

# OVIN Incubators – New Venture Creation

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## Program Information and Eligibility Requirements

### Overview and Benefits

The OVIN Incubators New Venture Creation Program is intended to facilitate the conversation of leading Ontario academic research into promising new ventures that deliver in-demand solutions to the challenges of the automobility sector and to support technology development from conception to prototype along the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) scale as an initial step in attracting interest from potential customers in the automotive and mobility sector.

The program contributes up to one-half of eligible project costs for approved projects up to a maximum of \$50,000, with the remainder contributed by Applicants. Project funding can be used towards the development and demonstration of automotive and mobility technologies.

Please note that any public communications about the project, OVIN, or 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.

**NOTE:** OVIN does not preclude the testing and/or demonstration of automotive and mobility technologies anywhere in Ontario, subject to Ministry of Transportation’s (MTO’s) Pilot Project ([O. Reg. 306/15, under Highway Traffic Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.8](#)) and all other applicable laws and regulations.

| Benefits to applicants   | Benefits to society  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercialization of Ontario-made technologies</li> <li>• Demonstration of Ontario-made technologies for potential customers</li> <li>• Marketable solutions to current challenges</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovative new products and services to improve driver performance</li> <li>• Reduced environmental and carbon footprint</li> </ul> |

## How Funding Works

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>OVIN Contribution</b>    | <b>Reimbursement</b> of one-half (maximum) of total project eligible costs, up to \$50,000   |
| <b>Matching Requirement</b> | One-half (minimum) of total eligible project costs (i.e., minimum 1:1 match to OVIN contribution) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Contribution match MUST be in the form of private sector contributions, and be unencumbered from other government grant sources</i></li> </ul> |
| <b>Example</b>              | Total eligible project costs: \$80,000 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximum OCI contribution = \$40,000</li> <li>Minimum Private Sector contribution = \$40,000</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Funding Recipient</b>    | OVIN funds flow only to the Applicant.   |

- Refer to the Eligible Expenditures Guide ([Resource Documents - OVIN - Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network \(ovinhub.ca\)](#)) for full details.
- All project activities must be performed within 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.
- Applicants will be required to disclose all sources of funding being applied for and/or received for the project.

## Eligibility Requirements

### Applicant

- An Applicant may be a researcher(s) from an Ontario Post-Secondary Institution at the time the application is submitted, however, the recipient of OCI must be an incorporated Ontario-based small- and medium- sized enterprise (SME):
  - Incorporated: active corporation with a Business Number issued by the Canada Revenue Agency.
  - Ontario-based: registered operations (R&D, manufacturing, product management, etc.) in Ontario.
  - SME: fewer than 500 global full-time employees.
- May be an *Applicant* on only one New Venture Creation project at a time.
- The *Applicant* is a co-signatory to the Funding Agreement.

### Project

- One *Applicant*.
- Project activities are carried out in Ontario.
- Minimum 1:1 contribution match by *Applicant*.
- Projects duration can be between 4 and 10 months.
- This program is intended to support technology development from conception to prototype (i.e., moving from [Technology Readiness Level 2](#) at the start of the project to [Technology Readiness Level 4](#) or higher at the end of the project)
- Typical project activities include proof-of-concept, technology development, and demonstration.
- Intellectual Property (IP) arising from a project will be managed by project *Applicant* as OCI does not claim or manage IP rights.
- At the conclusion of each project, a demonstration event will occur through which the Applicant will present project outcomes to OCI staff.

## How to Apply

### Reference Documents

The OCI Funding Agreement, the Eligible Expenditures Guide, the Full Proposal 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 Incubators New Venture Creation Program are accepted on a rolling intake basis – there are no deadlines while the program is open.

1. To begin the Full Application submission process, please complete a [client intake form](#):
  - **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.

### Assessment Process and Criteria

The OVIN Incubators New Venture Creation Program 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 advancements to 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 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 challenges, 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 transportation ecosystem (e.g., infrastructure, systems, and vehicles).
- Technical merits, novelty, and ability of the innovation to address challenges and market opportunities.
- Expertise and experience of the team members, clarity of roles and responsibilities.
- 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.
- Overall quality and completeness of the application.

## Project Activation, Funds and 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

- Upon activation, OCI will release a payment equal to 75 per cent of the OCI award. The remaining 25 per cent of the OCI award will be held back until project completion. For example:

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>OCI award amount</b>  | \$40,000 |
| <b>Applicant/private sector industry partner contributions</b> | \$40,000 |
| <b>Funds released upon project activation</b>                  | \$30,000 |
| <b>Holdback</b>  | \$10,000 |

- OCI will not release any funds until the project is activated and will not be held responsible for any expenses incurred for the project prior to the project Committee Decision Date stated in the project award notification issued by OCI. If for any reason the requirements for activation are not met within fifteen (15) days from the date of release of the approval notification, the funding offer may be retracted.
- The holdback will be released upon project completion and receipt of the following: applicant final progress and financial reports, completion of demonstration event with OCI.

## 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. Please refer to [DISP](#) for details.**

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. Please note that applicants must retain all proof of purchases, 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:

### 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* 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 and all contributing Partners will receive another notification and a link to complete the Final Report from OCI's AccessOCI system.
- Applicants and contributing Partners 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 its funders. 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 its AccessOCI project file. Such requests must be made at the earliest possible opportunity and approved before the planned changes are implemented. Applicants are encouraged to reach out to their BDM for further guidance on project change requests.