



SSRIA

SMART SUSTAINABLE RESILIENT
INFRASTRUCTURE ASSOCIATION

Innovation Fund

Frequently Asked Questions

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How do I apply?

First, contact SSRIA (innovationfund@ssria.ca) to arrange a meeting to discuss your project. After our conversation, if we feel your project meets the Innovation Fund requirements, we will share the Application Form(s) with you.

Visit the Innovation Fund webpage <https://www.ssria.ca/programs/innovation-fund/> for more information and to download the **Application Guide**.

When should I start my project?

Your building project can begin anytime. Innovation Funding is for clean technology innovation projects that are **completed by March 31, 2027** and include 6-12 months of energy monitoring. SSRIA can only fund up to 70% of the eligible labour expenses up to a maximum of \$300,000* of the clean technology innovation part of the project after a Funding Agreement is signed.

What organizations are not eligible?

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

Are First Nations and Metis communities eligible to apply?

Yes.

What projects are not innovative and/or scalable and thus not eligible for funding?

- Projects not based in Alberta
- Projects without SSRIA members
- Projects that are not TRL 7-9
- Projects that do not reduce carbon emissions in operations or construction
- Projects that do not provide additional funding for labour and materials
- Projects that do not have a measurement, verification, and monitoring component
- Projects that do not have a Team Lead
- Projects that do not have Collaborators
- Projects that aren't willing to share results



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Can I apply for a project that would be a one-off, such as an energy retrofit of a non-profit building?

Only if the clean technology innovation demonstrates low-carbon building solutions and can be replicated in the future in Alberta.

Do you fund projects focused on reducing embodied carbon emissions?

Yes.

What is required in terms of measurement and monitoring?

SSRIA funded projects are required to provide a measurement and monitoring plan as part of Milestone 1. Projects are required to conduct and report on measurement and monitoring of the clean innovation for 6-12 months and be completed by March 31, 2027.

What is the difference between a collaborator and a vendor?

A collaborator is a SSRIA member who is an active contributor to the project. A vendor is a supplier to the project.

SSRIA defines collaborators as member-businesses or organizations that have a significant stake in the outcome of the project and may utilize the results or materials on a going-forward basis to grow their business or expand their training or research capacity relating the green-building design, construction, operations, research, and training.

Collaborators could include primary design and engineering firms, energy conservation measures and modeling firms, alternate clean technology providers, contractors, post-secondary research/analysis groups, etc.

The SSRIA approved **Industry Salary Guide** must be used to determine the hourly rate for collaborators that is eligible for reimbursement and the additional amount that can be claimed as in-kind.

Fee-for-service consultants may be required to provide specific skills or products that Project Team collaborators do not possess. They would complete a one-off service and not have a stake in the outcome of the project.

What costs are eligible for funding?



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Eligible projects can receive funding of up to **70% of eligible labour costs up to a maximum of \$300,000*** in funding to support the clean technology innovative part of a project. All other costs must be supported by the Project Team or through other funding sources.

**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.*

How do you define the incremental cost of clean technology innovation?

The additional cost associated with the integration of the selected innovative clean technology design, technology, product, or service, when compared to the conventional technology, product, or service. Industry knowledge, comparison to past project estimates and vendor quotes are examples of information sources to use in determining the incremental costs. The information sources used should be described in the Budget tab of the Application Workbook (during full application phase).

The Innovation Fund contribution can be applied to eligible expenses related to the incremental cost associated to applying the clean technology innovation to the project.

Example of a Building Envelope Upgrade:

Base cost = walls built to code requirements with standard materials.

Clean Technology cost = cost of higher performing alternate wall system/materials.

Incremental cost = Base cost – Clean Technology cost

**Innovation Funding eligible expenses = Incremental cost
(labour up to 70% and maximum \$300,000)**

Agreed billable rates for Team Lead and Collaborators

We have an approved schedule of billing rates reflecting an industry average for major categories of consulting services. Billable rates reflect salary and benefit costs. Admin and profit costs can be included as in-kind.

To calculate the reimbursable 'at-cost' rate, SSRIA used both information from professional associations and a national recruitment firm with 2023 salary averages for the respective employment categories plus a standard percentage for benefits.



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SSRIA will reimburse eligible labour expenses at cost or as per rates indicated in the Industry Salary Guide. The difference between the eligible reimbursable labour rate and the approved billable rate can be claimed as an in-kind contribution.

The schedule is available on the SSRIA website. If you have questions about any specific rate, please discuss with SSRIA.

What do industry collaborators' contributions or in-kind contributions mean?

Recognizing that this sector may not have the cash contribution required by many funding agencies to match public contributions, SSRIA has negotiated a range of options that our funder is recognizing.

SSRIA members' contributions could include:

- consulting time, products or services donated outright (market value would be considered the contribution value),
- differential between "at-cost" and approved billable/sales rates, and/or
- Cash including funding from other sources

These contributions are considered an important requirement in any project proposal. SSRIA requires the same tracking and accounting for industry contributions as it does for expenses being reimbursed. Please describe these contributions in the Budget tab of the Application Workbook.

What about the Industry Salary Guide, how is it used, how to apply it to the project?

SSRIA's funders will reimburse staff salaries and benefits directly related to the project at cost only. Any staff specifically hired and solely dedicated to the project can be reimbursed at their direct salary costs plus 20% benefits.

However, SSRIA recognizes that many of our projects will involve some time from existing staff. Responding to this, we have developed an approach that calculates a fair reimbursable rate for different types of existing staff.

For in-kind contributions what can be included?

Labour and materials can be included as in-kind contributions to the project.

What is the decision-making process?



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1. Eligible Project Leads will complete and submit an Application to SSRIA.
4. SSRIA with PRC will review Full Applications.
5. SSRIA will notify successful applicants.
6. SSRIA will conduct additional financial due diligence.
7. SSRIA will sign a contribution agreement with the successful applicants.

Is membership in SSRIA a requirement?

We are required by our funder to provide some industry funds to support this program. One source of cash is the membership fees; therefore, all project applicants and their team of collaborators must be members, paid in full, for the duration of the project from application to final report.

This contribution, along with other in-kind contributions provided demonstrates each companies' commitment to the project, outcomes, and shared industry learnings.

How did SSRIA create the Innovation Fund?

The Innovation Fund is supported through funding from Alberta Innovates and Prairies Economic Development Canada.

Who can I contact with questions?

Please contact SSRIA at innovationfund@ssria.ca