Research Manitoba

researchmanitoba.ca

INNOVATION PROOF-OF-CONCEPT GRANT

Program Guide

Spring 2026 Intake

Last updated:
May 4, 2026

1. Preface

Research Manitoba is a provincial funding agency, which provides funds for research and innovation in health, natural sciences and engineering, and social sciences and humanities in Manitoba. Through funding received from the Province of Manitoba, Research Manitoba facilitates a number of research grants and awards programs.

2. Program Overview

The Innovation Proof-of-Concept Grant program provides funding for innovation research in the following four (4) provincial target areas:

- Bioscience
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- Advanced Manufacturing, and
- Infrastructure and Transportation Industries and Technologies

This program fills a critical gap in the Manitoba research and innovation ecosystem, and will offer three (3) funding streams during the **Spring Intake of 2026**:

Stream 1: Manitoba-Based Consortium supports collaborative research projects co-designed by Manitoba-based academic and industry applicants, and/or other partners. This stream allows industries to collaborate with academics to solve an industry-specific challenge in the innovation development process and accelerate commercialization. Industries and other partners benefit from the invaluable scientific expertise, cutting-edge research facilities, and trained highly qualified personnels (HQPs) available at Manitoba's world-class academic research institutions. A consortium can have multiple partners from diverse sectors (public utilities, municipalities, non-profits, etc.), but at least one industry partner must provide matching funds.

Stream 2: Manitoba Post-Secondary Researchers supports commercialization of discoveries and innovations made within an academic setting at post-secondary institutions and/or research hospitals in Manitoba. This stream will fund research and development activities to take discoveries from the laboratory setting to innovative commercially viable products, processes, and/or services of potential real-world use.

Stream 3: Manitoba Independent Industry supports research and development activities in an industry setting to develop products, processes, and/or services that will be of economic, environmental, health, and/or societal benefits for Manitobans. This stream will support companies that have operations (research and development, production, and/or manufacturing) in Manitoba.

3. Program Objectives

The key objectives of the Innovation Proof-of-Concept Grant are to:

- Support research and development activities to accelerate technology transfer and commercialization of discoveries and innovations emerging from Manitoba-based academic institutions and industries.

- Strengthen the research and innovation ecosystem in Manitoba, and promote cross-sector collaboration, partnership, and knowledge transfer to develop innovative products, processes, and/or services of potential real-world use.
- Provide funding for validation and proof-of-concept research projects to accelerate commercialization of Intellectual Property (IP) within five (5) years post-grant completion.
- Support talent development and research capacity in Manitoba by training HQPs, creating career opportunities, and retaining and attracting talent to the province.
- Create new knowledge, and develop innovative products, processes, and/or services of potential economic, environmental, health, and/or societal benefits for Manitobans.

4. Award Amounts and Duration

Streams	Award Amounts	Duration	Matching Funds Requirement
Stream 1: Manitoba-Based Consortium	Total award amount: $150,000 Annual maximum amount: $75,000	Two (2) years	Yes
Stream 2: Manitoba Post-Secondary Researchers	Total award amount: $100,000 Annual maximum amount: $50,000	Two (2) years	No
Stream 3: Manitoba Independent Industry	Total award amount: $100,000 Annual maximum amount: $50,000	Two (2) years	Yes

Projects with smaller funding needs and/or of shorter durations are welcome to apply.

Award funds must be used to defray the costs incurred through process validation and proof-of-concept research. A table of eligible and ineligible expenses is provided in **Appendix A**.

A one (1) year automatic extension on the use of funds will be permitted, with no additional funding.

Matching Funds Requirement (Stream 1 & 3 only)

Research Manitoba will not fund the full cost of any Stream 1: Manitoba-Based Consortium and/or Stream 3: Manitoba Independent Industry project.

Industry Applicant(s) and/or Partner(s) in Stream 1, and Industry Applicant(s) in Stream 3 will need to provide additional support in the form of eligible cash and/or in-kind contributions equivalent to a minimum of 50% of the amount requested from Research Manitoba. At least 50% of the matching funds **must be** a cash contribution. This contribution from the industry applicant(s) and/or partner(s) must be made after the award start date.

For example, a Stream 1 research project requesting $150,000 in funding from Research Manitoba will have to demonstrate additional support of at least $75,000, of which at least $37,500 must be cash contribution, and the rest can be in-kind.

Similarly, a Stream 3 research project requesting $100,000 from Research Manitoba will require a minimum contribution of $50,000 from the industry applicant, of which at least $25,000 must be a cash contribution, and the rest can be in-kind contribution.

Co-funding of Research Project

Research Manitoba encourages co-funding from other funding agencies and organizations (e.g. government agencies, NSERC Alliance Grants, Mitacs, academic institutions), however, when such co-funding takes place, it should be clearly identified in the proposal budget justification. In instances where co-funding is acquired after an application is submitted, the applicant must inform Research Manitoba of the new funding and provide a justification for holding both awards. Additional information is provided in **Appendix C.**

5. Eligibility Requirements

General Eligibility Requirements

- Projects funded by the Innovation Proof-of-Concept Grant program must conduct validation and proof-of-concept research on discoveries and/or innovations that are at a Technology Readiness Level (TRL) between TRL 3 and TRL 7. Please assess the TRL level of the project using the assessment table provided in **Appendix B** prior to application.
- Research results must be utilized to achieve commercialization of IP within five (5) years post completion of the project grant.
- Funding is targeted towards one of these four (4) areas: (1) Bioscience, (2) Information and Communication Technology (ICT), (3) Advanced Manufacturing, and (4) Infrastructure and Transportation Industries and Technologies.
- Conduct majority of the proposed research and commercialization activities in Manitoba.
- There is a **lifetime maximum of four (4)** Innovation Proof-of-Concept grants for each primary applicant and/or co-applicant(s) (both academic and industry, and across all streams). For applicants and/or co-applicants who have received prior Innovation Proof-of-Concept grant awards as a primary applicant, a co-applicant, and/or a collaborator, please fill out the **Prior Grant Support Form**.
- Primary applicants and/or co-applicants (both academic and industry) can hold up **to two (2) active** Innovation Proof-of-Concept grants at a time. This limit cannot be exceeded, and new applications cannot be submitted until all active projects and reporting requirements with Research Manitoba are completed.
- All primary applicants, co-applicants, and/or collaborators must be in good financial standing and should have completed all prior reporting requirements with Research Manitoba at the time of application.

Consortium Eligibility Requirements (Stream 1 only)

- The consortium supports collaborative projects and must comprise of **at least one (1) academic and at least one (1) industry** (e.g., a private sector company) applicant and/or partner, who are Manitoba-based.
- The academic applicant and industry applicant(s) and/or partner(s) must have an arms-length relationship.
- To serve as a primary applicant, the industry organization must generate its revenue through the sale of its products and/or services and not through government aid.
- The consortium can have additional partners (collaborators) from diverse sectors, and from outside of Manitoba, as long as the majority of the Consortium is based in Manitoba, and Manitoba-based organizations lead the project.
- The following types of organizations may serve as partners in the consortium:
  - Private sector companies
  - Public utilities
  - Non-profit organizations
  - Indigenous organizations
  - Community organizations
  - Municipalities and local governments
  - Start-up companies
  - Multinational companies (with research and development, manufacturing, and/or other commercial activities in Manitoba)
  - Foreign companies (only in partnership with a Manitoba-based organization, and with tangible economic benefits to Manitoba)

  This list is not exhaustive. If your organization does not fall within the categories outlined above, please contact us to confirm eligibility.
- At least one (1) industry applicant and/or partner must contribute matching funds. A complete **Industry Organization Form** is required from each industry applicant and/or partner providing matching funds. Other consortium partners (collaborators) that are not providing matching funds are not required to fill out this form.
- Each industry applicant and/or partner is eligible to apply for a maximum of two (2) Innovation Proof-of-Concept Grants per fiscal year (April 1- March 31).
- All consortium members must ensure that IP agreements are in place prior to applying.
- Academic researcher(s) leading the consortium, and serving as a primary applicant or co-applicant, must meet all eligibility criteria for academic applicants stated below.
- Industry primary applicants leading the consortium, and/or any industry partner providing matching funds to the project, must meet all eligibility criteria for industry applicant(s) or partner(s) stated below.

Academic Applicant or Post-secondary Researcher Eligibility Requirements (Stream 1 & 2)

To qualify as a primary applicant or co-applicant in Streams 1 and 2, the following eligibility criteria should be met:

- Hold an academic appointment at a Manitoba-based post-secondary institution or research hospital with a permanent position or a contract for more than three (3) continuous years.
- Conduct independent research, not under the supervision of another individual.
- Be allowed by the post-secondary institution or research hospital to hold the grant.
- Appointment should not be contingent on receiving this grant funding.
- Salaries must not be paid from this grant funding.

University-specific eligibility

- Be allowed to provide research project supervision (e.g., thesis supervision) to trainees (undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral) and not just supervision of regular coursework and assignments.

College-specific eligibility

- Be allowed to conduct independent research as part of an appointment that includes a research mandate.
- Trainee supervision is not requirement for college applicants.

Adjunct position-specific eligibility

- Those holding adjunct positions need to meet all the above-mentioned criteria for academic applicants and the university-specific or college-specific applicant criteria based on their primary affiliation.

Requirements during the tenure of the grant

- Awardees must start their faculty appointment at the university level or research position at the college level before disbursement of the award.
- The grant cannot be held while enrolled in a research-focused graduate program or working in a postdoctoral or similar supervised research role in any discipline.
- Changes to any eligibility requirements during the grant period must be notified to Research Manitoba immediately.

Academic applicant(s) and post-secondary researcher(s) need to provide a signature from the Vice President, Research (or designate) from the institution of their primary affiliation to certify that all the eligibility criteria are met.

Industry Applicant or Partner Eligibility Requirements (Stream 1 & 3)

An **industry applicant** refers to a Manitoba-based company/organization that serves as a primary applicant and/or co-applicant in a Stream 1 or Stream 3 application and will hold the funds if awarded.

An **industry partner** is a collaborator who serves as a consortium member in Stream 1 and may or may not provide matching funds. Please note that industry partner(s) that provide matching funds will also need to meet the eligibility criteria outlined below.

Additionally, companies or organizations that are not providing matching funds, or do not meet all eligibility criteria, or based outside of Manitoba, or multinational and foreign companies, can serve as consortium members in Stream 1, but cannot serve as a primary applicant or co-applicant.

Manitoba-based industry applicant or partner eligibility

- Be a for-profit organization incorporated in Manitoba (with a valid CRA business number).
- Have majority of the operations in Manitoba, focused on industrial research and development activities, and/or the development of products, processes, and/or services of economic, environmental, health, and/or societal benefits for Manitobans.
- Have a **minimum of three (3) full-time employees**, with at least fifty percent (50%) of the employees based in Manitoba at the time of application.
- Must operate from its own dedicated offices/facilities. For companies operating from a home address or virtual setting, additional information is required in the **Industry Organization Form**.
- Demonstrate appropriate financial, managerial, and technical capacity to contribute meaningfully to the research project and/or apply research results for commercialization within Manitoba.

Industry Applicant(s) or Partner(s) providing matching funds must fill out the Industry Organization Form with their application and provide a signature from an authorized signatory (e.g. CEO, Director of Finance, Director of Operations, or designate) to certify that all the eligibility criteria are met.

6. Application Deadline

The Innovation Proof-of-Concept Grant program is administered in two (2) stages. The Expression of Interest (Stage 1) and the Full Proposal (Stage 2), by invitation only. Below is the tentative timeline for the **Spring 2026** Intake.

Stage 1 – Expression of Interest (EOI)

EOI Applications Open: **May 5, 2026** (9 am Central Time)
EOI Application Deadline: **July 7, 2026** (4 pm Central Time)
Notification of Results: July 2026

Stage 2 – Full Proposal (by invitation only)

Full Proposal Applications Open: July 2026
Full Proposal Deadline: September 2026
Final Award Notifications: December 2026

Any changes to the above timeline will be announced on the program website. Specific timeline for the full proposal stage will be communicated directly to invited applicant(s).

7. Guidelines on the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence for grant applications

Research Manitoba aligns these guidelines on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) with the guidance issued by the Tri-Agency and the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) to ensure compliance with the highest standards of Responsible Conduct of Research, and Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest policies. All applicants and reviewers are expected to adhere to the following guidelines when preparing or evaluating grant applications for Research Manitoba.

Guidelines for use of generative AI in application preparation

Research Manitoba applicants may use generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, DeepL, Copilot, and others) to support the preparation of their grant applications, as there can be potential benefits such as improved efficiency, streamlined processes, and assistance for non-native English speakers. However, applicants must be aware that generative AI tools may not appropriately acknowledge or recognize authorship, and the applicant remains solely responsible for the accuracy, completeness, and integrity of the grant application submitted to Research Manitoba, including properly citing and referencing all sources.

Guidelines for use of generative AI in application evaluation

Research Manitoba reviewers are strictly prohibited from using any generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, DeepL, Copilot, and others) to evaluate Research Manitoba grant applications. It is important to note that application information uploaded to these online tools can result in breaches of privacy and research security, and in the loss of custody of intellectual property and data sovereignty, and as a result, is in violation of Research Manitoba's confidentiality and conflict of interest policies. Hence, use of generative AI in any step of the review process will be treated as a breach of reviewer obligations.

8. Application Requirements

Stage 1 – Expression of Interest (EOI)

The complete EOI application package should have the following documents:

- ☐ EOI Application Form
- ☐ EOI Research Proposal (4-pages)
- ☐ Appendices (no page limit, but only up to 10 pages will be reviewed)
- ☐ Narrative CVs (required for all primary applicants and co-applicants)
- ☐ Industry Organization Form (required for Stream 1 and 3)
- ☐ Prior Grant Support Form (if applicable)
- ☐ Letters of Support (if applicable)

The application package must be a single combined PDF document and emailed to Sneha Das at Sneha.Das@researchmb.ca. Please enter the email subject line as - **IPoC_SP26_Full Name of Primary Applicant**.

EOI Application Form

The EOI application form can be downloaded from the **program website** and consists of the following sections:

1. **Primary Applicant Information**

   Provide the primary applicant's identification details, including name, affiliation, address, and contact information.

2. **Proposed Project Information**

   Provide the project title, relevant keywords, and clearly indicate the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) at both the start and end of the project, using the TRL assessment table in **Appendix B**. Select the appropriate program stream and research area. This section also requires brief responses to questions regarding the proposal.

3. **Research Team Information**

   Provide the names, affiliations, and contact details of all team members, including co-applicants, collaborators, and/or consortium members. Clearly outline the roles and contributions of each member, including and any highly qualified personnel (HQP) involved in the project. Stream 1 applicants should also highlight key collaborations and partnerships that are critical to the success of the project.

4. **Budget and Budget Justification**

   Refer to **Appendix A** for the list of eligible and ineligible expenses before completing the budget table. The Research Manitoba budget table must include only the amount requested from Research Manitoba, and not the total project cost, and must remain within the maximum total award amount and the annual limits for the applicable stream. Provide a full justification for the requested budget.

   Matching funds are required for Stream 1 and Stream 3 applications. If the applicant is currently holding funds for the same project from another source, provide details of that support as leveraged funding. All matching and additional leveraged funds must be reported in the designated table.

   Provide information of the individual who will be administering the funds (e.g., director of finance, operations manager, staff in the finance and/or operations department of an institution or organization).

5. **Approvals and Signatures**

   Provide details on human ethics and animal care approvals, where applicable. A completed Institution/Organization Declaration form with the required signatures must be submitted.

   For academic applicants and post-secondary researchers, the form must be signed by the Vice-President, Research (or designate) at the institution of primary affiliation.

   For industry applicants, the form must be signed by an authorized representative within the finance department, such as the Director of Finance (or designate), who will be responsible for administering the funds.

EOI Research Proposal (maximum of 4 pages)

The Innovation Proof-of-Concept Grant program is research-focused, and **applications must be prepared as a research proposal**, which involves providing clear scientific rationale, rigorous methodologies, and citing relevant scientific literature and providing a list of references.

The EOI Research Proposal must include sections (a-g):

(a) Project Overview

- Provide a concise overview of the proposed project, including the discovery or innovation being developed, its key objectives, and the major activities planned.
- Specify which activities will be led in Manitoba, and if any components are planned outside the province, please include an explanation.

(b) Innovation and Commercialization Potential

- Clearly indicate the TRL level of your discovery/innovation at the beginning of the project, and also the TRL level that will be achieved upon completion of this project.
- Demonstrate that the proposed discovery/innovation is an original and unique technology, product, or process not currently available in the market. Include any market assessment results, if conducted.
- Outline how the proposed discovery/innovation is a significant advancement and not just a minor enhancement or derivative of existing technologies, products or processes.

(c) Project Design and Research Capacity

- Clearly describe the research objectives, scope, and outline research methods, including data collection and analysis.
- Provide a brief overview of research capacity, including research space, special equipment required, or access plan, and explain how they are adequate for completing the project.
- Highlight relevant experience, expertise, and track record that position the primary applicant and/or the research team to successfully complete the project.
- Describe any meaningful partnerships and their roles in supporting the research (if applicable).

(d) Project Timeline

- Provide a clear timeline of the research activities and include a Gantt Chart for capturing this information (included in the 4-page limit).

(e) Path to Commercialization

- Outline a feasible path towards commercialization in the next five (5) years post completion of the project grant.
- Provide a concise commercialization plan, including information on existing products currently in the marketplace, market size, considerations for market adoption, plans for prototype testing and demonstration, or consultation with end users of the product.
- Include a tangible plan to protect Intellect Property (IP) of the discovery/innovation through

patent and/or trade secret. Detail any consultations with technology transfer offices, IP consultants, training on IP protection, or other planned activities. Identify any partnerships or collaborations necessary to achieve commercialization.

(f) Training of Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP)

- Describe how this project will offer meaningful training experiences to HQP at academic institutions, and/or staff and trainees in an industry setting.
- Provide a concise training plan focused on development of relevant technical and professional skills such as leadership, communication, collaboration, and entrepreneurship.

(g) Benefits to the Identified Sector and to Manitoba

- Explain how the proposed discovery/innovation will provide broad and tangible benefits that address social, economic, health, environmental, and/or other needs in the identified sector and in Manitoba.
- Benefits may include but are not limited to streamlined processes and cost savings, improved health outcomes for individuals, reduced environmental impact or improved resource utilization, creation of job opportunities, or increased productivity.
- Include how this project will attract and/or retain talent in Manitoba.

Appendices (no page limit, but only up to 10 pages will be reviewed)

Reviewers are not required to read beyond the first 10 pages of the appendices. All materials included must be supplementary in nature.

A complete reference list must be included within the appendices. Citations should be clear, accurate, and consistently formatted according to the applicant's preferred style (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago, Vancouver, or IEEE).

Narrative CV (required for all primary applicants and co-applicants)

The Research Manitoba Narrative CV can be downloaded from the **program website**, and follows the Tri-agency CV guidelines. The maximum page limit of 5 pages for each applicant or co-applicant. Please follow the **Tri-agency CV: Guidance for writing a narrative CV** to prepare the narrative CV.

Industry Organization Form (Stream 1 and 3 only)

A complete form is required from each industry applicant(s) and/or partner(s) providing matching funds. The form can be downloaded from the **program website.**

Prior Grant Support Form (if applicable)

For applicants who have received prior Innovation Proof-of-Concept grant awards as primary applicant, co-applicant, or collaborator. The form can be downloaded from the **program website..**

Letters of Support (Stream 1 only)

A letter of support is required from each non-academic consortium member and must clearly outline the following:

- The need for this research project to be carried out in collaboration with an academic researcher and the potential benefits this research will have on their organization.
- The cost-sharing breakdown, including the value added through in-kind contributions and how these are important to realizing the project's intended outcomes.

Stage 2 – Full Proposal (by invitation only)

The complete full proposal application package should have the following documents:

☐ Full Proposal Application Form
☐ Research Proposal (7-pages)
☐ Appendices (no page limit, but only up to 10 pages will be reviewed)
☐ Narrative CVs (required for all primary applicants and co-applicants)
☐ Industry Organization Form (required for Stream 1 and 3)
☐ Prior Grant Support Form (if applicable)
☐ Letters of Support (if applicable)

The application package must be a single combined PDF document and emailed to Sneha Das at Sneha.Das@researchmb.ca, by the full proposal deadline communicated via email. Please enter the email subject line as - **IPoC_SP26_Full Name of Primary Applicant**.

Full Proposal Application Form

The full proposal application form will be sent via email to successful applicants, and consists of the following sections:

1. **Primary Applicant Information**

   Provide the primary applicant's identification details, including name, affiliation, address, and contact information.

2. **Proposed Project Information**

   Provide the project title, relevant keywords, and clearly indicate the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) at both the start and end of the project, using the TRL assessment table in **Appendix B**. Select the appropriate program stream and research area.

   This section also requires responses to the following:

   (a) Abstract (maximum 200 words): Provide a non-technical summary of your proposal written in simple and clear language suitable for a general audience.

   (b) Summary of Proposal and Benefit to Manitoba (maximum 1500 words): In this section, demonstrate the uniqueness and feasibility of the discovery/innovation, and its benefit to the sector and to Manitoba. Address the following in your response:

   - **Project Overview:** Provide a concise overview of the proposed project, including the discovery or innovation being developed, its key objectives, and the major activities planned. Specify which activities will be led in Manitoba, and if any components are

planned outside the province, please include an explanation.

- **Innovation and Path to Commercialization:** Demonstrate that the proposed discovery/innovation is an original and unique technology, product, or process, and explain how it is a significant advancement and not just a minor enhancement or derivative of existing technologies, products or processes. Briefly outline a path to commercialization in the next five (5) years and plans to protect Intellect Property (IP) of the discovery/innovation.
- **Benefits to the Identified Sector and to Manitoba:** Explain how the proposed discovery/innovation will provide tangible benefits that address social, economic, health, environmental, and/or other needs in the identified sector and in Manitoba.

3. **Research Team Information**

   Provide the names, affiliations, and contact details of all team members, including co-applicants, collaborators, and/or consortium members. Clearly outline the roles and contributions of each member, including and any highly qualified personnel (HQP) involved in the project. Stream 1 applicants should also highlight key collaborations and partnerships that are critical to the success of the project.

4. **Budget and Budget Justification**

   Refer to **Appendix A** for the list of eligible and ineligible expenses before completing the budget table. The Research Manitoba budget table must include only the amount requested from Research Manitoba, and not the total project cost, and must remain within the maximum total award amount and the annual limits for the applicable stream. Provide a full justification for the requested budget.

   Matching funds are required for Stream 1 and Stream 3 applications. If the applicant is currently holding funds for the same project from another source, provide details of that support as leveraged funding. All matching and additional leveraged funds must be reported in the designated table.

   Provide information of the individual who will be administering the funds (e.g., director of finance, operations manager, staff in the finance and/or operations department of an institution or organization).

5. **Approvals and Signatures**

   Provide details on human ethics and animal care approvals, where applicable. A completed Institution/Organization Declaration form with the required signatures must be submitted.

   For academic applicants and post-secondary researchers, the form must be signed by the Vice-President, Research (or designate) at the institution of primary affiliation.

   For industry applicants, the form must be signed by an authorized representative within the finance department, such as the Director of Finance (or designate), who will be responsible for administering the funds.

6. **Reviewer Suggestions**

Suggest the names of at least five (5) independent experts competent to assess the technical aspects of the proposal. This list can include experts from the academic community and/or non-academic community (i.e. public/private sector). If possible, please include at least one expert from Manitoba. Suggested external reviewers should not be in a conflict of interest with the primary applicant or any member of the research team.

Research Proposal (maximum of 7 pages)

The full proposal application will be reviewed for both scientific merit, and commercial feasibility of the discovery/innovation. The full proposal must include sections (a-g):

(a) Project Design

- Clearly describe the research objectives, scope, and outline research methods, including data collection and analysis.
- Position the proposed research relative to existing work in this area.

(b) Project Timeline

- Provide a clear timeline of the research activities and include a Gantt Chart for capturing this information (included in the 7-page limit).

(c) Innovation Potential

- Clearly indicate the TRL level of your discovery/innovation at the beginning of the project, and also the TRL level that will be achieved upon completion of this project.
- Demonstrate that the proposed discovery/innovation is an original and unique technology, product, or process not currently available in the market. Include any market assessment results, if conducted.
- Outline how the proposed discovery/innovation is a significant advancement and not just a minor enhancement or derivative of existing technologies, products or processes.

(d) Risks and Mitigation Strategies

- Identify and discuss potential risks in developing and implementing the proposed innovation/discovery. Specify if there are any regulatory risks or hurdles and how you plan to ensure compliance with all applicable regulations.
- Include a table of risks identified, likelihood, severity, and mitigation strategies.

(e) Path to Commercialization

- Outline a concrete plan for continuing research and commercialization activities after the funding period and describe how results will be implemented and commercialized within five (5) years of completing the project grant.
- Provide a tangible plan to protect Intellect Property (IP) of the discovery/innovation through patent and/or trade secret. Detail any consultations with technology transfer offices, IP consultants, training on IP protection, or other planned activities. Identify any partnerships or collaborations necessary to achieve commercialization.

- Describe if there is any potential for this discovery/innovation to result in business growth for existing companies, and/or result in new business startups.

(f) Research Expertise and Capacity

- Highlight relevant experience, expertise, and track record that position the primary applicant and/or the research team to successfully complete the project.
- Describe any meaningful partnerships and their roles in supporting the research (if applicable).
- Detail the research environment, infrastructure required, and access plan to facilities and equipment required for the project.

(g) Training of Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP)

- Describe how this project will offer meaningful training experiences to HQP at academic institutions, and/or staff and trainees in an industry setting.
- Provide a concise training plan focused on development of relevant technical and professional skills such as leadership, communication, collaboration, and entrepreneurship.
- Include how this project will attract and/or retain talent in Manitoba.

Appendices (no page limit, but only up to 10 pages will be reviewed)

Reviewers are not required to read beyond the first 10 pages of the appendices. All materials included must be supplementary in nature.

A complete reference list must be included within the appendices. Citations should be clear, accurate, and consistently formatted according to the applicant's preferred style (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago, Vancouver, or IEEE).

Narrative CV (required for all primary applicants and co-applicants)

The Research Manitoba Narrative CV can be downloaded from the **program website**, and follows the Tri-agency CV guidelines. The maximum page limit of 5 pages for each applicant or co-applicant. Please follow the **Tri-agency CV: Guidance for writing a narrative CV** to prepare the narrative CV.

Industry Organization Form (Stream 1 and 3 only)

A complete form is required from each industry applicant(s) and/or partner(s) providing matching funds. The form can be downloaded from the **program website.**

Prior Grant Support Form (if applicable)

For applicants who have received prior Innovation Proof-of-Concept grant awards as primary applicant, co-applicant, or collaborator. The form can be downloaded from the **program website.**.

Letters of Support (Stream 1 only)

A letter of support is required from each non-academic consortium member and must clearly outline the following:

- The need for this research project to be carried out in collaboration with an academic researcher

and the potential benefits this research will have on their organization.

- The cost-sharing breakdown, including the value added through in-kind contributions and how these are important to realizing the project's intended outcomes.

9. Assessment Criteria (Full Proposal Only)

Full proposals submitted to the Innovation Proof-of-Concept grant program are evaluated in a competitive peer-review process, which includes reviews from both scientific experts, and innovation and commercialization experts.

The following criteria are assessed by scientific reviewers:

(a) Research Project Merit and Feasibility: The clarity and completeness of the research proposal, including the research design, methodologies, feasibility, innovation, suitability of the proposed timeline and alignment of the budget with the research activities.

(b) Research Expertise: The demonstrated track record and subject matter expertise of the primary applicant and/or research team, and where applicable, evidence of meaningful collaborations and partnerships.

(c) Research Infrastructure and Capacity: The availability, suitability, and adequacy of research facilities, infrastructure, equipment, and resources required to successfully undertake the project.

(d) Training of Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP): The quality, clarity, and feasibility of the HQP training and mentorship plan, including opportunities for research training and skill development.

(e) Benefit to Manitoba and Identified Sector: The potential of the project to generate economic, societal, environmental, and/or health benefits for Manitoba and the identified sector.

The following criteria are evaluated by innovation and commercialization experts:

(**a) Project Design and Innovation:** Clarity and strength of the project design, degree of innovation and originality, potential to develop a novel product, process, or service addressing a defined need, and feasibility of the timeline.

(b) Commercialization Potential: Strength and clarity of the commercialization plan, evidence of market demand and opportunity, likelihood of commercialization within five years, appropriateness of TRL progression, and feasibility of the commercialization strategy.

(c) Risk and Mitigation Strategy: Identification of key technical, commercial, regulatory, and operational risks, understanding of barriers to commercialization, and feasibility of mitigation strategies.

(d) Research Expertise and Capacity: Expertise and track record of the primary applicant and/or research team, adequacy of facilities, infrastructure, and equipment, quality of HQP training and mentorship, and strength of relevant collaborations and partnerships.

(e) Benefit to Manitoba and Identified Sector: Potential economic, social, environmental, and/or health benefits for Manitoba, contribution to the province's innovation ecosystem, potential for job creation, talent development, and HQP retention, and alignment with provincial target areas.

10. Intellectual Property (IP) Assessment and Ownership

Research Manitoba does not claim any rights to intellectual property arising from projects funded by the Innovation Proof-of-Concept Grant program.

For the Manitoba-Based Consortium Stream, Research Manitoba recommends that the consortium follow best practices by signing an intellectual property agreement that defines the intellectual-property rights and obligations of all the partner organizations involved in the project. The agreement must be aligned with NSERC's Policy on Intellectual Property. Consortium members are responsible for ensuring IP arrangements are in order and agreed to by all in advance of applying.

As per NSERC's Policy on Intellectual Property, students involved in the funded research must maintain their right to defend their thesis without delays or impediments. It is also strongly encouraged that industry partners allow students to include work on this project, specifying the company name, on their CVs. All participants, including any trainees, should consult this policy to ensure that they are aware of their rights and obligations.

For all post-secondary researchers, Research Manitoba recommends that applicants abide by their respective host institution's policies governing patent, copyright and design protection for intellectual property derived from work originating within said institution, if applicable.

11. Reporting, Policies and Other Information

Research Manitoba reserves the right to determine the eligibility of applications, based on the information therein. Research Manitoba also reserves the right to interpret the regulations and policies governing its funding opportunities.

All applicants and grant holders must comply with the regulations set out in the Research Manitoba Finance and Administration Guide. Research funds are to be spent according to budgets approved during the review and decision process. Occasionally, it may be necessary to reallocate grant funds between approved categories if the needs or circumstances of the research project have changed. Grant holders need Research Manitoba approval for such reallocation only if the change involved is 25% or more of the grant's total.

Grant recipients are to report the outputs and outcomes of their funded research project on the completion of their award. The Innovation Proof-of-Concept grant requires an Interim Report and an End-of-Grant Report to be submitted. Grant recipients will be informed by Research Manitoba when the reports are to be completed. Grant Report Templates can be found on the Research Manitoba website under the Grant Administration tab.

As a general disclaimer, all proposed research projects need to be compliant with all relevant laws, regulations, guidelines (from the applicable institutions), and policies and/or requirements of Research Manitoba.

12. Contact Information

For questions regarding the application and submission process, please contact:

Email: helpdesk@researchmb.ca

Monday to Friday - 8:30AM to 4:30PM

Appendix A – Table of Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

This is not an exhaustive list. If you are uncertain of the eligibility of an expense, please contact us at helpdesk@researchmb.ca.

Eligible Expenses	Ineligible Expenses
Salaries, Wages, and Benefits	
▪ Salaries, benefits, stipends, or hourly wages of HQP directly engaged in the project. ▪ Stipend amounts paid to PhD students and/or postdoctoral fellows shall be in accordance with your home institution's policies. Stipends paid master's students shall be up to a maximum of $20,000. ▪ Salaries and wages for technicians, researchers, engineers, and/or scientific staff directly supporting project activities.	▪ Salaries of the primary applicant, co-applicants, or any listed collaborators or consortium members. ▪ Any payments to the primary applicant, co-applicants, or any listed collaborators or consortium members, including consulting fees or honoraria. ▪ Release-time stipends or course-load reduction support (excluding college-based primary researchers and clinicians).
Professional Fees	
▪ Clinician research release stipend of up to $9,000 for the primary applicants only. ▪ Course load reduction support of up to $9,000 for college primary applicants only. ▪ Project management, legal fees, consultant fees, business development expenses. ▪ Administrative support.	▪ Professional association fees and/or dues. ▪ Consulting fees to the primary applicant, co-applicants or any listed collaborators or consortium members.
Materials and Supplies	
▪ Research materials and supplies, including chemicals, consumables, and other directly related laboratory items. ▪ Small equipment purchases up to $10,000, unless prior approval is obtained from Research Manitoba.	▪ Equipment purchases exceeding $10,000 without prior approval from Research Manitoba. ▪ Home office operating costs like rent, home internet, or other utilities. ▪ Standard monthly connection or rental costs of telephones
Travel Expenses	
▪ Travel and accommodation costs for activities essential to commercialization and collaboration within the research plan. ▪ Travel to field sites or for real-world demonstrations involving potential users or buyers.	▪ Travel to academic conferences, workshops, or seminars. ▪ Travel for academic or research exchange programs. ▪ Travel related to routine business operations.
Other Expenses	
▪ Knowledge Mobilization Activities, including publication and dissemination fees (up to 25% of the total requested grant amount, with justification).	▪ Capital assets and equipment, including purchase, construction, renovation, or rental of laboratories or supporting facilities. ▪ Indirect costs of research, e.g., overhead and other indirect institutional expenses.

Appendix B – Technology Readiness Level (TRL) Assessment Table

The Innovation Proof-of-Concept Grant supports discoveries/innovation between TRL 3 and 7.

For additional information refer to the *Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada's TRL Assessment Tool*.

Technology Development Stage	TRL	Definition	Description	Checklist of activities to achieve this level
Fundamental Research	1	Basic principles observed and reported	Scientific research begins with properties of a potential technology observed in the physical world. These basic properties are being reported in the literature.	☐Basic research activities have been conducted and basic principles have been defined ☐Principles and findings have been published in the literature (e.g., research articles, peer-reviewed papers, white papers)
	2	Technology and/or application concept formulated	Applied research begins with identification of practical applications of basic scientific principles. There is an emphasis on understanding the science better and corroborating the basic scientific observations made during TRL 1 work. Analysis of the feasibility of speculative applications is being conducted and reported in scientific studies.	☐Applications of basic principles have been identified ☐Applications and supporting analysis have been published in the literature (e.g., analytical studies, small code units for software, papers comparing technologies)
Research and Development	3	Experimental proof of concept	Active research and development begins. The applications are being moved beyond the paper stage to experimental work. Feasibility of separate technology components are being validated through analytical and laboratory studies. There is not yet an attempt to integrate components into a complete system.	☐Proof of concept and/or analytical and experimental critical function has been developed ☐Separate components have been validated in a laboratory environment
	4	Validation of component(s) in a laboratory environment	Basic technological components are integrated "ad-hoc" to establish that they will work together in a laboratory environment. The "ad-hoc" system would likely be a mix of on hand equipment and a few special purpose components that may require special handling, calibration, or alignment in order to function.	☐ "Ad-hoc" integrated components, sub systems and/or processes have been validated in a laboratory environment ☐How "ad-hoc" integration and test results differ from the expected system goals is understood

[1] Adapted from IEA (2020), U.S. GAO (2020). U.S. Department of Energy (2015), U.S. Department of Transportation (2015), U.S. Department of Defence (2010), European Commission (2017), and NYSERDA (2018), BCIP (2017).

Technology Development Stage	TRL	Definition	Description	Checklist of activities to achieve this level
	5	Validation of semi-integrated component(s) in a simulated environment	The integrated basic technological components are performing for the intended applications in a simulated environment. Configurations are being developed but can undergo fundamental changes. The technology and environment at TRL 5 is more similar to the final application than TRL 4.	☐Semi-integrated component(s)/ subsystems or processes have been validated in a simulated environment ☐How the simulated environment differs from the expected operational environment and how the test results compare with expectations is understood
Pilot and Demonstration	6	System and/or process prototype demonstrated in a simulated environment	A model or prototype, that represents a near desired configuration, is being developed at a pilot scale, generally smaller than full scale. Testing of the model or prototype is being conducted in a simulated environment.	☐Pilot scale model or prototype developed ☐Pilot scale model or prototype system is near the desired configuration in performance, and volume but generally smaller than full scale ☐Pilot scale prototype or model system has been demonstrated in a simulated environment ☐How the simulated environment differs from the operational environment, and how results differed from expectations is understood
	7	Prototype system ready (form, fit and function) demonstrated in an appropriate operational environment	A full scale prototype is being demonstrated in an operational environment but under limited conditions (i.e., field tests). At this stage, the final design is very close to completion.	☐Full scale prototype with ready form, fit and function developed ☐ Full scale prototype demonstrated in an operational environment but under limited conditions
	8	Actual technology completed and qualified through tests and demonstrations	Technology is being proven to work in its final form and under expected conditions. This stage commonly represents the end of technology development. At this stage, operations are well understood, operational procedures are being developed, and final adjustments are being made.	☐Final configuration of the technology developed ☐Final configuration successfully tested in an operational environment ☐Technology's ability to meet its operational requirements has been assessed and problems documented; plans, options, or actions to resolve problems have been determined

Technology Development Stage	TRL	Definition	Description	Checklist of activities to achieve this level
Early Adoption	9	Actual technology proven through successful deployment in an operational environment	Actual application of the technology in its final form is being conducted under a full range of operational conditions. Sometimes referred to as "system operations", this stage is where technology is further refined and adopted.	☐The technology has been successfully deployed and proven under a full range of operational conditions ☐Operational, test and evaluation reports have been completed
Commercially Available		Technology development is complete	Technology is openly available in the marketplace and/or has been sold directly to a buyer in the public or private sector, in its current state or service offering for non-testing or development purposes. The technology is commercial and competitive but may need further integration efforts for wide spread adoption.	☐The technology is openly available in the marketplace and/or has been sold in its current state of service offering for non-testing or development purposes.

Key terms[2]

Scientific research: research aimed at expanding the base of theoretical scientific knowledge and predictions that have universal applicability

Applied research: the application of scientific knowledge to solve specific practical problems or answer certain questions

Research and development: systemic work designed to produce new products, techniques or processes or improve existing products, techniques or processes

Proof of concept: analytical and experimental demonstration of hardware/software concepts.

Model: a reduced scale, functional form of a system, near or at operational specification

Prototype: the first early representation of the system which offers the expected functionality and performance expected of the final implementation

Laboratory environment: a fully controlled test environment where a limited number of functions and variables are tested. Tests in a laboratory environment are solely for the purpose of demonstrating the underlying principles of technical performance (functions), without respect to the impact of environment

Simulated environment: a relevant working environment with controlled realistic conditions, generally outside of the lab. If the technology will be used in various environments (e.g., the Artic and Southern Canada), the technology must be developed and tested in a simulated environment for all conditions.

Operational environment: "real-world" environment with conditions associated with typical use of the product and or process. If the technology will be used in various environments (e.g., the Artic and Southern Canada), the technology must be developed and tested in each operational environment.

[2] Adapted from: U.S. National Science Foundation (2018), U.S. Department of Energy (2015), U.S. Department of Transportation (2015), SBIR (2014)

Appendix C: Co-funding requirements

Research Manitoba encourages co-funding from other funding agencies and organizations (e.g. government agencies, NSERC Alliance Grants, Mitacs, academic institutions), however, when such co-funding takes place, it should be clearly identified in the proposal budget justification. In instances where co-funding is acquired after an application is submitted, the applicant must inform Research Manitoba of the new funding and provide a justification for holding both awards.

The explanation should include:

- Why the Innovation Proof-of-Concept funding is critical for the project's success,
- How the co-funding will impact the project, and
- Provide a new budget justification with a complete breakdown of the budget from the other funding source(s) compared to the Research Manitoba budget.

Should the justification not adequately display the need for Research Manitoba's funding in addition to the co-funding, Research Manitoba reserves the right to make the final decisions for the application.