



Background

The Circular Opportunity Innovation Launchpad (COIL) Activate Circular Accelerator supports business scale-up activities that are informed by circular economy knowledge and practices. As the largest circular accelerator in Canada, the program offers mentorship, education, national and international scaling connections, and funding to fuel circular innovation across Southern Ontario.

This program is made possible through funding from the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, which was awarded to the City of Guelph in early 2021. COIL Activate builds upon the City of Guelph and County of Wellington's success in cultivating a dynamic regional circular food economy. The program is delivered through Innovation Guelph and funding is administered by 10C. As a regional hub with international reach, Innovation Guelph supports business growth through access to funding, mentorship, and training. Since 2011, we have supported over 1200 businesses, including over 50 scale-up companies each year. 10C is leading the development of Harvest Impact, a social finance fund investing in circular economy initiatives.

COIL Activate businesses will benefit from access to world-class circular economy training that is specially crafted to unlock each business' potential to reduce waste and reach new markets. It is designed to accelerate the growth of scalable businesses that have what it takes to change the world through circular business practices.

Program Overview

In its first cohort,¹ the COIL Activate Circular Accelerator will support the scaling activities of 10 businesses through:

- A non-repayable grant of \$20,000
- A 16-week educational program focused on business scaling (approx. \$7000 value)
- Up to 24 hours of targeted support and expertise from business leaders and an additional 8 hours of support through a 4-month alumni program (\$3200 value)
- An optional loan of up to \$10,000 (offered for a 2-year term at 0% interest)

Program Dates

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|---------------------------------|--|
| Applications open | February 7, 2022 |
| Program information sessions | February 16, 2022 – 1:00 – 2:00 pm March 2, 2022 – 10:00 – 11:00 am |
| Applications close | March 11, 2022 |
| Successful applicants announced | April 1, 2022 |
| Program runs | April 4 – July 29, 2022 |

¹ Additional cohorts to be announced. Please check the website for program updates.



Application Process

Step 1: Call for Applications

An open call for applications will be posted on the COIL [website](#) and shared through the social media accounts of COIL partners, including Innovation Guelph, 10C, LaunchIt Minto, Business Centre Guelph-Wellington, Guelph Chamber of Commerce, and the John F. Wood Centre.

Step 2: Completing your application

Applicants are responsible for completing and submitting the online application through our [application portal](#). The application form will request information about:

- How your business meets the program's eligibility criteria
- General information about your business
- Business growth and scaling goals
- Knowledge and experience related to circular practices
- How you would use the funds provided through this program

If you have questions about the application, please contact ceihub@innovationguelph.ca.

Step 3: Evaluation by Selection Committee

Once the open call has closed, applications will be evaluated by the Innovation Guelph CE iHub team and a selection committee. The selection committee will be comprised of representatives from COIL partner organizations and experts from outside of the ecosystem.

The selection committee will evaluate all applications based on the following eligibility and selection criteria. Selected applicants will then be informed of their award and will be onboarded into the program.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for this program, businesses must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- One or two members of the business' leadership team is available to participate in the program between April and July 2022.
- The business operates within the Canadian food system, or at the intersection of the food and environment sectors.
- The business is registered within a Canadian jurisdiction and operational within southern Ontario.²

² For the purposes of this program, southern Ontario includes any regions within the area from Windsor to Ottawa.



- The business generated a minimum of \$200,000 in annual revenue, which can be demonstrated through a Canadian tax return.
- The applicant has read and agreed to the Innovation Guelph Client Services Agreement (available through the online application).

Selection Criteria

To be selected for this program, businesses must meet the following criteria:

- Applicant has completed the application in full.
- Eligibility criteria have been met.
- The application provides enough information to address applicable evaluation criteria, including:
 - Intended use of funds is clear and consistent with a realistic strategy to achieve the business' scaling goals; and
 - The application meets various evaluation criteria related to business model, marketing/sales/customer success and team expertise.
- Applicant has acknowledged that funds will not be used for ineligible costs, as identified below.
- Applicant has acknowledged their agreement with all other terms and conditions of the program.

Ineligible Costs³

- Costs of land, building or vehicle purchase
- Refinancing
- Losses of investments, bad debts and any other debts
- Fines or penalties
- Costs related to litigation
- Fees for administrators, including payments to any member or officer of the recipient's Board of Directors
- Food, accommodation and entertainment costs
- Costs of membership in a professional body
- Lobbyist fees
- Cost of conference or tradeshow admission if not exhibiting or presenting
- Costs associated with basic research and development activities
- Sales Tax/HST
- Costs of intangible assets such as goodwill, whether capitalized or expensed
- Depreciation or amortization expenses
- Opportunity costs

³ Recipient's records may be subject to review and audit to confirm that funds have not been used for ineligible costs.



Activate
Circular Accelerator

Step 4: Award Recipient Agreement Process

Applicants will be notified as funding decisions are reached. Successful applicants (“recipients”) must:

- Enter into a Contribution Agreement with 10C’s Harvest Impact program governing the distribution of funds.
- Register as an Innovation Guelph CE iHub client.
- Engage with the CE iHub team who will assign a mentor based on the recipient’s need for specific expertise. Note: working with assigned mentors is a requirement of the program.

The grant will be distributed as outlined below:

- 50% (\$10,000) once an initial diagnostic and work plan has been completed by the recipient and by their assigned Innovation Guelph mentor.
- 50% (\$10,000) once planned activities are 50% complete as assessed by the mentor and approved by the Innovation Guelph mentor and CE iHub Program Manager.

Additional Requirements

As a condition of receiving funds and support, recipients agree to:

- Complete surveys at the end of the program period and periodically thereafter to report on the impact of the funds and support received through the program.
- Participate in program-related communications including allowing the use of their name, photograph, facilities, and video content (as applicable).
- Acknowledge COIL, Innovation Guelph, Harvest Impact by 10C, and FedDev Ontario in any public announcements or other communications about the fund.