



INOVAIT Focus Fund, Summer 2023

Call for Notices of Intent (NOI)

Publication Date: 2023-06-26

Pour obtenir la version française, veuillez communiquer avec nous : inovait@sunnybrook.ca

1. SUMMARY

INOVAIT is a pan-Canadian network funded by the Government of Canada and hosted at Sunnybrook Research Institute with the objective of building a truly integrated image-guided therapy (IGT) ecosystem, fueling continuous innovation that revolutionizes healthcare globally. Through connecting, educating, and investing in the industry's brightest minds and most promising ventures, INOVAIT will support and encourage collaborative development and the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into medical technologies.

The Focus Fund provides follow-on funding to organizations whose applications to the Pilot Fund were selected for INOVAIT funding. The Focus Fund will continue to support collaborative research and development (R&D) projects in IGT and AI technologies that help us achieve our mission to improve patient outcomes and fuel economic development in Canada.

We are asking those who are interested in applying for the Focus Fund to send us a short Notice of Intent (NOI) by **August 9, 2023** to help us better plan for the number of applications we will be receiving. The full Call for Applications will be released in July 2023.

Who?

All Canadian corporations, academic institutions, and not-for-profit organizations are eligible to participate as Collaborators on Focus Fund projects. Each proposed project requires the inclusion of two or more Canadian Collaborators.

The Project Lead must be an Industry Collaborator who is a Canadian small and medium enterprise (SME) and is or had been a collaborator on an INOVAIT-selected project. However, no Industry Collaborator who is a Project Lead for another Focus Fund project or are budgeted to receive more than 50% of INOVAIT Contributions from another Focus Fund project may be a Project Lead in this cycle.

What?

Funding will support a **two- to three-year project** in industrial research, including activities related to the discovery of new knowledge that aim to support the development of new technology-driven products or services and large-scale technology demonstration, including the advancement and development of new technologies into product-specific applications.

How much?

Applicants may request between **\$500,000** and **\$2,000,000** of reimbursement funding from INOVAIT to cover one-third of Eligible Supported Costs on a two- to three-year project.

Where?

Notices of Intent (NOIs) can be submitted via email to inovait@sunnybrook.ca.

Deadline?

NOIs must be received via email by **11:59 pm Pacific Daylight Time on August 9, 2023**.

2. ELIGIBILITY AND PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

Basic Eligibility Requirements

Projects must:

- be in the sector of image-guided therapy,
- look to integrate artificial intelligence into an image-guided therapy application,
- have a duration of two to three years,
- be led by an Industry Collaborator who is a Canadian small and medium enterprise (SME) and is or had been a Collaborator on an INOVAIT-selected project,
- involve at least two Canadian Collaborators who have the technological, commercial, and financial capability to conduct their part of the project as outlined, and
- request at least \$500,000 but no more than \$2,000,000 in contributions from INOVAIT.

Additional Project Aspects

Projects should have:

- strong engagement with and commitment from all Collaborators,
- potential for commercial impact and clear pathway to commercialization, and
- potential to impact the Canadian medical technology and healthcare landscape.

Additional consideration will be given to projects that are:

- inclusive of organizations in disparate regions in Canada,
- planning to share data within the INOVAIT Network,
- attracting, retaining and providing training to highly qualified personnel, and/or
- strengthening domestic collaboration and ensuring that benefits spill over to a wide array of firms, organizations and sectors beyond the project Collaborators.

We are seeking to fund a broad range of Industry and Academic Collaborators; therefore, we strongly discourage Industry Collaborators or individual academic researchers from playing major roles on multiple Focus Fund projects.

Location of Collaborators

Globally, across all projects, INOVAIT must ensure that at least 50% of the projects have one-third of its expenditures be incurred from outside of Ontario. We **strongly** encourage all applicants in Ontario to strive to collaborate with Canadian entities based outside of Ontario.

Full Application Process

The Call for Applications will be released in July 2023 with the full application being due in late September 2023.

This will be a competitive application process. INOVAIT cannot guarantee funding to all those who submit an application, nor can it ensure that the total amount requested by successful applicants will be approved. Applications will be assessed against the evaluation criteria detailed within the Call for Applications document.

The INOVAIT management board reserves the right to make the final decisions in the project selection process. The decision to fund all or part of an application will depend on the project's fit to the program priorities, assessment criteria and the overall demand of funds in the program.

3. ELIGIBLE PROJECT ACTIVITIES, FUNDING MECHANISM, AND FEES

Eligible Project Activities

Planned project activities (and costs associated therewith) must broadly fall under one or both of the following categories:

- Industrial research, including activities related to the discovery of new knowledge that aim to support the development of new technology-driven products, processes or services at early-stage TRLs.
- Large-scale technology demonstration, including the advancement and development of new technologies into product-specific applications at mid-to-late stage TRLs.

Non-exhaustive examples of work related to these activities can include:

- Technology development at TRL 1–7,
- The integration of technologies developed at TRL 1–7 into products that are already at stage TRL 8 or TRL 9,
- Hardware development,
- Software development,
- Prototyping,
- Preclinical validation,
- Clinical validation,
- User testing, and
- Patent filing.

Project Length

Projects can begin on or after January 1, 2024 or the day after the end of the Project Lead's latest Pilot Fund project (whichever is later). Projects must be two to three years (24–36 months) long but must end by December 31, 2026.

The Strategic Innovation Fund

Funding for INOVAIT was provided in part through the Government of Canada's Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF).

Funding Mechanism

The INOVAIT Strategic Innovation Fund is a reimbursement fund, not a disbursement fund. A month after each quarter end, the Project Lead must submit a short progress report and reimbursement claims form to INOVAIT with details of that quarter's expenditures.

Eligible project costs requested for reimbursement must be **real, reasonable, and related** to eligible project activities. "Real" means project costs may only include "actual" expenditures that are traceable (i.e., proof of spending provided by timesheets, invoices, receipts, etc.) and related to project activities. "Reasonable" means that the amount claimed for a particular expenditure does not exceed what an ordinary prudent person would incur to conduct in a similar business context.

- "In-kind" support such as discounts for equipment or cloud computing credits are not considered to be actual expenditures.
- Compensation in equity, stock options, future considerations, and similar instruments are not considered to be actual expenditures.

Contribution Ratio

The Contribution Ratio is the percentage of expenditures incurred that INOVAIT will reimburse for



your project. The Contribution Ratio for the Focus Fund is set at 1/3 (33.33%) with the maximum amount INOVAIT can contribute to your project being capped at \$2,000,000. Every project Collaborator must receive a part of the INOVAIT Contributions.

Eligible Cost Categories

- Direct Labour (Salaries and Wages)
- Subcontractors and Consultants
- Direct Materials
- Equipment
- Land, Building, and Building Improvement
- Other Direct Costs
- Indirect Costs (Overhead) – This cost will be calculated by INOVAIT based on your direct costs.

Administrative Fee

An administrative fee of 5% of the INOVAIT contribution to each project will be charged to the project Collaborators. This amount does not count towards the required matching. This fee will be used exclusively to support the activities of the INOVAIT Network. There is no fee for NOIs or applications that are not funded.

4. FORMAT AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE NOTICES OF INTENT

The Notice of Intent (NOI) will be used by INOVAIT staff to assess general eligibility of the proposed project for the Focus Fund program; all applicants that submit an NOI that appear to meet the eligibility criteria will be invited to submit a full application. The invitation to submit a full application is not an indication of the likelihood of the application being selected for funding.

The NOI should be a maximum of one page in length and presented as a letter to INOVAIT on the Project Lead’s company letterhead. It should be saved as a PDF document and submitted to INOVAIT via email to inovait@sunnybrook.ca by **11:59 pm Pacific Daylight Time on August 9, 2023**.

The NOI must include the following information:

- Project title,
- Brief (1–2 sentence) summary of project,
- Table of Collaborators,
- Total INOVAIT Contributions expected (1/3 of total eligible supported costs),
- Expected project start and end dates, *and*
- Indicate whether this proposed project is a continuation of an INOVAIT Pilot Fund project (and if so, which one(s))

Suggested Format of the Table of Collaborators

Collaborator Organization	Type	Province or Territory	Key Contact Name and Email	Expected % Share of INOVAIT Contributions

Eligible types of collaborating organizations: SME Industry Collaborator, MNE Industry Collaborator, not-for-profit Industry Collaborator, Academic Collaborator.

5. GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Project Lead: The lead Canadian organization that is applying for this funding request. The Project Lead will be the primary contact for INOVAIT staff during the application and review process. Should the project be selected for funding, the Project Lead will have the responsibilities of coordinating the project, ensuring that project spending is in line with the project budget, and reporting on behalf of all Ultimate Recipients.

Collaborator or Ultimate Recipient: The Project Lead and the other Canadian organization(s) collaborating on project activities who will receive a part of the INOVAIT Contribution (they are known as Collaborators during the application process and Ultimate Recipients after project selection). These include:

- **Academic Collaborators:** Universities, colleges and publicly-assisted post-secondary institutions located in Canada which grant degrees or diplomas and Academic Affiliated Institutions, research institutions wholly owned or controlled by a Canadian university or college.
- **Industry Collaborators:** Corporations, including not-for-profit organizations, incorporated and operating in Canada or any province or territory of Canada that are not Academic Collaborators.

Small and Medium Enterprise (SME): A corporation employing fewer than 500 paid employees.

Multinational Enterprise (MNE): Any large-sized enterprise, with 500 or more paid employees.

Total Eligible Supported Costs: The costs of project expenditures that are eligible supported direct or indirect costs, per SIF Cost Principles.

INOVAIT Contributions: The portion of the Total Eligible Supported Costs that will be reimbursed to Ultimate Recipients by INOVAIT.

Contribution Ratio: The Contribution Ratio indicates the percentage of Total Eligible Supported Costs that will be reimbursed through INOVAIT Contributions.

Technology Readiness Level (TRL): A measure of technology readiness according to the scale in *APPENDIX A*.

6. CONTACT

Should any questions arise throughout the NOI process, you can contact reach Kristian Hau by email at kristian.hau@sri.utoronto.ca.

We anticipate high email volume close to the NOI due date. If you have any questions, we recommend contacting INOVAIT staff early in the process. While we strive to assist all applicants, we cannot guarantee that all emails will receive a response close to the due date.

APPENDIX A: TECHNOLOGY READINESS LEVELS (TRL)

The following definitions of the nine technology readiness levels (TRLs) is provided by [Innovation Canada](#).

- **TRL 1: Basic principles of concept are observed and reported**
 - Scientific research begins to be translated into applied research and development. Activities 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. Activities are limited to analytic studies.
- **TRL 3: Analytical and experimental critical function and/or proof of concept**
 - Active research and development is initiated. This includes analytical studies and/or laboratory studies. Activities might include components that are not yet integrated or representative.
- **TRL 4: Component and/or validation in a laboratory environment**
 - Basic technological components are integrated to establish that they will work together. Activities include integration of "ad hoc" hardware in the laboratory.
- **TRL 5: Component and/or validation in a simulated environment**
 - The basic technological components are integrated for testing in a simulated environment. Activities include laboratory integration of components.
- **TRL 6: System/subsystem model or prototype demonstration in a simulated environment**
 - A model or prototype that represents a near desired configuration. Activities include testing in a simulated operational environment or laboratory.
- **TRL 7: Prototype ready for demonstration in an appropriate operational environment**
 - Prototype at planned operational level and is ready for demonstration in an operational environment. Activities include prototype field testing.
- **TRL 8: Actual technology completed and qualified through tests and demonstrations**
 - Technology has been proven to work in its final form and under expected conditions. Activities include developmental testing and evaluation of whether it will meet operational requirements.
- **TRL 9: Actual technology proven through successful deployment in an operational setting**
 - Actual application of the technology in its final form and under real-life conditions, such as those encountered in operational tests and evaluations. Activities include using the innovation under operational conditions.