



SSRIA INNOVATION FUND

Application Guide



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About SSRIA

The **Smart, Sustainable, Resilient Infrastructure Association (SSRIA)** is a federally incorporated not-for-profit corporation with members representing the design, construction, building product, building management, research, and training sectors. It is an industry-led and results-focused collaboration. SSRIA's mission is to accelerate the adoption of innovative low-carbon solutions for buildings. Our collaborative approach and industry-led solutions will demonstrate Canadian leadership and drive economic development.

What is Innovation to SSRIA?

Innovation is new. Not mainstream. A change to how the AEC industry traditionally designs, engineers, constructs, and manages building operations. But innovation is still practical, commercially viable and makes an impact. We do not adopt or promote innovations simply because it is new or different, but because it is supported with early research, prototype results, or real data from other regions that demonstrates a potential to successfully reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Alberta's built environment.

The Innovation Fund

Funding collaborative, innovative projects that reduce energy consumption, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and enhance understanding of clean technologies for buildings

The Innovation Fund will fund specific, incremental elements of approved building projects that demonstrate innovative technologies, products, or processes that support the reduction of GHG emissions in building construction and operation.

Innovation Fund objectives:

- Identify and enable a path to net zero emissions buildings by 2050 through innovation, including operational and embodied carbon;
- integrate new clean technologies, products, or processes that support energy and carbon reductions in operational buildings (new or existing);
- model, monitor, measure, analyze, and report on results from actual building performance; and
- grow clean technology sector businesses active in green buildings while strengthening the Architecture, Engineering, and Construction (AEC) sector.

Collaboration is a priority requirement for Innovation Fund projects and has been found to be a key element of success for past innovation projects. SSRIA is looking for projects from firms

with a desire to collaborate with new design, product, and research collaborators, who are willing to contribute towards the initiative in some manner, and willing to share results with the industry at large.

Funded applicants will:

- Gain valuable connections and working experience with other key influencers.
- Have access to independently analyzed data to demonstrate the performance of technologies, products, or processes.
- Get business support/advice and connections to expand their business market penetration through the Business Growth Program.
- Get an opportunity to grow their market share and gain exposure.
- Receive funding to reduce the risk of being a first mover on low-carbon building solutions.

Funding Details

We support innovative building demonstration projects across Alberta.

Eligible projects can receive funding of up to **70% of eligible labour costs to a maximum of \$300,000*** in funding to support the low-carbon innovation on a project.

- Innovation Fund funding can only be applied to labour expenses and will not cover materials, equipment, or capital expenses.
- Project teams **must provide a minimum 30% contribution in labour** to the project which can include funding from the project proponent, other funding sources and in-kind contributions.
- Project teams must cover the cost of base building expenses (those expenses not related to the low-carbon innovation) and any ineligible expenses which includes equipment and materials.
- Stacking of funding (total government support for a project) will be supported to a maximum of 100% of eligible expenditures. However, applicants will need to verify any stacking limits of other funding programs to which they may have also applied.

**Projects that can significantly contribute to the objectives but that can only be successfully implemented at a larger scale and scope will be considered on a case-by-case basis and dependent on available funds.*

Eligible Reimbursable Labour Expenses

Incremental costs relating to approved SSRIA clean technology projects can be reimbursed at cost (including GST). These eligible reimbursable labour expenses include:

- **Staff time of Project Team including** project planning, implementation, monitoring, and reporting related to the proposed project.
- **Hourly or fee-for-service costs for outside consultants, contractors, and vendors** (at fair market value) for planning, implementation, and monitoring services related to the delivery of the proposed project.

Note that although SSRIA is not able to reimburse equipment or material costs, we do ask that project teams include these contributions in their project budgets as we note the extent of these contributions to our funder as key to the success of the project encouraging future funding contributions to Alberta's AEC and innovation sector.

Ineligible Expenses

- Costs incurred prior to the date of the funding agreement.
- Costs to prepare the project proposal.
- Material, equipment, and other capital expenses. Labour associated with installing materials and equipment is however eligible.
- Any costs not included in the approved project proposal and funding agreement.
- Any costs not relating to the specific 'incremental' component of the project (i.e.: if the project purpose is to test an innovative HVAC system, expenses related to the building envelope will not be eligible).
- Selected expenses such as hospitality, non-essential travel etc., may also be excluded.

Reimbursement of Labour Expenses and Payment Schedule

SSRIA will reimburse up to 70% (maximum \$300,000) of eligible labour expenses (including GST) based on reporting requirements, an agreed schedule and/or the completion of agreed milestones.

Following the completion of the first milestone, SSRIA will confirm the approval of the next funding milestones. Project Leads will be expected to meet with SSRIA to discuss and confirm each milestone completion.

All claimed eligible labour expenses must be completed and paid in full by the applicant before they will be reimbursed by SSRIA.

NOTE: SSRIA reserves the right to deny project implementation if the implementation phase of funding exceeds the initial estimate and/or exceeds SSRIA funding resources.

Are you Eligible?

The Innovation Fund is to support Alberta-based projects led by eligible organizations that are incorporated or registered in Canada and have Alberta operations.

Eligible applicants:

- Commercial and for-profit organizations incorporated in Alberta or federally (with Alberta operations)
- Not-for-profit organizations and registered charities incorporated in Alberta or federally (with Alberta operations)
- Indigenous governing bodies
- Municipal/regional governments in Alberta
- Provincial government (Alberta only)

Ineligible applicants:

- Individuals and private citizens. Projects initiated by individuals will require an organization as the Team Lead.

Applicants can submit more than one project at the **Application** stage. However, each project must occur in a different building.

For example, an organization proposing an innovation project demonstrating a single clean technology across multiple buildings is allowed but considered a single project. However, a project with multiple clean technology innovations within the same building will be a single project.

Applicants are advised that SSRIA will carry out financial due diligence on the applicant and the project proposal prior to the signing of a funding agreement. This may include requests for financial statements from the past two years.

Eligible Innovative Projects

Projects that align with the Innovation Fund objectives will range in building type, construction type, and size. They may include new construction or retrofit projects. **In this proposal call we are prioritizing commercial and institutional projects.** Projects must demonstrate an innovative technology, product, or process that reduces the building's energy use or carbon emissions which could be applied and replicated in many other buildings. See the table below for details on how to assess innovation, scalability, and the impact of your project.



Innovation	+	Scalability	+	Impact	=	Innovation Fund project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects must demonstrate a technology, product or process that is not readily understood or currently applied in the way being proposed The innovation is a first of its kind project in Alberta or there are only a handful of applications in the Alberta market. The innovation can also be a known product or technology but that is being used in a new and unique way 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects must address and be designed to remove barriers for increased adoption across a specific building type. Things that reduce scalability are highly custom projects, small market potential, high cost, regulatory barriers, high risk of technical failure, limited skillset to deploy future projects Bonus: The project demonstrates how the innovation can be applied in multiple building types 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideal projects will result in <u>direct</u> operational energy savings of 40% or greater Projects with lower energy savings may be considered if there is high replicability potential or the savings align with the project cost (ie: low savings projects cost less) Embodied carbon reductions (from production, construction, and end of life processes) Projects that do not directly reduce energy or GHG emissions will not be considered (ie: marketing and behavior change projects) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 70% of eligible labour expenses Maximum funding of \$300,000 Complete by March 31, 2027 Includes 6-12 months data monitoring

In addition, projects will be evaluated for “co-benefits”, this includes economic and social benefits. Full project evaluation criteria can be found in the **Innovation Fund – Criterion Guide**.

Project requirements:

- Projects must occur in Alberta
- Projects must be seen as innovative
- Projects must produce energy savings and greenhouse gas emission reductions
- Projects should address embodied carbon and reduce where feasible
- Projects must be replicable and scalable
- Projects must be completed (and occupied) by March 31, 2027 and include 6-12 months of monitoring
- Projects and their occupants must agree to a post-occupancy monitoring period of 6 to

12 months or a period that includes the seasons of most impact on the technology, product, or process being demonstrated

- If the building will be turned over to other owners post construction, the Project Team will need to describe how they will secure agreement from the new owners or occupants to collect post-occupancy data

In the full **Project Application**, please include the proposed project schedule and outline risks and mitigation strategies related to the project schedule.

Project Teams

Innovation Fund applications are to be submitted by a **Project Team** composed of multiple SSRIA members that represent various professional fields of the AEC industry.

Project Team requirements:

- Have a Team Lead who will manage the group's activities, be the primary contractual contact with SSRIA, and manage payments to all other collaborators.
- Have appropriate levels of professional and commercial liability insurance.
- Have rigorous project management to ensure the promised milestones and outcomes are delivered on time and on budget, and an understanding of the data and financial reporting requirements.
- Have a willingness to share information relating to the performance of the systems or products integrated into the project,
- Comply with all funding requirements.

Business Growth Program

Clean technology project collaborators can access [SSRIA's Business Growth Program](#) at no cost as part of their Innovation Fund project. The **Business Growth Program** has been designed to support the successful delivery of demonstration projects and as such will be favourably evaluated and increase a project's chance of success. The Business Growth Program is currently open for registration and can be started prior to funding approval.

Team Leads

Each Project Team will be organized and led by a project **Team Lead**. Team Leads have a significant role in the project and are expected to benefit from the project outcomes. **The Team Lead is the formal applicant to SSRIA.**

Team Lead requirements:

- Be a building owner, institution, not-for-profit organization, or company.

- Be incorporated in Canada and operate in Alberta.
- Be a corporate member of SSRIA.

*NOTE: Eligible labour expenses related to the Team Lead will be included in the Applicant and Collaborator Staff budget category and will be subject to the **Industry Salary Guide**.*

Team Lead responsibilities include:

- Formulating a project for SSRIA peer review, consideration, and approval.
- Selecting appropriate collaborators and coordinating their roles.
- Identifying how the Team Lead organization will ensure collaborators will commit to producing project deliverables.
- Entering into the contractual agreement with SSRIA on behalf of the collaboration members.
- Formalizing any contractual relationships needed within the group members.
- Ensure that project team members have appropriate levels of professional and commercial liability insurance.
- Providing overall project management and accountability, including delivery of the desired outcomes and timely project reporting (narrative and financial).
- Supporting content development and sharing project results with SSRIA and more widely with the Alberta AEC community.

Team Collaborators

Collaboration is a priority requirement for Innovation Fund projects and has been found to be a key element of success for past innovation projects. Each Project Team can include one or more collaborators. A **Team Collaborator** can be a sub-consultant or a product/service provider with a strong business connection to the design, construction, and clean technology sector. Collaborators will benefit from the business development and learning opportunity gained out of the relationships developed, system/product validation gained or future opportunities to leverage the learnings for new business. A Team of Collaborators with a good mix of skills and products to deliver the best chance of optimum success.

Team Collaborator requirements:

- Have a market-ready product or service.
- Be able to contribute directly towards energy consumption reduction and/or GHG emission reduction, or modeling, measuring or monitoring building performance.
- Demonstrate their commitment to contribute towards the project in the form of cash, in-kind or product/services.
- Be able to finance contributions and/or out-of-pocket costs over a reasonable period of time (funding is provided on a reimbursement basis and no advance payments can

- be provided)
- Agree to project terms and conditions with the project Team Lead as outlined in the funding agreement.
 - Project collaborators acknowledge their participation and role in the team through a Confirmation of Participation letter included with the Project Application form.
 - All collaborators listed on the Project Team must be SSRIA members.
 - Contribute to reporting requirements.

*NOTE: Eligible labour expenses related to the collaborators will be included in the Applicant and Collaborator Staff budget category and will be subject to the **Industry Salary Guide**.*

Innovation Fund Timeline

- Call for **Project Applications** December 10, 2024 to January 31, 2025
- Full Application review and selection February 2025
- Notification to applicants and sign **Funding Agreements** in March 2025

How To Apply

Ready to apply for the Innovation Fund?

1. Applicants are encouraged to review this Applicant Guide prior to contacting SSRIA.
2. Please contact us to arrange a call to discuss your project and the anticipated funding needs to ensure alignment with SSRIA expectations and desired outcomes. The primary aim is to assess whether the project and/or applicant team will comply with or align with the Innovation Fund Objectives. This informal discussion is offered to help the applicant assess whether it is worthwhile to submit a funding application.
3. If it is determined your project meets the Innovation Fund requirements, we will share the application form(s) with you. Project Applications must be submitted by January 31, 2025. We strongly encourage you to engage with our program team to discuss your Project Application before submitting.

NOTE: Only those applicants that complete and submit a Project Application form will be considered for funding.

4. Project Team Lead completes the Application Form and submits it to SSRIA before the January 31, 2025 deadline for review and consideration.
5. The Project Application form will be peer-reviewed by the Project Review Committee (PRC), a group of independent building industry subject matter experts. All PRC members abide by SSRIA's confidentiality and conflict of interest policies. The project Team Lead and some of the project Team Collaborators may be interviewed.
6. The SSRIA Board will make final funding decisions based on the recommendations of the Project Review Committee.

Decision Making

All applicants will be advised whether their Project Application has been accepted or declined. All unsuccessful applicants will be offered feedback regarding the decision and their project from SSRIA staff.

For successful applicants:

- Successful applicants will be subject to additional financial due diligence before signing a formal Funding Agreement.

The formal Funding Agreement will be signed between SSRIA and the Team Lead applicant organization. The agreement will outline standard terms and conditions and include the final Project Funding Application. Examples of the template Funding Agreement will be available at the Project Application stage.

SSRIA leaves any agreement between the collaborators and the project Team Lead organization to the Team Lead to define. As such SSRIA will require the Team Lead to provide the following information:

- Methodology or process that will be used to hold team collaborators to account in fulfilling their project commitments, and
- Proof of commercial liability insurance coverage.

SSRIA will give approval in principle for the overall project and then will place a hold on the total project budget to ensure that the funds are available as the project moves through its milestone deliverables and future funding requests. SSRIA will review and fund the first phase/milestone only. Subsequent milestone reimbursements will be released only after the work is billed and completed.

Frequently Asked Questions

Please refer to the **Frequently Asked Questions** on the [Innovation Fund webpage](#).

Resources for Applicants

Applicants can access Innovation Fund documents and resource at SSRIA's [Innovation Fund webpage](#) including:

- SSRIA's [Project Showcase](#) for past project examples
- **Industry Salary Guide**
- **Frequently Asked Questions**
- **Criterion Guide**

Contact Us

Contact our team to book a call with our team innovationfund@ssria.ca.

During the call, we can:

- Get to know your organization and project objectives and work directly with you to ensure your project fits within SSRIA's Green Building Technology Network focus areas.
- Connect you with additional resources and partners, if applicable.
- Build a relationship with you and help you improve the quality of your application.

SSRIA offers funding only and does not assume liability for any processes implemented or products installed. This is the proponent's responsibility as per normal design and construction processes and expectations.
