

## Introduction

IMI's *Operationalizing Innovations Program* is designed to support projects, with the aim of technology development and demonstration - putting them on the path to commercialization. The objective is to see a solution developed, demonstrated and available for adoption and use by the minerals industry.

The development and demonstration work associated with this program is ideally undertaken by research organizations with a mandate for technology development, or by supply chain partners who share IMI's commitment to innovation.

*Operationalizing Innovations* projects typically take less than a year, but may take up to two years. They may look at validating or demonstrating key technology components in a significant operations environment, or solving an advanced issue through technology, ensuring that it can be broken down into practical applications for the minerals industry.

## Areas of Focus

The focus is on optimizing existing operations with innovative product or process improvements.

## Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for the *Operationalizing Innovations Program*, a project must meet the following criteria:

- At least two IMI member companies involved in the project;
- At least one IMI member research organization; or
- At least one Saskatchewan-based OEM or SME as developer.

IMI member company involvement needs to be confirmable, and may take the form of a letter of support or intent, memoranda of understanding, agreement, or other demonstration of support (such as the companies proposing the project to IMI).

## Project Funding

Funding recipients are research organizations and/or supply chain companies with research and development capabilities. Distribution companies are not eligible.

Priority will be given to projects lasting up to one year, though projects up to two years in length may be considered. Approved projects will be considered for:

- Up to \$100,000 for new product research and development; leading edge design, engineering and prototype development; and/or advanced product testing and refinement; and
- Up to \$250,000 for technology optimization critical for market acceptance; manufacturing of a prototype for demonstration; testing of a prototype in an operational environment; and/or results assessment/verification of technical data.

## Funding Allocation

It is expected that Applicants (research organizations, OEMs, and SMEs) would have to at least match the IMI's contribution either with cash or acceptable in-kind commitments, and have IMI member company participation (financially and/or in-kind).

It is also expected that *Operationalizing Innovation Program* projects will consider funding from government entities external to the minerals industry. Funding by IMI will be in consideration with the requirements of other potential funding partners. These include:



- Innovation Saskatchewan – Saskatchewan Advantage Innovation Fund;
- National Research Council – Industrial Research Assistance Program (which provides financial support to qualified small and medium-sized enterprises in Canada to help them undertake technology innovation); and
- Sustainable Development Technology Canada – SD Tech Fund (designed to support the development and pre-commercial demonstration of cleantech solutions with respect to climate change, air quality, clean water and clean soil).

## External Agency Funding

Upon approval of the project by IMII's Board of Directors, the Applicants have two months to submit the application to external funding agencies should the project be eligible for a grant. If an application is not made, IMII may withhold future payments or not consider future applications from the team.

## Intellectual Property

IMII will work with Applicants to protect intellectual property (IP) throughout the application process.

For approved *Operationalizing Innovation Program* projects, IMII prepares a technology development funding agreement which includes provisions for managing and protecting intellectual property (IP), is supportive of moving innovations down the path of commercialization, and ensures that it's signed by every project partner within two months of receiving approval. Negotiation of clauses on IP are at the discretion of the partners.