

# **RAPID RESPONSE TO BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE GUIDELINES**



## **BACKGROUND**

The Grand River Agricultural Society (GRAS) launched the Rapid Response to Business Development Initiative (RRBDI) to support their commitment to impact investing by creating long-term sustainability and fuelling innovation in the Agriculture and Environmental sectors. The GRAS RRBDI will provide up to \$10,000 to support Ontario-based, agriculture, agri-food and agri-products businesses, as they work with established business connections to advance market opportunities and secure sales for their innovative products, processes or technologies.

## **RRBDI OBJECTIVES**

- To enable businesses, with preference to those located in Wellington, Waterloo and Perth counties, to respond quickly to global market opportunities.
- To assist businesses that have developed new and innovative products, processes and technologies in the agri-food and agri-products sector to move quickly to secure sales and market opportunities.
- To provide support for eligible project activities, including travel and associated costs, that are required to work with clients where there is a high potential to “close the deal” with real and established business connections.

## **APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY**

- Eligible applicants will be Ontario-based businesses in the agriculture, agri-food and agri-products sectors that are legal entities.
- All projects must address the RRBDI Objectives above.
- Prior contact and interaction between the business and another organization/company must have occurred. This prior interaction has required time, effort and investment on the part of the Ontario business and can be demonstrated.
- There is a high potential to close business agreements based on the prior interaction between the companies and there is a need to move quickly (otherwise the opportunity may be lost).
- The opportunity must be innovative (e.g. innovative products, process, technology, service or new markets) in Ontario’s agri-tech, agri-food and agri-products sector.
- There are no other more appropriate funding mechanisms.
- Applicants have not received funding through GRAS in the past two years, including investment through [Ag Capital Canada](#) or [The 51 Food & AgTech Fund](#).
- Projects from previously successful RRBDI applicants will be considered in the following circumstances:
  - The project is separate from previously approved projects
  - The overall funding received through RRBDI will not exceed \$20,000 within a five year period
  - A maximum of two approvals per applicant will be considered
  - All other eligibility requirements are met

## **APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA**

- The products, processes and technologies have sufficient level of innovation.
- The products, processes and technologies must result in tangible benefits to the broader agriculture industry.
- If there are regulatory barriers, the applicant has addressed the challenges.
- The immediate or longer-term potential of this opportunity is significant.

- The costs and activities appear appropriate to address the company's sales requirement.
- GRAS funding will have an incremental impact on supporting sales goal.
- The applicant is making use of the existing network (trade commissioners, etc.).
- The applicant is sufficiently aware of the financing required to grow the company.

## TIMELINES AND FUNDING

The application intake will open May 7, 2025, and remain open until all funds are allocated or until March 1, 2026. [Agricultural Adaptation Council](#) (AAC) will administer the GRAS RRBDI. The application is available online through the [AAC application portal](#).

All applications will be screened for the eligibility of the applicant and application evaluation criteria. Applicants will be notified of the funding decision within three business days and successful applicants will enter into a funding agreement. All expenses must be incurred between the contracted project start date and the contracted project end date, the outside boundaries of which are May 7, 2025 – February 28, 2026. Funding will be provided on a reimbursement basis, whereby the business incurs all expenses and submits the required claim form and documentation after they incur the expenses. Eligible expenses (see below) will be reimbursed at a 100% funding level.

### ELIGIBLE EXPENSES INCLUDE:

Expenses associated with provincial, national or international travel, accommodations and meals to build business.

- Transportation
  - Base Economy airfare (including seat selection and baggage check, not including preferred seat fees or upgrades), taxis, train travel, public transportation, car rental (including gas), personal vehicle mileage if used as primary mode of transportation (at a rate of \$0.63 per km.), mileage to/from airport (at a rate of \$0.63 per km.), airport shuttle service, travel insurance, parking, tolls, entry visas.
- Accommodations (including hotel parking)
- Hospitality Meals (business entertainment) with description (**excluding** alcohol)
- Shipping costs directly related to the goals of the meeting for business relevant items with description
- Meal per diems are expensed as per the current [National Joint Council Travel Directive](#).
- Fees of required consultants with description (translator, region guide, etc.)
- Intellectual property registration and licensing fees related to commercialization.

### INELIGIBLE EXPENSES INCLUDE:

- Tradeshow attendance/booth space
- Trade Mission registration fees
- Expenses incurred by non-business-related individuals, or anyone not named in the application
- "Cost of Doing Business" items (photocopying, office supplies, gifts, wifi, cellphone coverage, manufacturing, etc.)
- Marketing/promotional materials
- In-room movies/laundry service
- Personal items (toiletries, cell phone, etc.)
- Salaries
- Any costs paid by cash without proper proof of payment
- Any costs realized prior to the approval date of the project/trip (prepaid hotel/air is OK)

The Rapid Response to Business Development Initiative is administered by AAC.  
If you have any questions, reach out to a team member at [admin@adaptcouncil.org](mailto:admin@adaptcouncil.org).