

Canada-Alberta-France joint industrial R&D projects – Call for proposals

A. Call description

The goal of this Call for proposals is to mutually enhance the sharing of knowledge and technology between Canada and France through collaborative, close-to-market projects between French and Albertan/Canadian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The scope of interest broadly covers innovative products and/or technology-based services or methods in any civil technological and application areas with demonstrated market potential in Canada, France or beyond. The Call is open to all enterprises in France and Canada, with Albertan firms eligible for funding support from both the Alberta-France Collaboration Fund being managed by the German-Canadian Centre for Innovation and Research (GCCIR) and the National Research Council of Canada Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC IRAP), in accordance with the terms outlined below.

This Call for proposals is part of a joint initiative involving Bpifrance, the Alberta Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, GCCIR and the NRC. Initiated by the Government of Alberta following a mission in France to explore areas of mutual interest and opportunities to promote bilateral collaboration, Bpifrance and the NRC subsequently joined to complement and broaden the scope of the call to the national level, and to leverage funding support to eligible participants.

Canada and France's membership in the EUREKA Network provides an effective delivery mechanism to promote and implement project proposals for this bilateral call. In this regard, GCCIR is working closely with Canada's National EUREKA Office, managed by the NRC on behalf of the Government of Canada, and with Bpifrance, which administers EUREKA for eligible French firms.

B. Basic project requirements

- Projects must aim to develop new products, processes or services that are technologically innovative, meet a civilian (non-military) market need, and show a clear path to commercialization after the completion of the collaboration. Pre-commercial demonstration projects can also be supported.
- The project must demonstrate an added value resulting from well-defined roles and well-balanced contributions from each of the partners (i.e. no less than 25% from either side).
- Participants from other countries may also participate in the project but they will not be eligible for funding from Bpifrance, GCCIR or NRC IRAP.

C. Eligibility and funding criteria

France

Bpifrance is the French public investment bank, which finances businesses from the seed phase to transfer to stock exchange listing, through loans, guarantees and equity. Bpifrance accompanies firms developing export activities and provides support to their innovation projects.

According to Bpifrance funding rules, French enterprises with less than 2,000 employees are financed through reimbursable loans with 0% interest (commonly called "avances récupérables"). The global funding amount will be partially non-reimbursable in case of technical failure. The funding rate is up to 65% (minimum amount 50 000€, maximum amount 3 M€).

University/Research Organizations are not funded; they are welcomed as subcontractors of a French company. Costs relating to subcontracting are taken into account.

Bpifrance provides funding support to assist French companies in the preparation of their project via the "Aide au partenariat technologique (APT)" program - a grant of up to 50 000€.

Firms considering a collaborative project with a Canadian partner should contact the Program Manager in charge of this Call for proposals for Bpifrance (see below) at the outset of the call. French enterprises must confirm their financial capacity (equity capital, fund-raising).

Eligible costs for Bpifrance:

- Personal costs
- Overheads: 20% of personal costs
- Costs related to intellectual property, patent extension etc.
- Feasibility study
- Market search
- Equipment (depreciation and amortization)
- Industrial research and experimental development
- Project management and associated costs (related travel costs of French participants)
- Implementation and development of prototypes, models, pilot productions, demonstration etc.

Alberta

The Alberta Ministry of Economic Development and Trade is providing funding of up to CDN\$250,000 to Albertan SMEs (1 to 499 employees and less than \$50 million in gross revenues) from the Alberta-France Collaboration Fund managed by GCCIR. To be eligible for GCCIR funding, the project must involve at least one French company and one Alberta company. Projects requiring more than \$250,000 may be eligible for additional funding from NRC IRAP.

Canada

NRC IRAP is providing funding support to eligible SMEs located across Canada. Total support for the firm is in the form of a non-repayable contribution. More information can be obtained on the IRAP website, including specific eligibility criteria.

In the case of joint GCCIR and NRC IRAP funding to Albertan SMEs, both funding authorities will coordinate coverage of expenses with the companies in accordance with the following rules:

Eligible expenses for reimbursement under GCCIR:

- 100% of costs for new, incremental employees and 50% of costs for existing employees (including salary, benefits, etc.)
- Fees for subcontractors and consultants
- Equipment acquisition
- Operating costs related to the project
- Travel costs up to 10% of the total grant (e.g. \$25,000 of a \$250,000 grant)

Eligible expenses for reimbursement under NRC IRAP:

- Salaries (including overhead) of technical personnel involved in the project
- Subcontractor's fees

Setting up a technological collaboration with a company in a foreign country may necessitate feasibility studies, partner searches, or legal contract preparation involving outside counsel, before submitting a proposal. Specific support for the set-up of technological collaboration can be provided by Bpifrance to French firms via the "Aide au partenariat technologique (APT)" program, and by NRC IRAP for the Canadian firms. The respective national authorities can provide more information on this funding support.

D. Proposal submission process

Dates

- Call opens: December 15, 2017.
- For applicants seeking feedback on their funding eligibility before investing time in a full application, which is highly recommended, a Preliminary Eligibility Assessment (PEA – see

Step 1 below) should be submitted by: January 30, 2018.

Expected decision: 2-3 weeks after submission.

- Full Application Deadline (see below Step 2 - EUREKA Label and Funding Support): March 15, 2018.

Expected decision: 2-3 months after full application.

Companies planning to propose projects should first contact the Program Managers listed below. In Canada, companies intending to apply to both GCCIR and NRC IRAP should make their intention known as soon as possible after the call for proposals opens. GCCIR and NRC IRAP Project Managers will set up a meeting with the company as soon as possible to explain how costs should be allocated to each program, depending on the project's requirements (e.g. personnel vs. equipment), and how reporting should be undertaken.

Application Step 1: Preliminary Eligibility Assessment (PEA)

The participants within a given project will designate a Main Participant. The Main Participant is required to submit, on behalf of the project team, a partially completed (only a few lines per section) [EUREKA Project Application Form](#) to one of the national points of contact listed below. At this initial stage, only basic information is collected including: participants contact information, nature of the participants (legal structure, size, etc.), estimated project start/ end-date, estimated project budget, relative share of effort amongst participants, and a few lines per textbox (nature of the project, innovation, target market, etc.)

This aim of this Step is to gather preliminary information about the participants and the project in order to assess their eligibility to the EUREKA label and for funding from their funding authorities, before they invest further effort in submitting full applications. Participants who obtain a positive PEA result will be invited to submit the full EUREKA Project Application Form, and will be put in contact with their respective Funding Authorities for funding application, according to said Authorities' respective criteria and processes.

Program Managers will notify their respective applicants regarding their eligibility within a month of receipt of the PEA Form. Companies should duly consider the deadline for submission of the full application when filing their PEA Form (this Form does not replace the Funding Application Forms required by the national procedures, in Step 2).

Application Step 2: Applications for the EUREKA Label and Funding Support

2.1 Eureka application

Project Partners must complete and submit the [EUREKA Project Application Form](#) ideally by re-using the form that was used in Step 1 for their Preliminary Eligibility Assessment (PEA) and completing the information.

The designated Main Participant submits the form in electronic format (PDF), accompanied by a scan of the form's signature pages (legally signed by all participants), as follows:

- If the Main Participant is a Canadian firm, it submits the form and signature pages to the NRC IRAP Program Manager; if the firm is also Albertan, it includes, in copy to the email, the GCCIR Program Manager.
- If the Main Participant is a French firm, it submits the form and signature pages to the Bpifrance Project Manager.

2.2 Funding application

The public funding agencies are providing access to public funding for approved projects in accordance with the national or provincial laws, rules, regulations and procedures in effect, on a no-exchange of funds basis, and subject to budgetary availability in each agency. Participants can also self-fund

- **French** SMEs are invited to [contact the appropriate regional office of Bpifrance](#) to submit the national application to general programs. French firms must submit their funding application to Bpifrance within one month of receiving their eligibility notice.
- **Albertan** firms seeking funding support from the Alberta-France Collaboration Fund are required to complete the GCCIR Funding Application Form, available from the GCCIR Program Manager (see Section E below), and submit it back to them.
- **Canadian** SMEs, including Alberta firms, seeking funding support under an NRC-IRAP Contribution Agreement will be put in contact with an IRAP Industrial Technology Advisor (ITA), in order to proceed with the funding process. Please contact the appropriate Program Manager listed below.

In the interest of mitigating potential risks and contentious issues associated with collaborative R&D initiatives, and prior to the awarding of any national funding and EUREKA labeling, participants must confirm with their respective Project Managers that all parties have concluded a Consortium Agreement that governs the project's implementation (i.e. schedule, funding arrangement, roles and responsibilities, intellectual property rights, etc.). Project Managers can provide more details on this requirement.

Step 3: Evaluations and approvals

Projects will be assessed in due consideration of technical, commercial and business strengths.

Canadian and French funding authorities will normally inform applicants of their decision within three months after the receipt of a **complete** application and other requested documents.

Step 4: EUREKA Labeling and Allocation of Funding

Successfully evaluated projects are submitted to the EUREKA Network to obtain the EUREKA Label, an internationally recognized endorsement that provides a competitive edge in future dealings with financial, technical and commercial partners. EUREKA Labels are approved by the national EUREKA High-Level Group Representatives that meet on a quarterly basis.

Step 5: Implementation

National funding support is allocated to project participants, which begins project implementation. Funding authorities will synchronize their actions and will advise project participants about project funding details, including their effective funding start date for a given project and reporting procedures.

E. Additional information and national points of contact

For more details, please see the [Bpifrance](#), [GCCIR](#), or [NRC](#) websites and/or contact your national program manager.

Program Managers in France:

Bpifrance, Direction du Soutien Réseau/Programmes Internationaux Innovation

Patrick Cornet
Telephone: +33 1 41 79 84 38
Email: Patrick.Cornet@bpifrance.fr

Odile Hénin
Telephone: +33 1 41 79 87 85
Email: Odile.Henin@bpifrance.fr

Program Managers in Canada:

German-Canadian Centre for Innovation and Research (GCCIR)

Katelyn Petersen, Manager
Telephone: 780-492-4287
Email: kpetersen@gccir.ca

Jonas Kuhn, Senior Project Coordinator
Telephone: 780-492-5745
Email: jkuhn@gccir.ca

National Research Council of Canada Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC IRAP)

Eric Holdrinet, Industrial Technology Advisor
Telephone: +1-514-882-9384
Email: Eric.Holdrinet@cnrc-nrc.gc.ca