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Discover, Innovate and Grow with the new Canadian Food Innovation Network

A new network that will stimulate connections, collaborations, innovation and investments across Canada's food ecosystem has been established. As Canada's new gateway to food innovation, the Canadian Food Innovation Network (CFIN) will be launching a series of programs and services this fall, that will bring together key players in the Canadian food industry to accelerate new product development and technology adoption in Canada.

CFIN received support from the Government of Canada through the [Strategic Innovation Fund](#) and additional investments from industry.

"Our government is proud to support the agri-food industry as it constantly transforms and improves to meet the challenges of the 21st century. CFIN will foster collaboration to help accelerate innovation and the adoption of new technologies, which will have a real impact on Canadians' everyday lives while helping to create well-paying jobs from coast to coast to coast."

- The Honourable François Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry

Canada's food and beverage manufacturing sector is the largest employer in Canada's manufacturing industry, accounting for 281,000 jobs across the country. It is also Canada's largest manufacturing sector in terms of sales, with \$122.9 billion in goods sold in 2020.

"Science and innovation play an important role in keeping Canada's value-added food industry strong and competitive. Hundreds of thousands of Canadians work in the food and beverage industry across the country and we support CFIN as it equips industry with tools and expertise to drive innovation, economic growth, sector resiliency and job creation."

- The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food

CFIN is a pan-Canadian initiative that will make it easier for Canadian-based organizations of all sizes to:

- **DISCOVER** trends, insights, innovation best practices and profitable connections
- **INNOVATE** collaboratively with the support of innovation directors, senior mentors, technical resources, working groups and funding
- **GROW** with like-minded business-to-business customers, suppliers, technology companies, researchers and investors

"Our goal is to improve connectivity and collaboration across Canada's food industry and beyond to drive effective innovation that will support technology adoption, investment and scale-up to build more value-added Canadian food and beverage market share at home and abroad."

- Barbara Miller, Interim CEO of the Canadian Food Innovation Network

An interim board and CEO currently lead CFIN, while a full board of directors and a permanent staff team, including innovation directors located across the country, are recruited. A formal launch of CFIN and its initial services is expected for September 2021. Visit www.cfin-rcia.ca.

Associated links:

- [Funding from the Government of Canada](#)

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Frequently Asked Questions: Canadian Food Innovation Network

What is the Canadian Food Innovation Network?

The Canadian Food Innovation Network (CFIN) is a new global hub for food innovation designed to grow Canada's food and beverage industry by fostering strategic connections, collaborations, and investments across Canada's food ecosystem.

Starting this fall, CFIN's team will be rolling out programs and services for the benefit of innovative Canadian-based businesses, and their suppliers and customers. As Canada's gateway to food innovation, CFIN will make it easier for its pan-Canadian members of all sizes to connect, collaborate and lead by:

- sharing trends, insights and innovation best practices
- matching programs and resources to their innovation and growth needs
- launching innovation challenges and pilots to tackle complex problems and meet the needs of future consumers.

What types of organizations should get involved?

CFIN is open to organizations across Canada's food ecosystem including but not limited to:

- Food and beverage manufacturers
- Food tech, digital and other technology companies
- Foodservice operators and distributors
- Grocery retailers and distributors
- Ingredient suppliers including agriculture and fisheries
- Investors and financial services
- Packaging and equipment companies
- Research, technology and innovation centres
- Service providers and specialized consultants
- Start-ups and other early-stage companies
- Superclusters, networks and trade associations
- Trade media

If you don't see yourself on this list, let us know and let's chat!

What is CFIN's mission?

CFIN's mission is to accelerate food innovation in Canada by stimulating strategic connections, collaborations and investments across our national food ecosystem.

What innovation priorities will CFIN be advancing?

CFIN's innovation priorities centered around building effective innovation that will support technology adoption, investment and scale-up to build more value-added Canadian food and beverage market share at home and abroad centred around building a world-leading network for global food innovation. Priorities include but are not limited to:

- **Smart product and process development** (i.e., health, nutrition and wellness, robotics, emerging science)
- **Food ecosystem sustainability** (i.e., circularity and upcycling, green packaging, waste reduction)
- **Agile and safe supply chains** (i.e., IoT, blockchain, traceability, consumer analytics, safe food)

What types of services will CFIN offer to network members?

Members will gain access to a multitude of innovation, collaboration and business building resources including cost-shared funding and other investment opportunities. These benefits range from regional innovation directors located across the country to facilitate connections and customized solutions to innovation information sharing forums and special programming for early-stage companies, small and medium enterprises, and multinational business to advance innovative solutions. More information will be made available this fall.

Why is there a CFIN interim board and management team?

CFIN is starting with a smaller, interim board to help guide the organization through its launch and start-up phase. In the coming months, the board will be expanded to 12 to 15 positions that represent the food and innovation ecosystem, including SMEs, large Canadian companies, and MNEs from food and beverage manufacturing, food retail, foodservice, research and innovation centers as well as technology, equipment, packaging and other suppliers. CFIN is also launching the search for a permanent CEO who will continue to guide the launch and growth of the new organization across Canada.

Where is CFIN located?

For legal purposes, CFIN's office address is currently in Guelph, but its board and permanent staff, once in place, will be located across Canada, giving CFIN truly national reach and presence. CFIN's vision has never been about "bricks and mortar" at a new physical location, but about building and strengthening connectivity across the existing food ecosystem to grow Canada's food industry.

How is CFIN funded?

CFIN is receiving an investment of \$30 million over four and a half years from the Government of Canada through the Strategic Innovation Fund. When combined with industry contributions, the total investment will be over \$50 million. All CFIN projects require cost-share contributions from industry partners.

CFIN is also now responsible for delivery of transformative research projects currently underway in collaboration with the department of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership's AgriScience cluster program (2018-2023). The total investment for this initiative is approximately \$6.6 million.

What is the cost to join CFIN?

There is currently no cost to become a network member for organizations working with Canada's food industry.

Can organizations from outside Canada get involved?

CFIN is open to discussing partnership opportunities with international organizations.

How can I learn more about CFIN programs and services, and possibly get involved with the organization?

More information about CFIN's programs and services, including how to participate, will be announced this fall. If you are not already on our mailing list and wish to stay informed, please visit www.cfin-rcia.ca and sign up for our news updates.