



**General Guidelines for
2014-2015
*Product Differentiation
Call for Proposals***

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1.0 Guidelines

1.1 Purpose

The targeted Product Differentiation Call for Proposals is focused on creating and capturing opportunities to differentiate Alberta's livestock and meat products. This will strengthen Alberta's competitiveness by enhancing quality, safety, value based attributes and activities that create better products. The scope extends to projects that advance certification, verification, audit and traceability capacity.

The Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency (ALMA) will invest \$2.0 million to support innovation in areas that support the differentiation of Alberta's livestock and meat products and allow the supply chain to deliver authenticity and integrity to consumers.

1.2 ALMA's Investment Priority

ALMA is a catalyst for stimulating new thinking, new ideas and new approaches to enhance the reputation, competitiveness and profitability of Alberta's livestock and meat industry, and to build relationships among the various stakeholders in the industry. Submissions to the Product Differentiation call for proposals should target creating new and innovative means for Alberta's businesses to market products as superior to alternatives.

1.3 Background

Consumers within Canada and abroad are increasingly focused on understanding where their food comes from, as well as its nutritional value, quality, safety or uniqueness. It is difficult for Alberta's business to compete in a commodity-based industry because of cost structure and low cost global competition. It is important that Alberta's industry has access to innovation that allows them to meet the specific needs of its customers and end-consumers, both domestically and internationally.

Several research reports were consulted to provide direction to the Product Differentiation call and to ensure alignment with the needs of Alberta's livestock and meat industry. These include:

- [Canadian Consumer Retail Meat Study](#); ALMA (2012)
- [National Beef Quality Audit](#); Canadian Cattlemen's Association (2010/11)
- [Power of Meat](#); Food Marketing Institute (2014)
- [Five Game-Changing Consumer Trends](#); Business Development Bank of Canada (2013)
- [The Canadian Consumer: Behaviour, Attitudes and Perceptions Toward Food Products](#); Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (2010)

1.4 Objectives

The objective of the 2014-2015 Product Differentiation Call for Proposals is to support the development and application of differentiated livestock and meat products through the use of new technologies, tools, conceptual research (including proof-of-concept), applied research and pilot studies within an industry facility, a public institution, and/or a combination of the two.

This call for proposals is designed to:

- Accelerate research that will lead to the introduction of new, innovative and competitive traits and attributes to differentiate Alberta's meat and livestock products.
- Support innovation that results in the delivery of a unique and targeted Alberta advantage.

Key long-term outcomes for this program are improved competitiveness, profitability and preference for Alberta's livestock and meat industry. Examples may include:

- enhanced tenderness and eating experience,
- enhanced capacity to measure attributes in real-time
- reduction of sodium in processed meat products

For more information, please view the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency's business plan found on the ALMA website (alma.alberta.ca) or contact the ALMA Program Manager.

1.5 In-Scope

The targeted call for proposals gives priority to projects that deliver:

1. Products or technologies that differentiate Alberta products based on:
 - a. Quality attributes
 - b. Safety attributes
 - c. Value-based attributes
 - d. Nutritional attributes
2. Capacity for audit, verification and traceability: New technologies and capacity for information flow, management and data collection
3. Innovative product development on form, function or targeting of end products
 - a. Enhanced and novel packaging technologies
 - b. Enhanced shelf-life and storage
 - c. Innovative product formulations

1.6 Out of Scope

- Scale-up of new technologies beyond pilot studies
- Marketing activities
- Commercialization activities
- Research into consumer demand and preferences

1.7 Requirements for Product Differentiation proposals

1. Demonstration of creation of opportunity for Alberta's industry as it responds to changing consumer preferences and expectations.
2. Demonstration of collaboration:
 - a. Preference will be given to projects demonstrating collaboration across departments and/or institutions at a provincial, national or international level (if appropriate).
 - b. Letters of support must be attached to the proposal to indicate that the project has secured industry support (cash and/or in-kind).
3. Description of the economic impact of the project, such as:
 - a. Alignment to consumer preferences
 - b. Return on investment
 - c. Market potential
4. A well-developed technology transfer plan through scientific communication and/or appropriate extension/industry activities.

1.8 Process and Timelines

1. Grants can be up to 3 years in duration, and should commence (start date) by March 1st, 2015.
2. Information on preparation and submission of Letters of Intent (LOI) can be found on the ALMA website at www.alma.alberta.ca/Programs/index.htm. Each LOI must be submitted through the on-line system, which can be found at www.fundingconsortium.gov.ab.ca/ALMA/Account. Only successful LOIs will be invited to submit a full proposal.
3. Applicants may request funding for one of two tiers or types of projects. **Tier I** will be for smaller, innovative proof-of-concept ideas. The funding request for Tier I proposals will be capped at \$150,000 over a maximum of 2 years. **Tier II** funding requests will be capped at \$500,000 over a maximum of 3 years for larger, multidisciplinary projects. Increases in the full proposal budget from the LOI budget will not be considered unless accompanied by adequate justification or requested by ALMA.

4. Timeframe:
- a. June 12, 2014: Call for Proposals announced.
 - b. August 14, 2014, 2:00 pm: LOIs Due. Late submissions will not be accepted.
 - c. August 20, 2014: Applicants with successful LOIs will be notified.
 - d. October 1, 2014, 2:00 pm: Full Proposals Due. Late submissions will not be accepted.
 - e. December 1, 2014: All applicants notified on or before of funding decisions.

2.0 Guidelines for Submission

2.1 Format and Forms

The guidelines and instructions for using the on-line application system can be found on ALMA's website at alma.alberta.ca/Programs/index.htm. This site also includes templates to be used in preparation of creation of an LOI. Once the LOI portion of the process is complete, the full proposal form will be made available only to successful applicants invited to submit a full proposal.

The on-line system can be found at www.fundingconsortium.gov.ab.ca/ALMA/Account.

2.2 Eligibility

Eligibility will be based on eligibility requirements for ALMA's Research and Development Program or ALMA's Industry and Market Development Program, which can be found at: alma.alberta.ca/Programs/index.htm.

In addition to the Eligibility requirements above, there will be a cap on the funding requested for training of students. The maximum amount requested to ALMA for an MSc student will be \$21,000/year and \$25,000/year for a PhD student. Please note that indirect overhead costs and GST are not an eligible expense.

Additional eligibility criteria along with the submission of the full proposal for not-for-profit organizations will be the provision of a document outlining the organization's governance structure.

2.3 Funding Sources

Applicants are encouraged to obtain other sources of financial support for the project from stakeholders that are likely to benefit from the results of the proposed research and innovation. The application should include details of potential and confirmed partners. The Funders will require written confirmation of contributors and their investment, whether cash or in-kind contributions, to the research outlined in the full proposal. This confirmation will be required with the submission of the full proposal.

ALMA will share the submitted LOIs with other potentially-interested Alberta-based funding agencies if permission is granted to do so by the applicant. Upon submission of the LOI, an email requesting this consent will be automatically generated back to the applicant.

2.4 Evaluation Criteria

Applications received through the Product Differentiation Call for Proposals will be evaluated based on innovative ideas that can transform the livestock and meat sector, collaboration and impact to the industry and excellence. They must be in full accordance with the criteria of the ALMA Research and Development Program or Industry and Market Development Program. The proposals will be confidentially reviewed by external scientific and/or industrial reviewers, and further reviewed through ALMA's technical review committees for recommendation of funding. Depending on the size of the funding requested, ALMA's Programs and Services Committee may also review for approval of funding.

All approved proposals will enter into an investment agreement with ALMA according to the terms and conditions governing the specific program area in which the proposal was approved. Please consult the ALMA website (alma.alberta.ca/Programs/index.htm) for the specific program terms and conditions.

2.5 Intellectual Property

Intellectual property developed and owned by the applicant must be managed by the applicant.

2.6 Notice of Collection

The personal information provided through this process will be used to process the applications through the ALMA Product Differentiation Call. This may require sharing your

information confidentiality with external reviewers to assist with the evaluation process. This information is collected under the authority of section 33 (c) and 34 (1)(a)(i) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. If you have any questions about the collection and use of this information, contact the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency, Suite 101, 1003 Ellwood Road SW, Edmonton AB, T6X 0B3; by telephone 780-638-1699; by fax 780-638-6495.

For further information, please contact:

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For questions regarding the Research and Development Program, please contact:

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For questions regarding the Industry and Market Development Program, please contact:

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