# B.C. Fast Pilot Program 2022
## Guidelines for Firms
*A program delivered jointly by Innovate BC and the National Research Council of Canada Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC IRAP)*

The need to test and demonstrate new technology operating under real world conditions is a common challenge for small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) aiming to commercialize new technologies. A pilot implementation is an essential but often capital-intensive step for companies to progress from prototype stage to commercialization. The B.C. Fast Pilot Program is designed to support SMEs through this important step by helping them measure the value of their solution through a pilot installation in the field with a customer. The program is competitive and selections will be made based on the strength of projects and budget availability.

## Program Description
The implementation of a pilot installation is a key mechanism SMEs can use to prove the value of an innovative technology to potential customers. The B.C. Fast Pilot Program is for B.C.-based SMEs developing technologies that have passed the prototype stage and now require real-world pilot-scale validation to demonstrate the value of their innovation to potential customers. Support is available to SMEs to design, build, and operate a pilot plant or small demonstration of their technology in real-world conditions, at a potential customer's site, to prove the impact of their product, measure the value of their solution, and encourage customer adoption. The goal of the B.C. Fast Pilot program is to facilitate the sale of an SME's product or service.

## Priority Focus Areas
Priority areas include, but will not be limited to:
- Regional B.C. SMEs and pilot implementations/sites in B.C., especially outside the Lower Mainland.
- Pilot initiatives in the cleantech sector defined as processes, products, or services that reduce negative environmental impacts through significant energy efficiency improvements, the sustainable use of resources, or environmental protection activities.
- Pilot initiatives involving Indigenous communities or organizations.

## Company Eligibility

The program helps B.C. SMEs who have developed a prototype and are ready to take their technology and demonstrate it at a prospective customer site. An SME needs to contact an NRC IRAP Industrial Technology Advisor (ITA) and meet the eligibility criteria for NRC IRAP financial support, including:

- Having separate legal status as an incorporated, for-profit SME in Canada with the objective to grow and generate profits
- Having less than 500 employees
- Operating legally in Canada, and specifically in B.C. for this program

## Project Scope & Funding
This program is funded by Innovate BC and leverages NRC IRAP funding. The exact amount and ratio of funding per project will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Pilots may receive up to $200,000 in joint funding for projects, depending on available funds. Projects that are at a Technological Readiness Level (TRL) of 7 or higher will be considered. SME's must be prepared to implement the solution and execute on the majority of the deliverables of their project by March 31, 2023.

Program Timeline:
- April 19th 12:00 PM - Expression of Interest submission deadline
- Early to Mid-May - Successful applicants invited to submit Full Proposal

**Project Description**

A typical project will include design, construction, and operation of a pilot plant at a customer site, at the scale and duration sufficient to prove long-term performance of technology. Pilot projects should involve physical installations and equipment; be capital intensive in nature and not solely software related. Examples of supportable project activities include, but are not limited to:

- Design and construction of pilot rig
- Site preparation
- Pilot plant commissioning, testing mechanical systems
- Operation of pilot plant
- Testing for stability, reliability, durability, components degradation

- Validation of product features and product performance
- Generating data to design a large-scale / commercial installation
- Preparing reports and documentation
- Training of end user on the technology
- Data collection and recording

**Customer/Early Adopter**

An SME should identify a potential customer or early adopter and ensure their agreement to operate a pilot installation at their site in real-world conditions. Preference will be given to projects where the firm has provided evidence of support of an identified pilot customer for the project (LOI, MOU, email with commitment to host a pilot project).

**Supportable Costs**

This is a cost-shared pilot program delivered by Innovate BC in partnership with NRC IRAP. Depending on the needs of the project, B.C. Fast Pilot funding can support SME technical salaries, contractor fees, capital costs, travel and other necessary costs incurred during the project implementation. For projects that are selected for funding, NRC IRAP will cover a component of salary and contractor costs, while Innovate BC will cover a component of other project costs (equipment, material, travel). Projects should include both categories of costs, to outline the need for government funding from both agencies in this cost-shared program.

**How will the Project success be measured?**

Baseline data will be collected as part of the application process and projects will be expected to report on critical metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) after the pilot to assess success. Examples include, but are not limited to: whether the pilot implementation resulted in a purchase agreement, key benefits to customer/adopter, jobs created, new investments and revenues created for B.C. SMEs.

**Important Project Feature Checklist**
- Applicant company (the innovator) meets company eligibility.
- A BC innovation that is market ready (TRL 7+), and clearly outlines readiness.
- Includes a physical installation of equipment, and is not solely software related.
- A demonstrated need to test/de-risk/validate the innovation at pilot scale, and not solely for marketing purpose.
- A demonstrated need for funding from both government funding agencies.
- Strong over-all market opportunity, with benefits to B.C. (economic, jobs, IP, etc.).
- A pilot site at an industry/customer location, ideally in B.C.
- Evidence of support or interest from the pilot customer is important.
- All or majority of project objectives can be achieved by March 31, 2023.
- Alignment with priority focus areas is favourable, but does not guarantee funding. The over-all strength of the project is key.

**General Inquiries or Support**

All general inquiries and/or requests for B.C. Fast Pilot support should be directed to Innovate BC (programs@innovatebc.ca) or an NRC IRAP ITA. Eligible companies without an ITA should contact IRAP to find an appropriate advisor in their region.

**How to Apply**

The application process is three-step:

1. SMES's without an NRC IRAP ITA must first connect with NRC IRAP to get assigned an ITA. For more information on finding an ITA, visit: https://nrc.canada.ca/en/support-technology-innovation/nrc-irap-advisory-services or contact NRC IRAP Client Engagement Advisors at 1-877-994-4727. SMEs should allow 2-3 weeks to undergo an evaluation to get assigned an ITA.

2. SMEs should request an "*Expression of interest for B.C. Fast Pilot*" form from their local NRC IRAP ITA. It is highly recommended that SMEs work with their ITA to fill out the form to ensure all requirements are met. Completed forms will be reviewed and submitted by the ITA to the B.C. Fast Pilot Joint Review Committee (JRC), which consists of representatives from both NRC IRAP and Innovate BC. Submitted applications will be screened, evaluated, and selected by the JRC for next step.

3. Successful applicants will be invited to submit a full NRC IRAP project proposal. The SME will work with their ITA to develop a full proposal according to standard NRC IRAP practices.