



CRITICAL
INDUSTRIAL
TECHNOLOGIES

Critical Industrial Technologies Sector Adoption Program

Leveraging Critical Technologies to Address Labour Challenges within the Agri-Food Sector

Challenge Launch Date	May 15, 2024
Expression of Interest (EOI) Deadline	June 15, 2024
Application Deadline	June 30, 2024
Challenge Statement	<p>The Ontario agri-food sector is currently grappling with challenges in maintaining an adequate workforce to meet its labour requirements, posing potential obstacles to the sector's capacity to sustain and enhance the province's food supply and export potential. Innovative solutions that integrate critical technologies are a viable and extremely promising solution for the sector.</p> <p>The Critical Industrial Technologies program is therefore issuing a call for transformative solutions that leverage Critical Technologies to enhance the operational efficiency, increase productivity, and offset labour shortages within the agri-food sector.</p> <p>These technologies encompass a wide range of innovations, including robotics, automation, and advanced process efficiencies, which can optimize operations across the supply chain while facilitating workforce development and safety. For example, robotics for crop production, computer vision for sorting and processing and 5G-based sensors for data collection can all contribute to ensuring that Ontario has a robust agri-food sector.</p> <p>Ontario-based companies are encouraged to submit their innovative solutions that can demonstrate a transformative approach to the agri-food sector labour market challenges.</p>
Timeline	Maximum Project duration is up to 1 year
Available Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Up to \$1,000,000• Funding must be matched 2:1 by the Applicant Companies by cash or cash equivalent. Matching contributions can also be provided by Industry Partners.• Cash equivalent can include, but is not limited to salaries and other operating expenses that will be allocated to the project.

<p>Project Details</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lead applicant <u>must be</u> an Ontario-based SME and must meet the requirements identified in the Sector Adoption Program Guidelines. • Applicants are encouraged to form a consortia of partners who will work collaboratively to develop and demonstrate a solution that will have widespread adoption and impact on the Ontario agri-food sector. • Applicant Companies must identify at least one Primary Partner who will commit to participating in the project as a strategic partner, customer, etc. Primary Partners do not have to be based in Ontario. At least one Partner should exhibit market ‘pull’ to help validate the readiness of the sector to adopt the demonstrated solution. • Solutions developed through the challenge must have a significant impact for the agri-food sector, and can be adopted by multiple stakeholders throughout the province. • Projects must involve the integration, development, adoption and/or acceleration of critical technologies (5G, AI, Blockchain, Cybersecurity, Robotics, Quantum). • Proposed projects can be enhancements to existing products/services or new products/services.
<p>Project Outcome and Participation Benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and demonstrate a scalable solution(s) that can be easily replicated and deployed across multiple stakeholders -thus fostering widespread adoption and impact. • Successfully integrate critical technologies such as 5G, AI, Blockchain, Cybersecurity, Robotics and Quantum into agri-food processes, leading to improved efficiencies and productivity • Develop, implement, and demonstrate innovative solutions that significantly improve operational efficiencies and productivity within the agri-food supply chain. • Foster collaborative partnerships between Ontario-based SMEs and industry partners, leveraging diverse expertise and resources to drive innovation and achieve shared goals. • Generate significant job creation and economic growth for the applicant companies and related industries, supporting Ontario’s broader economic development objectives. • Create opportunities for market expansion and business growth by introducing innovative solutions that meet evolving market demands and customer needs, both within Ontario and beyond.