Innovation Saskatchewan

# Made In Saskatchewan Technology Program

## MIST

**PROGRAM GUIDE**

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# Program Overview

Innovation Saskatchewan's (IS) Made In Saskatchewan Technology (MIST) program fosters partnerships for pilot projects between Saskatchewan tech startups and public sector entities. These entities include the Government of Saskatchewan, its Ministries, Agencies, Crown corporations, Saskatchewan public sector organizations, as well as Saskatchewan non-profit organizations, community-based organizations, and municipalities. The program aims to encourage innovative solutions to public sector challenges and to promote growth within the province's technology sector.

Innovation Saskatchewan provides tech startups with non-repayable funding via the MIST program. To qualify for the grant, startups must obtain MIST approval. Applications are accepted year-round, with the approval of eligible startups occurring quarterly.

## Program Objectives

1. Advance the public sector's commitment to excellence and innovation by piloting technologies to enhance service delivery.
2. Address challenges that eligible pilot partners encounter by developing and deploying innovative technological solutions.
3. Stimulate the expansion and development of the technology sector in Saskatchewan through strategic collaborations with early-stage tech startups.

# Eligibility

## Startups

Eligible tech startups must meet the following criteria to be considered for participation in the program:

1. Be based in Saskatchewan, as defined by meeting the following criteria:
   - Has a Saskatchewan head office address;
   - Registered to carry business in the province; and,
   - At least 50% of its employees reside in the province.
2. Has fewer than 50 employees, including full-time, part-time, and contract workers.
3. Reported annual recurring revenue of under $1M in the latest year-end financial statements.
4. Has a novel technology that is ready to implement or is close to commercialization (at least Technology Readiness Level 6).
5. Has reasonable capacity to work with an enterprise-level customer (i.e. government).

## Project Partners

Eligible project partners include the Government of Saskatchewan, its Ministries, Agencies, Crown corporations, Saskatchewan public sector organizations, as well as Saskatchewan non-profit organizations, community-based organizations, and municipalities.

**For further clarification on eligibility, please contact the program manager.**

# Funding Structure

Startups approved for the MIST program can receive a lifetime maximum of $30,000 to support pilot projects. The MIST grant must be matched 1:1 by the eligible project partner.

## Examples

| Scenario | Total Project Contribution | Project Partner Provides | MIST Provides |
|---|---|---|---|
| Startup pilots its technology with one project partner | $60,000 | $30,000 cash | $30,000 cash |
| Startup pilots its technology with two project partners | $60,000 | Project Partner A: $15,000 cash<br><br>Project Partner B: $15,000 cash | $30,000 cash |
| Startup pilots its technology with one project partner for less than $30,000 | $10,000 | $5,000 cash | $5,000 cash |

The startup must have an executed contract or statement of work with the identified project partner(s) before a MIST grant can be issued. The contract or statement of work should detail the total pilot project cost/ contribution, including a breakdown of the funding structure, which will be shared equally between MIST and the project partner(s).

Prospective startups who have not already been engaging with potential project partners are advised to contact the MIST program manager for pathfinding support.

There is no limit on the number of grants a company can receive from the program to support pilot projects, provided that the lifetime amount does not exceed $30,000.

# In-Kind Contribution

In-kind aims to recognize and qualify non-monetary contributions from project partners to receive matching funds from the MIST program. This matching mechanism maximizes available resources and enhances the impact of supported projects. These contributions may take various forms, including equipment, expertise, facilities, or other resources crucial for project success.

By aligning financial support with in-kind contributions, the program incentivizes partnerships and promotes efficient resource utilization.

## Evaluation

In-kind contributions will only be considered for matching under funding when the project partner has committed a monetary contribution to the project. There is no specified minimum or maximum amount required, but a monetary contribution must be evident to qualify the in-kind contributions for matching.

In-kind contributions must comply with the project cost eligibility detailed in the MIST program guidelines. The evaluation of in-kind contributions follows a transparent and standardized process. Parameters are assessed based on the nature, value, and relevance of the contribution in relation to project objectives. This ensures fairness and accountability in the allocation of matching funds.

The provision of in-kind contribution is contingent on its necessity for the continuity or expansion of the pilot project, provided that a clear path for the utilization of the funds is outlined.

# Stacking Policy

Startups are not allowed to use MIST grants to supplement project funding from other IS grant programs, such as the Saskatchewan Advantage Innovation Fund (SAIF). MIST alumni startups who have exhausted its $30,000 lifetime cap are free to apply for other IS grant programs.

Conversely, startups who have benefited from other IS grant and incentive programs in the past are eligible for MIST grants, provided they meet the eligibility criteria.

# Project Costs

## Eligible Pilot Project Costs

Funding from MIST can only be used towards work items identified in the contract or statement of work between the startup and the project partner. These items may include:

- Consumables;
- Startup salaries for R&D and technical personnel;
- Contracted professional technical services or expertise (i.e. third-party software developer);
- Costs related to intellectual property (IP) protection, technology transfer, commercialization; and
- Travel and accommodation for project purposes.

Startups are responsible for tracking and accounting expenditures related to the project in the event IS conducts an audit on the approved MIST grant.

## Ineligible Pilot Project Costs

IS reserves full discretion to declare expenditures ineligible. Ineligible costs include, but are not limited to:

- Capital expenditures (i.e. equipment);
- Land/building purchases;
- Non-R&D/technical project partner salaries;
- Billable hours of project partner's staff or affiliated consultants;
- Professional/association membership fees and dues;
- Business development; and
- Hospitality and entertainment.

# MIST Multi-Startup Collaboration

MIST allows for more than one startup to collaborate on a pilot project. This aims to enhance capacity through collaboration, leverage diverse expertise, and promote collaborative innovation within the provincial technology start-up ecosystem.

Under this policy, more than one startup can jointly lead proposing, executing, and delivering MIST-funded projects with public organizations. It's the full responsibility of the startups involved to define their respective roles and contributions based on their expertise and capabilities.

## Eligibility

Each eligible startup participating in a pilot project is subject to all guidelines outlined in this document (approvals, stacking policy, funding cap $30,000, in-kind policy, etc.).

# Application Process

Startups that meet the program's Eligibility Criteria are welcome to apply at any time by filling out the application form.

Once IS receives an application, an internal assessment is conducted to ensure that the company meets the program's *Eligibility Criteria*. During this process, the program manager may reach out to the company to request additional information if necessary.

If the company passes the internal assessment, the application will be forwarded to an independent advisory committee to assess the following:

1. **Innovation:** Demonstrate how the technology being developed is novel and innovative. Differentiate the technology from existing solutions available in the market to the public sector.

2. **Value Proposition/Relevance:** Demonstrate how the technology being developed is relevant to a potential project partner. Highlight a target project partner that the technology could be valuable for. Explain how the technology can be implemented to address public sector challenges.

3. **Technology Readiness:** Describe the technology's readiness level. MIST requires the technology to be at least TRL 6. Startups are encouraged to refer to Technology Readiness Levels as defined by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. Discuss any testing and validation that has been conducted on the technology to date.

4. **Team Capacity and Enterprise Readiness:** Describe your capacity to execute on the proposed pilot project. Provide a list of personnel that will be involved in the project along with brief biographies. Describe the company and technology's readiness to work with an enterprise-level client.

5. **Current Level of Engagement with Clients and Partners:** Describe your current level of engagement with your existing business.

IS makes the final determination on applications based on the results of the advisory committee reviews and their recommendations

# MIST Application Review Periods

Applications are accepted year-round, with the selection of eligible startups occurring quarterly. To be considered for MIST approval, prospective startups must apply, via the application link, before the deadline to be considered for review with the external MIST Advisory Committee.

Below are important dates for each review period in the IS fiscal year:

**Intake Period 1**

| | |
|---|---|
| April 30 | Deadline for Q1 MIST applications |
| May 15* | MIST Advisory Committee Review Meeting |
| May 31 | Q1 MIST target for application responses |

**Intake Period 2**

| | |
|---|---|
| July 31 | Deadline for Q2 MIST applications |
| August 15* | MIST Advisory Committee Review Meeting |
| August 31 | Q2 MIST target for application responses |

**Intake Period 3**

| | |
|---|---|
| October 31 | Deadline for Q3 MIST applications |
| November 15* | MIST Advisory Committee Review Meeting |
| November 30 | Q3 MIST target for application responses |

**Intake Period 4**

| | |
|---|---|
| January 31 | Deadline for Q4 MIST applications |
| February 15* | MIST Advisory Committee Review Meeting |
| February 28 | Q4 MIST target for application responses |

** MIST Advisory Committee Review Meetings will occur on or before this date*

# Pilot Project Contracting Process

Once the startup has received approval to participate in the MIST program, it is eligible to receive MIST grants to support pilot project with an eligible partner.

If the startup has already identified a pilot project with an eligible partner, it can submit the contract or statement of work to IS for matching funds from the program.

Once IS receives proof that a pilot project is agreed upon between the startup and project partner(s) via a signed contract or statement of work, IS will issue a separate funding agreement between the startup and IS. MIST grant funding is disbursed after the IS funding agreement has been signed and an invoice has been issued.

If the startup has yet to identify a pilot project and/or potential partner, IS can provide support with pathfinding, project readiness, connections. Once introductions have been made to potential partner(s), the startup is solely responsible for collaborating with partners in setting up meetings, follow-ups, contract/statement of work, etc.

To ensure safety, accountability and integrity in public service delivery, all partner organizations and personnel involved in MIST pilots that engage with vulnerable populations must provide a criminal record/vulnerable sector check and may undergo due diligence assessment, including:

- **Legal and Corporate Status:** Verification of corporate registration, financial and operational capacity, and be deemed in overall good standing to carry the activities outlines in their proposed scope of work.

# Important Information

## Intellectual Property

IS will not assume ownership of any IP that results from funded pilot projects. If necessary, the startup is responsible for entering into an IP agreement with the project partner.

The startup is responsible for ensuring it has the freedom to operate. IS will not assume any costs or damages related to potential IP disputes with a third party. IS retains the right to terminate funding if a project becomes stalled due to IP issues.

## Confidentiality

IS will not release personal, technical, and/or financial details of a project to any party without explicit consent from the company. Funding contract details will remain confidential between IS, the startup, and project partner(s). Information may be shared between IS and the project partner(s). Consultants contracted by IS to evaluate applications are bound by non-disclosure agreements.

## Media Releases

From time to time, IS will make public media releases on funding decisions and projects. The startup will be notified and consulted with prior to any releases being made. IS will not disseminate any personal or commercially sensitive information referenced in “Confidentiality” without explicit consent from the company.

## Reporting Requirements

The startup will be required to submit final report at the end of the pilot project. A final report template will be provided to the startup, which clarifies information expected to be included in the report.

The startup is obligated under the funding contract to report on specific metrics for up to one year after the project funding period has expired. The program manager will reach out to the startup for these metrics on an annual basis.


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