

OVIN Technology Pilot Zones

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Program Information and Eligibility Requirements

Overview and Benefits

The Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network (OVIN) Technology Pilot Zones program provides SMEs with two world-class live environments in Toronto and in Windsor/Sarnia to pilot cutting-edge automotive and mobility solutions. This program supports the advancement and commercialization of next-generation automotive and mobility technologies. The two pilot zones are dedicated to fostering innovation in key areas including zero-emission, connected, autonomous, and emerging mobility solutions. Through this program, SMEs can demonstrate and pilot the effectiveness, safety, and reliability of their technologies in a live environment, granting them a competitive edge in the market and facilitating the scaling and commercialization of their technologies, thus accelerating their adoption and deployment within the global supply chain.

OVIN Technology Pilot Zones (TPZ) program contributes up to one-half of the eligible project costs for approved SMEs up to a maximum of \$100,000 with the remainder contributed by *Applicants* and/or *Private Sector Partners, if applicable*.

Project funding can be used towards the validation, testing, piloting, demonstration, commercialization, and deployment of advanced automotive and smart mobility products and services.

Urban Transportation Pilot Zone in Toronto

This technology pilot zone operates across several sites in the City of Toronto and focuses on addressing urban mobility challenges in Canada's largest metropolitan areas, such as road congestion, dated infrastructure, rapid urbanization, accessibility, and more.

Technologies and solutions that can be piloted at the sites include, but are not limited to:

- Zero-Emission Vehicles (ZEV)
- Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAVs) for passenger or delivery purposes; snowplows and mowers
- Innovative pavement materials or lane markings
- Electric Vehicle Charging
- Accessibility solutions for people with disabilities
- Innovative methods for protecting vulnerable road users, such as cyclists and pedestrians
- Dynamic signage and traffic signals

Cross-border Transportation in Windsor and Sarnia

The technology pilot zone in the Windsor and Sarnia area is focused on solutions to facilitate the safe and efficient flow of people and goods across borders. Supported by the province’s existing partnership with the Federal Bridge Corporation Limited, Windsor-Detroit Tunnel and the State of Michigan, Ontario SMEs can pilot pioneering, multi-modal transportation solutions.

Technologies and solutions that can be piloted at the sites include, but are not limited to:

- Commercial drones
- Electronic filing of credentials/reporting
- Automated authentication of vehicles, cargo, and personnel
- Dangerous goods tracking
- Readily accessible current/predictive travel conditions information
- Coordination and dissemination of real-time traveler information
- Technologies for increasing the efficiency of international crossings and other tolled facilities

Benefits to Applicants and Partners	Benefits to Society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration, piloting, and deployment of Ontario-made technologies and solutions in real-world environments. • Marketable solutions for ZEV, CAV, and new mobility focused technologies. • Access strategic partnership opportunities for collaborative piloting activities. • Support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in commercializing emerging mobility technologies. • Lead the adoption of advanced automotive and smart mobility solutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advancement of cleaner and more efficient mobility technologies. • Improvement of urban and cross-border transportation efficiency and safety. • Enhance Canada’s economy through job creation in the growing automotive and mobility sector. • Support Canada’s transition to net-zero emissions by 2050.

How Co-Investment Works

OVIN Contribution	<p>Reimbursement of one-half (maximum) of total project eligible costs, up to \$100,000, triggered by submission and approval of required reporting.</p>
Matching Requirement	<p>One-half (minimum) of total eligible project costs (i.e., minimum 1:1 match to OVIN contribution)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution match may come from <i>Applicant and/or Partners (if applicable)</i>. • Contribution match MUST be in the form of private sector contributions, and be unencumbered from other government grant sources.

Example	Total eligible project costs: \$200,000 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum OVIN contribution: \$100,000 • Minimum Private Sector contribution: \$100,000
Funding Recipient	OVIN funds flow only to the <i>Applicant</i> . The <i>Applicant</i> is responsible for reimbursing <i>Partners</i> , if applicable.

- Refer to the Eligible Expenditures Guide ([Resource Documents - OVIN - Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network \(ovinhub.ca\)](#)) for full details.
- All project activities must be performed in Southern Ontario unless written approval has been obtained from OCI before submission of an application.
- OCI may reimburse expenses incurred after the application approval date. The Funding Agreement must be executed by relevant parties before a project is activated. Until activation is complete, project expenses are incurred at the risk of the participants.
- The *Applicant* must achieve a 1:1 private sector contribution to the project. The contribution must be unencumbered; that is, it cannot be used to leverage other public funds to pay for a portion of the same activity.
- Contributions from public entities (municipalities, transit authorities, academic institutions, local electricity distribution companies, government agencies, provincial and federal departments, and grant programs, etc.) do not constitute eligible sources of matching.
- The *Applicant* will be required to disclose all sources of funding being applied for and/or received for the project.

Eligibility Requirements

Applicant

- A small- and medium- sized enterprise (SME) with fewer than 500 global full-time employees.
- Must have registered operations (R&D, manufacturing, product management, etc.) in Southern Ontario. Southern Ontario includes the following regions: 1 Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry; 2 Prescott and Russell; 6 Ottawa; 7 Leeds and Grenville; 9 Lanark; 10 Frontenac; 11 Lennox and Addington; 12 Hastings; 13 Prince Edward; 14 Northumberland; 15 Peterborough; 16 Kawartha Lakes; 18 Durham; 19 York; 20 Toronto; 21 Peel; 22 Dufferin; 23 Wellington; 24 Halton; 25 Hamilton; 26 Niagara; 28 Haldimand-Norfolk; 29 Brant; 30 Waterloo; 31 Perth; 32 Oxford; 34 Elgin; 36 Chatham-Kent; 37 Essex; 38 Lambton; 39 Middlesex; 40 Huron; 41 Bruce; 42 Grey; 43 Simcoe; 46 Haliburton; and 47 Renfrew.
- *Applicants* who have received over \$500,000 of funding from OCI administered programs in their lifetime (excluding TalentEdge) are required to obtain OCI approval before a new application for funding is initiated. Your Business Development Manager can guide you through the process.

Partners

Partners are organizations directly contributing **matching leverage** to the project.

- *Partners* may participate in multiple concurrent projects.
- For *partners* providing matching contributions, they become co-signatories to the Funding Agreement

Partners may be:

- Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)
- National and Multi-National Enterprises (NEs and MNEs)
- Not-For-Profit Organizations (such as industry associations and Not-For-Profit Organizations with non-public sources of funding)

Project

- Minimum 1:1 contribution match by *Applicants and/or private sector partner*, if applicable.
- Projects can be up to 12 months in duration.
- *Applicant* and any *Partners* must have an arm's-length business relationship.
- Project activities are carried out in Southern Ontario.
- This program is not intended for research or basic technology research. Projects may vary in scope, spanning from commercial-ready and commercially available technologies primed for operational environment demonstrations (Technology Readiness [Levels 7-9](#)). Projects may be focused with specific short-to medium-term objectives, or discrete phases in a longer-range program. However, in all cases, projects should highlight how it benefits and enhances urban or cross-border mobility solutions.
- Intellectual Property (IP) arising from a project will be managed by the *Applicant* as OCI does not claim or manage IP rights.

Applicant and any applicable *Partners* should demonstrate close collaboration and scalable outcomes with high potential for commercialization, strong commercial pull, competitive advantage, and alignment with intended program benefits.

How To Apply

Reference Documents

The OCI Funding Agreement, the Eligible Expenditures Guide, the Application Questionnaire, and the Data and Information Sharing Protocol (DISP) documents are available for your perusal here:

[Resource Documents - OVIN - Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network \(ovinhub.ca\)](#)

Application Process

Applications to the OVIN Technology Pilot Zones - are accepted during two intake rounds. Application dates are posted on [ovinhub.ca](#).

The OVIN Technology Pilot Zones require a full application. They can be developed and submitted using OCI's AccessOCI web portal.

1. To begin the Full Application submission process, please complete a client intake form ([Resource Documents - OVIN - Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network \(ovinhub.ca\)](#)) or reach out to the Business Development Manager if already connected with one.

Please note: Completion of this form does not constitute an application for funding.

An OCI Business Development Manager (BDM) will contact you to discuss the opportunity and assist you with developing your proposal.

2. Applicants submit their Full Application for internal and external review.
3. Your BDM must endorse your application for eligibility and suitability prior to submission.
4. External reviewers score your application. Applications which meet a minimum scoring threshold are recommended for funding recommendation to OCI's Internal Review Panel (IRP).
5. IRP, comprised of senior OCI staff, makes the final decision.
6. Successful Applicants will be notified by OCI and provided an outline of conditions and additional information necessary to activate the project.
7. Applicants who are not selected will be notified by OCI. Feedback on the decision can be provided by their BDM.

Applicants should start negotiations with any applicable partners regarding intellectual property (IP), preferably before submission of the application.

Assessment Process and Criteria

The OVIN Technology Pilot Zones is a discretionary, non-entitlement program with limited funding. OCI will fund qualified projects with potential for the greatest economic benefits and contribution to transportation and mobility advancements in Ontario. Not all eligible applications can be funded.

All eligible applications are assessed on their merit and reviewed against program objectives and evaluation criteria.

Full Applications are internally reviewed for eligibility, completeness, and financial compliance, prior to evaluation by our independent external reviewers with domain and sector expertise. All reviewers are bound by Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs). The final funding decision is made by OCI.

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation criteria include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Clarity of the proposed solution, significance of the market opportunity, expected economic benefit to the companies and Ontario (e.g., new revenues, job creation/retention, productivity improvements) and potential benefit/contribution to Ontario's urban and cross-border transportation ecosystem (e.g., infrastructure, systems, and vehicles)
- Technical merit, novelty, and ability of the innovation to address challenges and market opportunities
- Expertise and experience of the team members, clarity of roles and responsibilities, and evidence

of collaboration.

- Potential impact and outcomes to the automotive and smart mobility sector, social, environmental, and/or other benefits (i.e., leading to globally competitive business and market opportunities).
- Clarity, feasibility and appropriateness of the project plan and budget, and how the Technology Pilot Zone(s) will be leveraged.
- A clear strategy and capacity to bring the results to market and/or implement proposed solutions.
- Overall quality and completeness of the application.

Project Activation, Funds and Project Reporting

Project Activation

- The *Applicant* must execute the OCI Funding Agreement, within 30 days of the announcement of award.
- The executable agreement with schedules specific to the approved proposal will be generated through our online management system and sent to all contracting parties.

Flow of Funds

- OCI funds flow only to the *Applicant*. The *Applicant* is responsible to reimburse *Partners*, if applicable.
- Reimbursements are triggered by the submission and approval of claims and reports.
- Reimbursement claims from the *Applicant* to OCI are made when submitting interim and final reports and paid following approval.
- An advance payment of up to 10 per cent, at the sole discretion of OCI, is released upon activation of the project.
- 10 per cent hold-back remitted upon submitted and approved final report.
- Payments are based on the total OVIN award project value.

Project Reporting

A major component of OVIN is the generation and analysis of data and information to support Ontario's automotive and mobility ecosystem (e.g., governments, broader public-sector organizations, industry, post-secondary institutions, transportation authorities, etc.).

OCI will not be collecting, analyzing, or otherwise handling and disseminating data and information considered by applicants to be proprietary, commercially sensitive, or publicly sensitive. OCI will work with applicants to ensure that the collection of information reflects specific project design or business needs and supports their interests.

Reporting instructions and templates will be sent to successful parties at the time of reporting. Reports must be received and approved by OCI prior to release of funds for eligible claims.

Notes:

- Applicants **MUST** retain all proof of purchase, receipts, and other relevant documentation relating to eligible expenses.
- Completion of all required reports is a contractual obligation to receive funding from OCI.

The following project reports will be required:

Interim Progress Report(s)

Reports, including progress, project metrics, data and information requirements, proof of expenditures and partnership contributions, financial attestation, and a request for reimbursement must be submitted by the *Applicant*. The reports are due no later than 30 days following the end of the quarter.

The Report form is accessed directly on the AccessOCI system from the Report Tab.

Final Report

A final report, including progress, project metrics, data, and information requirements, claim form, proof of expenditures and partnership contributions, financial attestation, and a request for reimbursement is required at the end of the project. Forty-five (45) days prior to the scheduled completion date, the *Applicant* and all contributing *Partners*, if applicable, will receive an email notification of the project end date from the AccessOCI system, with a link to the Final Report should the parties wish to begin entering data.

- *Applicants* can request early reporting by emailing the Program Manager.
- On the scheduled project completion date, the *Applicant* will receive another notification and a link to complete the Final Report from OCI's AccessOCI system.
- *Applicants* must submit their Final Report within 30 days of project completion to be reimbursed for eligible expenses and maintain good financial standing with OCI.

Project Metrics

If a project crosses an OCI fiscal year end (March 31), the *Applicant* will be required to complete an annual metrics survey each April, for the part of the project that has been completed since the previous March 31. This annual report is mandatory for OCI to fulfil its contract with FedDev Ontario. Required metrics reports must be submitted to maintain good financial standing with OCI.

Retrospective Survey

At one, two and three years after project completion, the *Applicant* will be sent a link to complete a retrospective survey to collect data on commercial outcomes from the project. This information is required by OCI for assessment of program impact and continuous improvement.

Project Changes

If required, *Applicants* **MUST** request project extensions, milestone variances, and/or variances to the OVIN budget exceeding 10% of any budget category value, using the Project Change Request form in the Project Administration tab in their AccessOCI project file. Such requests must be made at the earliest possible opportunity and approved before any planned changes are implemented.

Applicants are encouraged to reach out to their business development manager for further guidance on project change requests.

NOTE: At project completion, recipients are required to demonstrate their product and/or service developed and piloted or advanced through FedDev Ontario's support. Please note that any public communications about the project, OVIN, or FedDev Ontario funding will require review and approval from OCI prior to release. Sharing information and achievements through showcase events and media communications is encouraged and will be supported.

Contacts

For inquiries related to application initiation, submit a client intake form ([Resource Documents - OVIN - Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network \(ovinhub.ca\)](#)).