

Accelerating Agriculture Innovation – One Health Solutions Targeted Stream

Program Guidelines

June 11, 2024

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1.0 Overview: Accelerating Agriculture Innovation - One Health Solutions Targeted Stream (AAIOH)

RDAR (Results Driven Agriculture Research) has partnered with Genome Alberta (GAB) to solicit research proposals under the theme of One Health. Genome Alberta in partnership with RDAR will coordinate the proposal intake process and technical review process. RDAR will be responsible for Notice of Award and post award process.

Funding for this call is provided by the governments of Canada and Alberta under the [Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership](#).

1.1 RDAR

RDAR (Results Driven Agriculture Research) was established in 2020 with a mandate to target strategic investments in producer-led, results-driven agriculture research powering the profitability, productivity, competitiveness, and sustainability of Alberta's agriculture industry. RDAR research funds ensure producers provide science-based leadership in agriculture research.

Today, RDAR manages a comprehensive research portfolio of over 400 impactful projects that increase farm cash receipts, promote value-added investments, and generate employment opportunities across our industry.

1.2 Genome Alberta

Genome Alberta is a publicly funded not-for profit corporation that invests primarily in large-scale genome sciences research projects and technology platforms focused on areas of strategic importance to the province (e.g. human health, forestry, plant and animal agriculture, energy, and environment). By working collaboratively with government, universities, and industry, Genome Alberta is a catalyst for a vibrant, life sciences cluster with far reaching social and economic benefits for Alberta and Canada. To date, the organization has managed 134 genome-focused initiatives with a \$573 Million research portfolio. Please visit [Genome Alberta's website](#) for more information.

2.0 Eligibility

2.1 Eligible Research Areas

Projects funded through this targeted call must have an omics focus addressing a One Health approach to the targeted priority research areas and demonstrate a tangible impact on end-users in Alberta within the project term. Projects must demonstrate that their deliverables have the potential to benefit Alberta and that necessary individuals and resources are in place to enable this, such as inclusion of an Albertan end-user, lead, co-lead, or key co-applicant in the Project.

Projects are solicited will have an omics focus addressing a One Health approach to the targeted priority research areas of:

- **Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)**, including but not limited to genomics-based monitoring & surveillance, genetic CWD resistance/resilience, vaccine development, and interspecies transmission of CWD.
- **Feral Pigs and African Swine Fever (ASF)**, including but not limited to population genetics, control of reproduction, detection, monitoring, and characterization of pathogens carried by feral pigs.
- **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)**, including but not limited to genomic surveillance, molecular diagnostics, genomics-informed antimicrobial treatment, and host resilience as it pertains to Alberta's livestock industry.
- **Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)**, including, but not limited to virus identification and surveillance, understanding cross-species transmission, vaccine development and evaluation, and environmental surveillance and management.
- Other urgent and emergent areas of one-health importance may be considered if accompanied by a strong case and ability to deliver solutions to Alberta's producers.

2.2 Funding Details

- Up to CDN \$5 Million is available in RDAR funding.
- RDAR will contribute up to 60% of total project costs, with a maximum contribution of \$600,000 per project. The remaining 40% is to be contributed either in cash or in-kind from other sources.
- The project duration will be capped at three (3) years without the possibility of extension.

2.3 Eligible Applicants

Funding will be available to qualified researchers from or under contract with organizations that directly and/or indirectly participate in the service and development of the Alberta livestock or crop industry, provided that such organizations are in good standing and not in default under any other agreements or programs with RDAR. Eligible applicants include but are not limited to:

- a. marketing boards and commissions established under the Marketing of Agriculture Products Act;
- b. educational institutions including universities, colleges, and technical schools;
- c. government organizations and agencies (at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels);
- d. incorporated not-for-profit agricultural associations representing Alberta's agriculture producer; and
- e. for-profit companies operating in Alberta and contributing to research benefitting Alberta's crop and livestock producers.

2.4 Eligible Locations

Research projects can be conducted either within or outside Alberta. The following are important considerations if the proposed research will be conducted outside of Alberta:

- a. it is strongly recommended that at least one project team member be located in Alberta;
- b. the research work proposed must result in economic benefit to the Alberta crop and livestock industry; and
- c. the benefits gained by Alberta will be equivalent to those which would accrue if the work had been conducted within Alberta.

3.0 Timeframe

Date	Process
June 11th, 2024	Competition launch
July 12th, 2024	Statement of Intent (SOI) due
August 9th, 2024	Invitation of selected SOIs for proposal development
September 20th, 2024	Full proposals due
December, 2024	Notice of Award (NOA) to Applicants

Genome Alberta and RDAR will be cohosting an information webinar to support applicants through the process.

4.0 Submission and Review Process

Application documents will be submitted in a two-step process:

1. Submission of a Statement of Intent (SOI)
2. Submission of a Full Proposal.

SOIs will be reviewed by Genome Alberta and RDAR staff, complemented by subject expertise and will be primarily screened for alignment with priorities and criteria outlined in Sections 4.1.1. Full Proposal applications will undergo a confidential, independent review process by an expert review panel, Genome Alberta and RDAR. Applications will be evaluated against the eligibility and evaluation criteria outlined in Sections 2.1 and 4.2.1, respectively.

4.1 Statement of Intent

The Statement of Intent Form will be available on Genome Alberta's Website [<https://genomealberta.ca/funding-opportunities/>]. Applicants must submit the completed and signed SOI form on or before **11:59 pm on July 12th, 2024** directly to Tian Zhao [tzhao@genomealberta.ca] with the email subject line:

“AAIOH – [Last name] – SOI”

Applicants will be notified as to whether their application is considered eligible. Eligible applicants will receive email communication from RDAR and be invited to submit a Full Proposal.

4.1.1. Statement of Interest Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will use the following list of questions to assess the SOIs:

- Does the project address the priority One Health challenge in Section 2.1 and will employ an omics-derived or omics-enabled approach?
- Are the activities proposed achievable within the designated project timeframe?
- How impactful are the project deliverables and anticipated (co) benefits for Alberta producers and the broader agriculture and food industry?
- What is the extent of end-user consultation, and how does the project address the needs of end users?

4.2 Full Proposal Submission

Full Proposals will be submitted to RDAR through ARGO (Agriculture Research Grant Organizer); instructions for submission can be found [here](#). Eligible applicants will receive an email invitation with a link to access the Full Proposal form on ARGO.

The applicant will submit project information regarding the project background, project objectives, anticipated outcomes and deliverables, methodology, novelty and uniqueness, research adoption extension and commercialization, team contributions roles and responsibilities, ability to complete, budget, GANTT chart, and long-term impact as well as additional documentation required.

The Full Proposals will be reviewed for scientific and technical excellence by an external expert review panel. The external review panel will be primarily international and multidisciplinary, consisting of scientific and industrial experts. Applicants will be given the opportunity to identify those experts who are not appropriate reviewers for their research projects. Reviewers will sign non-disclosure agreements and will have to declare all potential conflicts of interest. They will evaluate each Full Proposal based on the evaluation criteria presented below.

4.2.1 Full Proposal Evaluation Criteria

To ensure that the goals for AAIOH are met and that the proposed research has a significant impact on the sector, reviewers will be asked to address, and score the Full Proposals on the following questions:

Anticipated Outcomes & Benefits to Alberta Producers and Agriculture Industry

- How important or in-demand are the project outcomes to the industry? (Consider benefits to export markets, profitability, productivity, efficiency, and/or sustainability to the industry)
- How direct is the path to industry or producers? (i.e. are there short-term and immediate applications and are there any limitations?)
- Does the proposal effectively describe the requirements of the industry and/or end-users, and how will the applicant address those requirements?
- Does the project demonstrate end-user engagement in the achievement of benefits to Alberta?
- Do the project outcomes result in a new technology or tool and is there a clear adoption and/or commercialization potential for the innovation

Overall goal and objectives & Ability to complete

- Are the short- and long-term goals reasonable, clear, and well-articulated?

- Can the activities be completed by the project end date?

Novelty and Uniqueness

- Is this research novel or replicative of other ongoing research efforts? (e.g. show understanding of related research efforts and gaps)

Project Design and Methodology & Gantt chart

- Does the project address the priority One Health challenge in Section 2.1 and will employ an omics-derived or omics-enabled approach?
- Are the methodology and experimental designs feasible? (consider the budget requested)
- Are the specific activities consistent between the research proposal, budget and Gantt chart?
- Are the experimental design and statistical methods sound? (e.g. Number of animals or samples, statistical analysis)
- Have they cited appropriate literature, and are there key papers missing that could add value or another perspective to the study?
- Are there other technologies or methods that could be used that are more efficient, accurate, or high throughput?
- Have anticipated difficulties and alternative methods been considered, including cost-effectiveness?

Knowledge transfer and Intellectual Property

- Are there other KTT opportunities that may assist in communicating or transferring the research outputs?
- Are there important IP or regulatory limitations missing? (e.g. Regulatory considerations for technology or product? consideration of consumer acceptance?)
- If applicable, does the project include an IP management strategy?

Team contributions

- Do the team members have the necessary background and expertise to carry out the project successfully?
- Are there other academic or industry partners in the field that may be needed for the success of this project?

4.3 Successful Full Proposals

Following final funding decisions all applicants, whether selected for funding or not, will be formally notified of the final funding decision (through ARGO). Successful applicants will receive a Notice of Award with conditions that must be met prior to project launch.

The project titles and contact information for successful Proposals will be posted on Genome Alberta's and RDAR's website. By submitting a Proposal, applicants authorize Genome Alberta and RDAR to make such postings.

5.0 Costs and Co-funding

5.1 Eligible Expenses

The following expenses may be approved by RDAR as an Eligible Expenses,:

- a. Cost of supplies, equipment rentals and land rentals directly required for the Eligible Activity;
- b. Salaries and benefits of scientific and technical personnel who conduct the Eligible Activity;
- c. Stipends and benefits for students (in such amounts as outlined on RDAR's website) who conduct the Eligible Activity;
- d. Costs for fee-for-service providers or contributors that are essential for the conduct of the Eligible Activity, e.g., engineering costs;
- e. Costs for the development and delivery of KTT activities for the Eligible Activity, e.g., event registrations for a project team member; cost of communications with Alberta agriculture industry stakeholders (e.g., social media, publications, promotional advertising); costs for materials, supplies, and inputs required for the design, development, implementation, and extension of the Eligible Activity's applied research activities;
- f. Reasonable travel-related expenses incurred directly for the Eligible Activity, provided they are in accordance with the Alberta Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership Travel Expense Policy posted on the RDAR website, as may be amended (excluding RDAR staff);
- g. Cost of surveys related to gathering data required for reporting on the Eligible Activity;
- h. Commercialization expenses, e.g., patent and other protection of intellectual property;
- i. Cost of assessments necessary for the legal or technical requirements applicable to the Eligible Activity (e.g., risk, welfare, economic, environmental); and
- j. If the Eligible Applicant is a Post-Secondary Institution, indirect overhead expenses up to a maximum of 15% where the Eligible Applicant can demonstrate that indirect overhead funds are going to the department completing the Eligible Activity and are utilized to deliver research and development activities.

5.2 Ineligible Expenses

Expenses that are not eligible for reimbursement by RDAR include:

- a. Goods and Services Tax (GST), Provincial Sales Tax (PST), Harmonized Sales Tax (HST);
- b. Costs of In-Kind Contributions;
- c. Costs incurred outside of the Project Term;
- d. Expenses paid to a Government of Canada department or agency;
- e. Expenses for hosting, food, alcohol, and non-alcoholic beverages;

- f. Expenses for commercial marketing materials;
- g. Expenses for commercial product development;
- h. Active costs associated with complying with assurance programs;
- i. Normal and ongoing administrative, management, maintenance and operating costs not directly related to the Eligible Activity;
- j. Costs of common items that can be used for multiple purposes (e.g., digital cameras, GPS, smartphones, measuring tapes);
- k. Website hosting/domain registration;
- l. Travel expenses not related directly to the Eligible Activity, including travel expenses to view or pick up equipment/technology;
- m. Travel expenses for individuals who are not Project team members;
- n. Costs for the lease of office furniture, space, and equipment;
- o. Costs of equipment attached to a building, such as sinks, walls, doors, plumbing, framing, and flooring;
- p. Costs of repair/maintenance of existing infrastructure; and
- q. Any other expense deemed by RDAR to be an ineligible expense.

5.3 Funding Levels

Applicants are encouraged to obtain funding from other sources to supplement RDAR grant funding. Applicants must be transparent about additional funding requested or obtained from other organizations.

Upon approval of a Full Proposal, written confirmation and description of additional funding secured (cash and in-kind) may be required. Applicants will be responsible for noting any stacking issues for funding (i.e., a portion of the funding required for matching funds to other grants) as well.

Upon completion of the research, the Applicant may be required to provide confirmation of receipt of funding from all sources contributing to the project.

Eligible Non-Capital Expenses may be cost-shared at 60% grant and 40% Eligible Applicant. In-Kind Contributions are not payable under the Program, but RDAR may consider in-Kind Contributions as part of the Applicant's required contribution, subject to the following:

- a. In-Kind Contributions are subject to the same financial review procedures as other Eligible Expenses and must be adequately documented to the satisfaction of RDAR; and
- b. RDAR has the absolute discretion to reduce or reject any In-Kind Contribution if RDAR is not satisfied that the In-Kind Contribution is reasonable and adequately verified.

6.0 Reporting

6.1 Reporting Requirements

Applicants will be required to submit detailed:

1. Interim Reports and financial statements; and
2. Final Report and financial statements

online within ARGO at rdar.smartsimple.ca in accordance with the terms and conditions in the RDAR Grant Agreement.

6.2 Acknowledgment and Communications

Funding from RDAR must be acknowledged on appropriate signs, stickers, posters, publications and press releases dealing with the project. The Applicant will be granted permission upon request to use RDAR's name and logo when acknowledging RDAR's contribution to the project. The use of RDAR's name and logo must comply with RDAR's Communication Guidelines, which are available from RDAR and on the RDAR website.

7.0 Intellectual Property

All intellectual property resulting from funded projects will vest with the Applicant. The Intellectual Property arising from the Project shall be dealt with in accordance with RDAR's Intellectual Property and Commercialization Policy available at www.rdar.ca.

Contact Information

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