



- Why this team, at this stage of development, is capable of delivering the proposed project on time and within budget.

### **The Future**

- ❖ **Commercial Path - Describe your pathway from project completion to full market entry, including the steps required to reach TRL 8 and achieve commercial adoption (500 words).** Your response should address:
  - What milestones remain between your projected end-of-project TRL and full commercial readiness (TRL 8), and how you plan to reach them.
  - Who your target customers are, and what the adoption pathway looks like for this type of buyer in the food processing or distribution sector.
  - What commercial relationships, partnerships, distribution channels, or early sales are already in place or actively in development.
  - What barriers to market entry exist and how you plan to address them.

### **Section 5: Project Benefits**

- ❖ **Impact Estimate - Provide a high-level projection of the environmental outcomes your technology will deliver, with supporting logic. A full Environmental Impact Calculator will be required at the full application stage (500 words).** Your response should address:
  - Your projected impact across one or more of the following dimensions: GHG reduction (tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e), water savings (litres), or waste diversion (kilograms) – quantify each outcome you claim
  - The assumptions and data sources underlying your projections, including the baseline you are measuring against and how it was determined
  - The logic connecting your technology's performance to the projected environmental outcomes – reviewers should be able to follow your calculation from baseline to impact
  - Any additional environmental co-benefits your technology delivers beyond the primary metric (e.g. refrigerant elimination, reduced chemical use, landfill diversion)

*Note: Projections do not need to be precise at this stage, but they must be logical, clearly reasoned, and grounded in credible assumptions. Unsupported claims will score poorly regardless of their ambition.*

### **Section 6: Budget & Workplan**

- ❖ **Budget**
  - Your budget needs to be detailed enough for assessment. For direct labour resources, outline the job title and number of hours on the project. For consultants, outline the vendor's name if available, and the scope of work (i.e. Testing Services, Outsourced Engineering, etc.).
  - Refer to [2.1 Cost Categories](#) to determine which cost categories your project costs will fit under. You can add rows if you need to add more costs. The costs must be outlined based on the Fiscal Year in which they are incurred.
  - Based on your costs inputted into the budget, the spreadsheet will calculate the Total Eligible Costs, Total Project Costs Eligible for CFIN funding and the Total Costs to be financed by Lead Applicant, Partners & Other Government Funds.
  - This will be available to be revised at the full application if you are invited forward.

### **Section 7: Application Files**

- ❖ Supporting Documentation
- ❖ Financial Statements



### 3.2.2 Impact Expression of Interest Scoring Grid

Impact EOI Assessment Criteria	Scoring
<b>Pilot Partner:</b> A confirmed pilot partner receives full marks. If your partner is not yet confirmed, identify specific organizations you are in active discussion with and describe the status of those conversations in concrete terms. Generic descriptions of facility types without named candidates will score in the weak range. Reviewers are looking for evidence that the project is grounded in a real operational context, not a hypothetical one.	5
<b>The Pitch:</b> Be specific about the problem you are solving and name the types of facilities or operations affected. Quantify your technical advantage using data from your own testing or published industry benchmarks. Clearly connect your solution's performance to tangible outcomes for your customers – cost savings, energy reductions, or operational improvements that are grounded in real numbers rather than general claims. The Impact stream is competitive; vague or aspirational pitches will not score well against applications that demonstrate technical depth and commercial awareness.	20
<b>TRL Validation:</b> Reference specific tests, trials, or prototype results with quantitative data where available. Be honest about what remains unproven – reviewers will discount overstated TRL claims. Clearly explain how your proposed project activities will advance the technology and be realistic about what is achievable within a project window ending December 31, 2027.	10
<b>Project Objectives and Technical Approach:</b> Write objectives that are specific enough to be tested – avoid language like "validate the technology" without defining what validation means in measurable terms. Be honest about the technical challenges you face and explain concretely how you will address them. Reviewers are looking for evidence that you have thought through what could go wrong and have a plan for it. Define success criteria as testable statements: "the system will achieve X under conditions Y, verified by method Z."	10
<b>Team Profile:</b> Provide specific examples for both your technical and management leads – name the project, the context, and the outcome. For technical experience, directly relevant food sector examples score highest, but adjacent sector experience is acceptable if you explicitly connect it to the food context. For management experience, reference specific funded projects including the funder, budget scale, and outcome. If you are a small or early-stage team, address this directly and explain the systems or support you have in place to meet CFIN's reporting and financial management requirements.	10
<b>Commercial Path:</b> Map the steps between your end-of-project TRL and TRL 8 explicitly. Be specific about your target customer: their operation type, size, purchasing behaviour, and what drives their technology adoption decisions. If you have letters of intent, active pilots, or early sales, reference them. Reviewers will look for evidence that you have engaged with the market, not just analyzed it from a distance.	15
<b>Environmental Impact - Projected Impact Ambition:</b> Quantify your projected impact – a number with a unit and a timeframe is the minimum expectation. Think beyond your immediate pilot: where possible, indicate the potential sector-wide impact if your technology were broadly adopted. If your technology delivers impact across multiple environmental dimensions (e.g. both GHG reduction and water savings), quantify each. Ambition matters here – modest projections for a large funding ask will be scrutinized.	15
<b>Environmental Impact - Quality of Logic and Methodology:</b> Define your baseline clearly and explain how it was determined – reviewers cannot assess your impact claim without understanding what you are measuring against. Walk through your calculation logic step by step. State your assumptions explicitly and explain why they are reasonable. Acknowledging uncertainty where it exists will not hurt your score – unsupported overconfidence will. Remember that a full GHG Calculator will be required at the full application stage, so the methodology you establish here should be one you can defend and build on.	15
<b>Total Score</b>	<b>100</b>



Completed Expressions of Interest will be assessed by a panel of internal and external reviewers with expertise across technical, environmental, market, and food industry areas. Each application will be scored independently by multiple reviewers before scores are discussed and reconciled by the panel. CFIN will notify all applicants of their EOI outcome within 30 days of the intake close date.

Only the highest-scoring EOIs will be invited to submit a full application. Reaching the full application stage is competitive – applicants should expect that a meaningful portion of EOI submissions will not advance. Applicants who are not invited forward will receive the opportunity to hear feedback on their EOI. For those invited forward, feedback will also be shared with the applicant with the intent of supporting a strong full application.

Receiving an invitation to submit a full application does not constitute a commitment of funding from CFIN. Funding decisions are made following the full application review process described in Section 3.2.3.

### 3.2.3 Impact Full Application

When you advance to the full application stage, your EOI responses are unlocked for editing. You are not required to rewrite your responses from scratch – instead, you are expected to strengthen, update, and build on what you submitted at the EOI stage in light of progress made, feedback received, and the more detailed requirements of the full application.

You are not expected to fundamentally reframe your technology, pivot your priority area, or propose a substantially different project scope at the full application stage. The full application is a deepening and evidencing of your EOI commitment, not a new proposal. Applications that present a materially different project at Stage 2 than at Stage 1 will be flagged for a program lead review before scoring proceeds.

The following guidance describes what CFIN expects you to update, and what reviewers will be looking for when assessing the evolution of your responses between stages.

#### **Section 1: Project Overview**

This section can be updated with changes since the EOI.

#### **Section 2: Applicant Overview**

This section can be updated with changes since the EOI. For example, if you have a new investor, or have changed addresses, ensure the changes are reflected here.

#### **Section 3: Project Partners**

##### **❖ Demonstration Site and Facility Details – Update Guidance**

**Your Pilot Partner response should be updated to reflect whether a partner has been confirmed, and if so, to provide specific facility details, operational context, and the partner's confirmed role and contribution.**

- The specific characteristics of the facility that make it suitable for demonstrating your technology at the proposed scale and TRL.
- How the facility's operational conditions (e.g. throughput, energy systems, process flows, regulatory environment) reflect the real-world conditions your technology is designed for.
- Any facility upgrades, modifications, or preparations required to support the demonstration, and who is responsible for these.
- Why this site, among available options, represents the strongest possible validation environment for your technology.



*Note: Applications that advance to the full application stage without a confirmed pilot partner will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the program lead. A strong justification for why confirmation has not yet been possible, combined with evidence of advanced discussions, will be required to proceed.*

❖ **NEW: Letter of Commitment - Mandatory upload. Upload an executed Letter of Support from your pilot partner confirming the following:**

- Site access for the duration of the project.
- The financial and/or in-kind contribution the partner is making to the project.
- The partner's commitment to participate in CFIN's measurement and verification process post-installation.

#### **Section 4: Application Questions**

Your EOI responses are available for editing and some new questions are there for response. The outline below identifies where changes are expected and what fields will be added.

#### **The Solution**

❖ **The Pitch and TRL Validation Update Guidance**

Responses should be updated to reflect any new testing results, prototype developments, or performance data gathered since your EOI submission. If your understanding of the technical differentiation or customer value proposition has sharpened, update your language accordingly. Reviewers will assess the final submitted version, but a response that has clearly developed since the EOI will signal active progress.

#### **Project Plan**

**This section is expected to show the most significant evolution between stages.**

❖ **Project Objectives and Technical Approach Update Guidance**

At the EOI stage this question established your project goals, technical path, and success criteria at a high level. At the full application stage your response should reflect the more detailed planning work you have completed since submission. Your updated response should address:

- Updated and refined objectives if required.
- A more detailed account of the technical challenges you have identified through planning, site visits, or partner discussions, and how your approach has evolved to address them.
- Any new dependencies, equipment specifications, or facility constraints that have emerged since the EOI.
- Success criteria that are now specific enough to map directly to milestones in your workplan – reviewers will check for consistency between this response and the workplan you submit.

❖ **Team Profile Update Guidance**

At the EOI stage this question established the core experience and capacity of your team. At the full application stage your response should reflect the current state of your team and any changes since submission.

#### **The Future**

❖ **Commercial Path Update Guidance**

Your Commercial Path response should be updated to reflect any new customer conversations, letters of intent, signed agreements, or commercial partnerships that have developed since the EOI. Reviewers will look for concrete evidence of commercial momentum that was not present at the EOI stage – a response that is unchanged between stages will score lower than one that demonstrates progress.



- ❖ **NEW:** IP Strategy - Outline the current protection status of your intellectual property and provide evidence of Freedom to Operate in your target markets (500 words).

Your response should address:

- The status of IP protection for the core technology – including any patents filed or granted, trade secret protocols in place, or other protective measures.
- A summary of your Freedom to Operate assessment – confirm that you have reviewed the relevant prior art and third-party IP landscape and describe the outcome of that review.
- Your strategy for protecting new IP generated through this project, including who will own it and how it will be documented and secured.
- Any identified risks to IP exclusivity or freedom to operate, and how you plan to manage or mitigate them.

## **Section 5: Project Benefits**

### ❖ **Impact Estimate Update Guidance**

Your Impact Estimate response should be updated to align with the detailed projections and baseline established in your GHG Calculator submission. Where your EOI impact estimate relied on assumptions or approximations, update it to reflect the more rigorous analysis completed for the full application. Inconsistencies between your written narrative and your calculator outputs will be noted by reviewers.

- ❖ **NEW:** Environmental Impact Calculator - Mandatory Excel upload A link to the CFIN Environmental Impact Calculator will be available for download.

Complete the Calculator and upload it to this section.

Complete all relevant fields in the CFIN Environmental Impact Calculator template. Use real operational data from your confirmed pilot site wherever possible (utility bills, equipment specs, production records) and document every assumption explicitly in the notes fields provided. Reviewers will verify that your base case and project case reflect the same facility, operating conditions, and time period – inconsistencies between the two scenarios will be flagged and will affect your score.

Your application should also demonstrate a credible, practical plan for collecting and reporting environmental performance data once your technology is installed. Describe what data will be collected, how and where it will be captured, and who in your organization will be responsible – keeping in mind that funded applicants will report actual pilot data with support from CFIN's external M&V advisors, Quinn+Partners. Plans grounded in existing operational systems and a clear division of responsibilities will score higher than general commitments to track performance.

Reviewers will assess:

- The ambition and credibility of your projected GHG reductions (tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>).
- The completeness and accuracy of energy, fuel, water, and waste inputs.
- The rigour and transparency of the baseline established for each impact dimension.
- The quality and defensibility of the assumptions underlying your projections.

## **Section 6: Budget and Workplan**

- ❖ **Budget – Your budget can be updated to reflect any updates since the EOI.**

Once complete, finalize the Quarterly Forecast Table and Sources of Funds tables.

- ❖ **NEW** - Forecast by Quarter



- Complete the Forecast by Quarter to forecast the amount of CFIN reimbursement funding that you will be requesting in a fiscal quarter (based on the government fiscal year from April 1 - March 31). This will be based on the invoice date for the expenses incurred.

❖ **NEW - Sources of Funds**

- The purpose of this spreadsheet is to provide a further breakdown about the sources of funding from the Lead Applicant and Partners, along with any sources of government funds that will be used (50%);
- The Business/Organization Name will populate from the Project Profile tab;
- Indicate with a Y/N if the funding partners are a Small or Medium Enterprise (SME), a business with 499 or fewer employees and less than \$50 million in gross revenues;
- Indicate with a Y/N if any of the project partners are affiliated to each other, as defined in the Program Guide;
- Outline the industry cash coming directly from the Lead Applicant and Partner(s).
- If the cash contribution from the Lead Applicant or Partner(s) is sourced from other municipal, provincial or federal Government funding programs, outline the total funds, the Government/Program Name and the Government Level; and,
- Indicate with a Y/N if your Industry Cash Contribution is sourced from outside Canada (i.e. any of the Lead Applicant or Partner cash is directly from an international source).

❖ **NEW - Project Workplan Table**

- Complete a detailed project work plan with activities, milestones, timelines. A minimum of 4 activities are required.
- Select the appropriate fiscal year associated with the activity start date from the drop-down menu;
- Activity Description should outline the planned activities in chronological order and include any project milestones;
- Expected Outcomes are the benefits or results that will occur during the project and their achievement is a measure of success. These might include items such as new products, practices, processes, and systems that are developed:
  - New products are goods and services that differ significantly in their characteristics or intended uses from products previously produced and used. Examples could include equipment, software, novel foods or consumer goods;
  - New practices are new techniques or methods that can be applied
  - New processes are the set of operations performed by equipment in which variables are monitored or controlled to produce an output in labs or processing facilities; and,
  - New Systems are the set of detailed methods, procedures and routines created to carry out a specific activity, perform a duty, or solve a problem.
  - Select the appropriate TRL that represents the achievement of the Expected Outcomes. If no TRL is associated with the Expected Outcome, then select “\_”.

**Section 7: Application Files**

You may add or edit files under supporting documents or financial statements.

**3.2.4 Impact Full Application Scoring Grid**

Impact Full Application Assessment Criteria	Scoring
<b>Partner Commitment:</b> Connect your site suitability rationale directly to your technology's validation requirements – explain why this specific facility with its specific operational characteristics is the right environment to generate meaningful performance data. Your Letter of Support must be executed and must address all three elements: site access, financial or in-	10



kind contribution, and M&V participation. Ensure the partner's commitments described in the letter are consistent with the role and contributions reflected in your workplan and budget.	
<b>The Pitch:</b> Your full application pitch should reflect everything you have learned since your EOI – from site visits, partner discussions, customer conversations, and continued development work. Reviewers will assess the final version on its merits but will note responses that appear unchanged from the EOI. Quantify your technical advantage and connect it directly to customer outcomes.	10
<b>TRL Validation:</b> Reference specific tests, trials, or prototype results with quantitative data where available. Be honest about what remains unproven – reviewers will discount overstated TRL claims. Clearly explain how your proposed project activities will advance the technology and be realistic about what is achievable within a project window ending December 31, 2027.	5
<b>Project Objectives and Technical Approach:</b> Your updated response should reflect the planning work you have completed since the EOI – including site visits, equipment specifications, and partner discussions. Success criteria should now be specific enough to map directly to milestones in your workplan. Reviewers will check for consistency between this response and your workplan, so ensure the two are aligned before submitting.	8
<b>Team Profile:</b> Whether the team as currently constituted is appropriately resourced and experienced to deliver the project scope defined in the workplan and budget, and whether any gaps identified at the EOI stage have been addressed.	7
<b>Commercial Path:</b> Your full application commercial path should reflect concrete progress since the EOI – new customer conversations, signed agreements, confirmed distribution partners, or a refined pricing strategy. Reviewers will look for evidence of commercial momentum, not just commercial awareness. Map the steps to TRL 8 explicitly and connect your project outcomes directly to your sales process.	12
<b>IP Strategy:</b> Name your patents or applications by number if filed, or describe your trade secret protocols in concrete terms. Your Freedom to Operate assessment does not need to be a formal legal opinion but you must demonstrate that you have reviewed the relevant prior art and IP landscape. Address project-generated IP explicitly – who will own it, how it will be documented, and what steps you will take to protect it.	8
<b>Impact Calculator:</b> Complete all relevant fields in the CFIN Environmental Impact Calculator – blank fields in applicable sections will reduce your score regardless of the quality of other sections. Ensure your base case and project case are drawn from the same facility and operating conditions and document every assumption explicitly in the notes fields provided. For your monitoring plan, describe what data will be collected, how it will be captured, and who in your organization will be responsible. Plans built around existing operational systems and clear accountabilities will score higher than general commitments.	30
<b>Budget:</b> Your budget should map to your workplan – reviewers will check consistency between the two. Confirmed matching funds with supporting documentation score significantly higher than anticipated or unconfirmed funds. If your matching funds come from multiple sources, document each separately. Quarterly spend should reflect your workplan timeline – front-loaded or back-loaded spend without a workplan rationale will be questioned.	10
<b>Total Score</b>	<b>100</b>

### 3.3 Environmental Impact Calculator

The True North Sustainable Food Fund Environmental Impact Calculator is a mandatory Excel-based tool that all applicants must complete and submit as part of their funding application. Developed by Quinn+Partners on behalf of CFIN, the tool provides a standardized framework for quantifying and documenting the expected environmental benefits of each proposed technology project.

#### Purpose

The calculator is designed to produce a rigorous, consistent estimate of the environmental impact of an applicant's technology by comparing two scenarios side by side: a *base case* (how the relevant food



processing or distribution activity operates today, without the technology) and a *project case* (how the same activity will operate once the technology is deployed). The environmental impact attributed to the technology is the measurable difference between these two scenarios, assessed over the same functional activity and timeframe.

## Structure

The tool is organized into five applicant-facing tabs:

- **Project Information** – Captures general project details including organization name, location, funding stream (Spark or Impact), project timelines, a description of the innovation, and the TNSFF priority areas most relevant to the project (e.g., energy and heat decarbonization, water and wastewater, waste and circular economy, logistics and distribution, novel processing, or measurement and monitoring).
- **Project & Base Case Definition** – Guides applicants through establishing a clear boundary for their impact assessment. Applicants describe both the current state (base case) and the expected state with the technology (project case), and identify which environmental impact areas – such as facility energy consumption, water use, feedstock volumes, transportation, or waste – are materially affected by their technology.
- **Project & Base Case Data** – The quantitative core of the tool. Applicants enter side-by-side data for the base case and project case across all relevant impact areas identified in the previous tab. Data fields cover electricity, fuel, and district energy consumption; water inputs and outputs; feedstock types and volumes; transportation modes and distances; and waste types and disposal methods. The tool converts all entries into standardized units and applies Canadian-specific emission factors (sourced from Canada's National Inventory Report and other authoritative references) to calculate projected GHG reductions in tCO<sub>2</sub>e.
- **Data Considerations** – Requires applicants to document the sources, assumptions, and estimates underlying the data entered in the previous tab. This transparency requirement ensures that the boundary and timeframe applied to the base case and project case are consistent and defensible.
- **Project Data** (*for funded applicants only*) – A parallel reporting tab, currently hidden from applicants at the time of application, that will be used during the pilot phase to record actual measured performance data. Completion of this tab will be supported by Quinn+Partners, who will also review the data for accuracy.

## How the Tool Calculates Impact

Behind the applicant-facing tabs, the tool automatically applies province-specific electricity grid emission factors, fuel combustion factors, transportation emission factors, and waste disposal emission factors to convert raw input data into estimated GHG reductions. It also calculates summary metrics such as annual energy savings (kWh), annual water savings (m<sup>3</sup>), annual food miles reduced (tonne-km), and annual waste diversion – as well as a carbon yield metric (CAD per tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year) that contextualizes funding efficiency.

## Guidance on Boundaries

A critical principle emphasized throughout the tool is the importance of consistent, defensible boundaries. Applicants are asked to capture only the *direct* impacts of their technology – those that occur as a predictable and measurable result of deployment at the pilot site – rather than speculative downstream or economy-wide effects. Ancillary benefits may be described qualitatively but should not be included in the quantitative data inputs.

## Support

Questions about completing the tool can be directed to [innovation@cfin-rcia.ca](mailto:innovation@cfin-rcia.ca). CFIN may also follow up with applicants to clarify information submitted.



### 3.2.5 Full Application Assessment and Funding Decisions

Completed full applications will be assessed by a panel of internal and external reviewers with expertise across technical, environmental, market, and food industry areas. Each application will be scored independently by multiple reviewers within 60 days of the full application due date. Scores and consolidated reviewer feedback will then be presented to CFIN's Innovation Advisory Council, who will make final funding recommendations based on the results of the review panel and the overall strategic fit of applications within the program.

CFIN will aim to communicate funding results within 60 business days of the intake deadline. Applicants will be notified if a decision will be delayed.

Applicants approved for funding will be required to enter into a Master Project Agreement with CFIN within 30 business days from the date of receipt of the Master Project Agreement. The funding decision is finalized upon the signing of the Master Project Agreement, which will include agreement to, without limitation: reporting requirements, timelines, IP strategy, and other performance management criteria and compliance requirements.

Applicants who are not accepted for funding will be notified with a summary of how their project proposal was evaluated, outlining the reasons why they were not approved as well as recommendations to strengthen their proposal. Projects may not be recommended for funding if they score below the competitive threshold on the assessment criteria and/or there are insufficient funds available within the program.

Should an application be unsuccessful but still be deemed eligible, CFIN may encourage applicants to apply to future calls for proposals or other CFIN programs.

## 4. Program Policies

### 4.1 Terms and Conditions

The primary contact must agree to the terms and conditions to submit the application. The application will ask applicants to certify that:

- They have read, understand, and are willing to comply with CFIN's project requirements;
- Their service providers are independent of the applicant and have no conflict of interest in undertaking the project;
- The project will be carried out in Canada;
- The project is incremental and new;
- The project would not be undertaken to the same extent without CFIN funding;
- They are willing to invest in and complete the project within a one-year time frame;
- They have adequate financial means and project management capabilities to carry out the project; and,
- They agree to provide information necessary for CFIN to conduct required due diligence including, but not limited to the last two years of external accountant prepared financial statements for the Applicant, upon the request of CFIN to assess financial capacity, as the Applicant is required to cash flow 100% of the total eligible project expenses.

### 4.2 Intellectual Property

CFIN will support industry-led projects that will generate IP of potential benefit to Canada's food ecosystem. The Project proposal is a key document to be used by applicants to detail their intellectual property strategies for their outlined project. Applicants who have not begun their IP protection or



strategy work yet will be required to outline budget line items for these costs or prove their involvement with intellectual property resources such as Elevate IP, Intellectual Property Ontario, or a law firm to receive CFIN funding. Your Regional Innovation Director can connect you to regional or provincial resources to assist with intellectual property protection.

Project proposals are required to provide an IP rationale that demonstrates how the Project will provide CFIN members, including those who are not participating in a Project, the opportunity to access IP arising from the Project. This is the basis of our focus on the 'transformative' innovation potential of a project.

Successful applicants must comply with the terms of the CFIN's Intellectual Property Policy (included in the Master Project Agreement) and agree that:

- Any IP deriving from CFIN projects, ownership rights and exploitation thereof, will remain in Canada for a minimum of five years (5) after the end of the project funding agreement unless otherwise approved in writing by the Minister on a case-by-case basis.

CFIN will not itself take any interest in Intellectual Property in any project, but it may assist with facilitating the commercialization of Intellectual Property by applicants for Canada's benefit.

### 4.3 Capital Assets

Projects funded under the True North program may include the purchase of capital assets as part of eligible project costs. A capital asset is defined as any tangible asset with a fair market value over \$25,000 that is purchased, constructed, or otherwise acquired by the Ultimate Recipient using True North funding.

#### Eligible Use

Capital assets purchased with True North funding must be used directly in support of the funded project and must remain dedicated to that purpose for the duration of the project. Applicants should identify any anticipated capital asset purchases in their project budget at the time of application, including a description of the asset, its intended use, and its estimated value.

#### Restrictions on Disposal and Change of Use

Capital asset restrictions apply until March 31, 2028, which is the end date of the True North program. Until that date, Ultimate Recipients are required to obtain CFIN's prior written approval before taking any of the following actions with respect to capital assets purchased under the program:

- Selling, transferring, or otherwise disposing of the asset
- Pledging, mortgaging, or encumbering the asset as security
- Changing the use of the asset to activities unrelated to the funded project or its commercial continuation
- Allowing the asset to be used by a third party outside the scope of the original project purpose

Requests for approval should be submitted to [innovation@cfin-rcia.ca](mailto:innovation@cfin-rcia.ca) and will be reviewed within 30 business days of receipt.

#### Disposition of Proceeds

Where a capital asset is sold or disposed of prior to March 31, 2028 with CFIN's approval, CFIN may require that a portion of the proceeds be returned to the program, proportional to the share of the asset's original cost covered by True North funding. The applicable amount will be determined by CFIN at the time of approval based on the asset's estimated fair market value at the time of disposal and the ratio of program funding to total project cost.



## **Inventory Requirement**

Upon project completion, Ultimate Recipients must provide CFIN with an inventory of all capital assets purchased under the program, including a description of each asset, its original cost, and an estimate of its current fair market value. This inventory must be submitted as part of the final project report.

## **Assets Below the Threshold**

Tangible assets with a fair market value below \$25,000 are not subject to the capital asset restrictions above but must still be identified in the project budget and used in support of the funded project for its duration.

## **4.3 Stacking and other Government Funding**

True North funding may be combined with other government funding sources, subject to the rules and limits outlined in this section. Applicants are responsible for disclosing all other sources of government funding at the time of application and notifying CFIN of any changes to other funding sources during the project.

### **ACT RIA Program – Stacking Not Permitted**

True North is one of six programs receiving funding under Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Agricultural Clean Technology Research and Innovation Stream – Accelerator (ACT RIA). Applicants may not combine True North funding with funding received from any other ACT RIA recipient organization for the same project or project activities. Applicants who are uncertain whether another funding source falls under the ACT RIA program should contact CFIN at [innovation@cfin-rcia.ca](mailto:innovation@cfin-rcia.ca) before applying.

### **Other Federal, Provincial, and Regional Programs – Stacking Limit Applies**

True North funding may be combined with funding from other federal, provincial, territorial, or municipal government programs, provided that the total government contribution to the project does not exceed 75% of total eligible project costs. This is CFIN's maximum stacking limit and applies to all sources of government funding combined, including True North.

Applicants who are receiving or anticipating funding from other government programs must disclose the following in their application budget:

- The name of each government program contributing to the project
- The funding amount received or anticipated from each program
- The specific cost categories or activities each program is funding

Applicants must ensure that individual cost items are not submitted to CFIN if they are already being fully or substantially funded by another program. Where another program covers a specific cost category – for example, where a program such as the National Research Council's Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP) is funding labour costs – those costs cannot be claimed as eligible costs under True North. This applies where the other program's contribution to that cost category meets or exceeds 50% of the cost, as submitting those costs to CFIN would result in a combined government contribution to that line item that is not reasonable or defensible.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their budget clearly identifies which costs are being funded by which program, and that no individual cost item is double-counted across funding sources.



## **Scientific Research and Experimental Development (SR&ED)**

SR&ED tax credits are not considered government funding for the purposes of CFIN's stacking rules and do not count toward the 75% stacking limit. Applicants who are claiming or anticipating SR&ED credits related to their True North project are not required to disclose these in their application budget.

## **Changes to Other Funding Sources**

If the amount or source of other government funding changes after an application is submitted or after a funding agreement is signed, the Ultimate Recipient must notify CFIN within 30 calendar days of the change. CFIN reserves the right to adjust the True North funding amount if a change in other funding sources results in the total government contribution exceeding the 75% stacking limit.

## **4.4 Project Monitoring and Reporting**

Approved projects will have quarterly reporting requirements as well as a final report at project completion. Reporting is in place to ensure that project participants are fulfilling their obligations and to track progress against financial and performance metrics. CFIN will track performance of applicants according to the key performance indicators as specified in the Master Project Agreement.

The Applicant will be responsible for monitoring and reporting on the progress of the project in line with information requests and performance metrics agreed with CFIN. Failure to complete the required reporting, as outlined in the CFIN Master Project Agreement, will impact timely reimbursement of eligible project costs.

### **Final Reporting and GHG Calculator**

At project completion, all funded projects are required to submit a completed True North GHG Calculator as part of their final report. The calculator captures the actual energy, emissions, water, and waste impacts of the demonstrated technology against the baseline established at the application stage. Applicants should ensure that their data collection methodology during the project is consistent with the methodology and project boundaries they outlined in their full application, as reviewers will compare projected and actual performance as part of the final assessment.

### **Third-Party Monitoring and Verification Support**

CFIN provides funded projects with third-party impact accounting support to assist with post-project data collection, validation, and sign-off. This support is provided at no cost to the Ultimate Recipient and is intended to strengthen the credibility and accuracy of reported environmental outcomes. The support includes assistance navigating data challenges, validation of assumptions and estimation methodologies, and an independent review of the completed GHG Calculator. Upon completion of the review, a data validation statement will be issued confirming the findings. Applicants are expected to cooperate fully with the third-party reviewer, including providing access to supporting documentation such as utility invoices, energy use reports, or metered data as requested.

### **Financial Reporting**

The Applicant will also be responsible for approving requests for reimbursement of eligible project expenses and submitting them to CFIN. Financial reporting will be completed through CFIN's secure online portal. The Applicant will be required to maintain accurate accounts of the project for at least seven years after its termination and comply with the financial reporting and auditing requirements as outlined in the CFIN Master Project Agreement.

### **Knowledge Sharing**



At the conclusion of the project and on receipt of final reports, the project may be profiled in CFIN communications. The purpose of this is to share knowledge, learnings, and results to serve as a catalyst for other businesses and innovators across Canada's food ecosystem. There may also be opportunities to communicate the project, its progress, and collaborative efforts throughout the duration of project activities.

## 5. Accelerator Program

In addition to funding, all True North recipients receive access to tailored accelerator-style support designed to strengthen the commercial outcomes of their project. This support is provided in partnership with Bioindustrial Innovation Canada, a national network that connects entrepreneurs with the resources, expertise, and relationships needed to scale their businesses.

The support is customized to the needs and stage of each funded company and may include:

- Investment readiness – Coaching and preparation support to help companies articulate their value proposition, refine their investor materials, and engage effectively with potential funders as they move toward commercialization
- Customer development – Facilitated introductions and coaching to support meaningful conversations with target customers in the food processing and distribution sector, helping companies validate their commercial strategy and accelerate market entry
- Pilot design – Hands-on support to ensure the demonstration project is structured to generate the most commercially useful data and evidence possible, strengthening the case for broader adoption
- Commercial strategy – Advisory support to help companies sharpen their go-to-market approach, pricing strategy, and post-project commercialization plan

This support is provided as a program benefit and is available to all funded recipients regardless of stream. CFIN will work with each company at the outset of their project to identify priorities and tailor the support accordingly.

For more information about BIN Canada and their work supporting entrepreneurs across Canada, visit [bincanada.ca](http://bincanada.ca).



## Appendix A – Applicant Responsibilities

True North Sustainable Food Fund submissions under either stream may only have one applicant (Lead) who incurs and submits costs. The responsibilities of the Applicant will include, but are not limited to:

- Ensuring compliance with the CFIN Master Project Agreement;
- Overseeing the performance of the project;
- Collecting funds from any project partners and cashflowing all project expenses;
- Submitting requests for reimbursement of eligible project expenses and submitting them to CFIN; and,
- Monitoring and reporting on the progress of the project in line with information requests and performance metrics agreed with CFIN.

### Project Applicant Requirements

To be considered for project funding, applicants must:

- Certify that the same project they are proposing is not already approved or in progress, and that financial commitments would not otherwise have been made to the project in its current form;
- Ensure that only eligible project costs defined under the CFIN guidelines are to be claimed for reimbursement (See [2. Eligible Costs](#) for more information).
- Agree to incur all expenses for which CFIN funding is sought no earlier than the date of the signing of the Master Project Agreement and no later than one year after that date, unless otherwise stated in the Master Project Agreement;
- Specify any other sources of government funding anticipated for their project;
- Agree to adhere to CFIN’s conflict of interest policy (included in the Master Project Agreement); and,
- Agree that, if their project is selected, they will maintain auditable financial records substantiating their expense claims and provide CFIN with the information it requires to monitor and report on the progress of their project.



## Appendix B – Travel Policy

CFIN travel expense coverage is guided by the AAFC Travel Directive and aligns with the National Joint Council Travel Directive. Recipients with approved travel as part of their project activities may submit eligible travel costs for reimbursement. Recipients are responsible for reimbursing their staff for travel expenses and must submit supporting documentation to CFIN as part of the regular quarterly claims process.

### 1. General Principles

The project team will choose the most economical travel and subsistence options consistent with health, safety, and the needs of the traveller. Virtual meetings must be used:

- When health officials advise against travel or when COVID-19 or other public health preventive measures are in place;
- When a virtual meeting would accomplish the same outcome as an in-person meeting; and
- When international travel is required to achieve project outcomes, as many services as possible (e.g., airfare) will be purchased in Canada.

### 2. Travel Expense Standards

All rates in this document reflect the AAFC Travel Directive (Annex B, Section 4.0). Where discrepancies exist, current AAFC rates and requirements take precedence. Recipients may choose to claim either the established per diem or an amount less than the per diem based on actual costs.

#### A. Per Diem Rates

Per diems cover accommodations, meals, local transportation (buses, taxis, vehicle rentals), ground transportation (including parking, transportation to/from the public carrier terminal), entry documents (including non-Canadian visas), vaccinations, and incidentals (personal phone calls, laundry, gratuities, currency exchange fees, etc.).

Travel Type	Canada	International
Day trip – no overnight stay	\$70 CAD/day	\$100 CAD/day
Travel with overnight stay	\$300 CAD/day	\$425 CAD/day

**Note:** Individual invoices and proofs of payment for incurred travel costs are not required at time of claim when using the per diem option; however, Recipients must retain all invoices and proof of payment per their Contribution Agreement. Proof of travel (e.g., boarding passes, hotel invoices, trip reports) will always be required.

#### B. Air Travel

Economy class is required for all flights (domestic and international). Premium Economy, Business, and First Class are not eligible. Bookings should be made as far in advance as possible to maximize cost savings.

- Seat selection and baggage costs are eligible.



- Upgrades beyond economy are not eligible.
- If a higher class is purchased, proof of the economy rate for that flight must be obtained and submitted for reimbursement purposes.

### C. Travel by Vehicle

Recipients may claim:

- Rental vehicle: the cost of a mid-size vehicle (or larger where justified by safety, traveller needs, or the bulk/weight of goods), gas, and parking at the destination.
- Personal vehicle: a kilometric rate of up to \$0.55 per km, regardless of province or territory, as well as parking at the destination.

**Note:** *Non-essential rental vehicle options such as GPS and roadside assistance are not eligible. Personal vehicle users should ensure adequate insurance coverage is in place.*

### D. Accommodation

Individuals requiring overnight accommodation away from their regular place of residence may claim the cost of accommodation with an approved receipt. The most cost-effective accommodation should be selected while ensuring the health and safety of the traveller.

### E. Meals

Meal costs are covered under the per diem rates described in Section 2A. Where actual meal costs are claimed instead of the per diem, both of the following receipts must be submitted:

- An itemized receipt indicating all items purchased; and
- A total receipt showing the tip and amount paid.

**Note:** *Alcohol will not be reimbursed under any circumstance. Gratuities are not reimbursable separately, but are included within the per diem incidentals allowance.*

### F. Incidental Expenses

The following incidental costs are eligible when incurred for business purposes:

- Taxi fare and/or parking
- Baggage charges
- Internet charges for business purposes
- Foreign exchange on business-related purchases (based on actual amounts, verified by credit card statement or foreign exchange receipt, or the average rate in effect during the travel period)

**Note:** *Air fare cancellation insurance will be considered at the CEO's discretion. Travel and accident insurance (medical, cancellation, personal coverage) is not eligible.*

### G. Documentation Requirements

All travel expense claims must include:

- Proof of travel (e.g., boarding passes, hotel invoices, trip reports) for any travel involving transportation costs;
- Invoices/receipts and proof of payment when transportation costs are sampled; and
- For purchases made online: a screen print showing the vendor name, date, detail of items purchased, and proof of payment.

All documentation must be submitted to CFIN with the expense claim, invoice, and related receipts during the quarterly reporting process.



### 3. Non-Reimbursable Expenses

The following expenses are not eligible for reimbursement under this program:

Non-Reimbursable Items
Interest on credit card balances
Insured losses on vehicles
Traffic and parking fines
Personal internet charges and in-flight or hotel entertainment (movies, etc.)
Additional travel, accident, or life insurance for personal coverage
Expenses resulting from failure to cancel transportation or hotel reservations
Personal cell phone charges
Alcohol under any circumstance
Travel and accommodation costs for federal government employees
Non-essential rental vehicle options (GPS, roadside assistance, etc.)
Upgrades beyond economy class airfare
Other expenses deemed non-reimbursable by CFIN or not eligible under the AAFC Directive

### 4. Compliance

This policy is based on the AAFC Travel Directive (Annex B, Section 4.0 of the Applicant Guide and Cost Principles), which is subject to periodic revision. In all cases, the current AAFC directive rates and requirements take precedence. Recipients are responsible for ensuring all travel costs submitted for reimbursement are eligible, reasonable, and supported by appropriate documentation.

Questions regarding travel eligibility should be directed to your CFIN program representative prior to travel where possible.



## Appendix C – Technical Readiness Scale

Technology Readiness Level	Description
TRL 1—Basic principles observed and reported	Lowest level of technology readiness. Scientific research begins to be translated into applied research and development (R&D). Examples might include paper studies of a technology's basic properties.
TRL 2—Technology concept and/or application formulated	Invention begins. Once basic principles are observed, practical applications can be invented. Applications are speculative, and there may be no proof or detailed analysis to support the assumptions.
TRL 3—Analytical and experimental critical function and/or characteristic proof of concept	Active R&D is initiated. This includes analytical studies and laboratory studies to physically validate the analytical predictions of separate elements of the technology.
TRL 4—Product and/or process validation in laboratory environment	Basic technological products and/or processes are tested to establish that they will work.
TRL 5—Product and/or process validation in relevant environment	Reliability of product and/or process innovation increases significantly. The basic products and/or processes are integrated so they can be tested in a simulated environment.
TRL 6—Product and/or process prototype demonstration in a relevant environment	Prototypes are tested in a relevant environment. Represents a major step up in a technology's demonstrated readiness. Examples include testing a prototype in a simulated operational environment.
TRL 7—Product and/or process prototype demonstration in an operational environment	Prototype near or at planned operational system and requires demonstration of an actual prototype in an operational environment (e.g. in a vehicle).
TRL 8—Actual product and/or process completed and qualified through test and demonstration	Innovation has been proven to work in its final form and under expected conditions. In almost all cases, this TRL represents the end of true system development.
TRL 9—Actual product and/or process proven successful	Actual application of the product and/or process innovation in its final form or function.

