FABrIC Fabrication Process Development Challenge Round 2 FAQs and Q&A

FAQs – Frequently Asked Questions

This document is not intended to replace or replicate the FABrIC Fabrication Process Development Round 2 Guide. Please reference fabricinnovation.ca/process-challenges for requirements and resources or contact challenges@fabricinnovation.ca.

Index

- Challenge Objectives and Funding
- Challenge Eligibility
- Project Requirements
- Expression of interest (EOI) and Proposal Process
- FABrIC Membership and Accounts
- Q & A – Your Questions and Answers

Challenge Objectives and Funding

What are the Challenge Objectives?

Expand and Leverage Canadian Research Institute Prototyping Capability

Support the development of novel fabrication processes that enhance SME access to Canada's world-class capabilities in MEMS, compound semiconductors, quantum, and photonics. This strengthens domestic prototyping, boosts commercialization of made-in-Canada semiconductor products and contributes to a resilient national supply chain.

Advance Silicon Photonics Processes

Accelerate innovation in silicon photonics by building on Canada's globally recognized strengths in telecommunications and advanced semiconductor fabrication. This positions Canadian companies to lead in critical markets—from internet and AI infrastructure to aerospace, defence, and next-generation consumer technologies.

What funding is available through this challenge call?

Up to **$1M** in non-repayable funding to reimburse Ultimate Recipients up to 40% of eligible project expenses is available (per project). In exceptional cases, up to **$1.5M** may be considered. Please reference the challenge guide.

What is the EOI submission deadline?

The EOI submission deadline **is 9:00 PM ET, Monday, March 2, 2026**. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

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What are the key dates for this Fabrication Process Development Challenge?

- February 2, 2026 – Challenge Call Issue
- March 2, 2026, 9:00 p.m. ET – Deadline for EOI submission
- No later than March 30, 2026 – Successful applicants will be notified and invited to submit a full proposal.
- April 27, 2026, 9:00 p.m. ET – Deadline for full proposal submission
- June 2026 – Notification of results to applicants

What is an Ultimate Recipient?

"Ultimate Recipient" means one or more Lead/Co-Lead Organizations who receive funding and carry out Eligible Projects as part of a Challenge Project. "Lead," "Co-Lead," and "Collaborator" are defined under the Definitions section in the challenge guide.

Challenge Eligibility

Who is eligible to respond to this Challenge call?

The call is open to organizations incorporated or registered in Canada, with significant operations in Canada. At least one of either the Lead or Co-Lead organizations **must be a SME** (<500 employees). Individuals are not eligible to apply.

Eligibility:

- For-profit SMEs (<500 employees)
- Not-for-profit organizations
- Canadian post-secondary institutions and/or their affiliated research institutes
- Indigenous organizations in Canada

May Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) participate in this challenge call?

MNEs may participate as Ultimate Recipients as long as at least one of either the Lead or Co-Lead organizations is a SME.

How many Leads, Co-Leads and Collaborators can an application include?

There is one (1) Lead organization that ultimately becomes responsible for the overall management of the project. Up to three (3) Co-Leads and up to six (6) Collaborators per application is acceptable. See Definitions, in the challenge guide.

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What are the basic eligibility requirements for applicants?

Applicants participating as Lead or Co-Lead(s) must be incorporated or registered in Canada and have significant operations in Canada. At least one of either the Lead or Co-Lead organizations must be a SME (<500 employees). See all **Key Requirements** and Basic Eligibility for Applicants, but not limited to – applicants, in the challenge guide.

- Must have ≥3 full-time equivalent employees.
- Must comply with Canadian sanctions and trade laws.
- Must be FABrIC Members.

Project Requirements

What types of projects are eligible?

The project must include the design and development of a novel:

- Process expanding and leveraging Canadian Research Institute commercial prototyping capability in one (or more) of the key areas of focus: MEMS, compound semiconductors, quantum, and photonics processes.
- Silicon photonics-related process

What are the key project requirements?

Key requirements are **listed in full** in the challenge guide.

What Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) should projects aim for?

Projects should aim to reach **TRL 7 or higher** by completion. An ISED assessment tool is available online at ised-isde.canada.ca/site/innovation-canada/en/technology-readiness-levels.

Expression of interest (EOI) and Proposal Process

How do I submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) and full proposal?

EOIs and full proposal must be submitted through the FABrIC Challenges Portal, hosted on the Blackbaud platform. You must create a Blackbaud account to enter your application. Please reference Portal / Platform Account Creation Instructions. The Attestation and Signature Template must be completed and **uploaded** into the Portal as part of the submission process.

Note: The Expression of Interest (EOI) and Full proposal Templates are available for **reference only** (and may not be used for submission).

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What is the selection process?

The selection process is **described in full** in the challenge guide. In summary:

- **Step 1: Call for Challenge Projects** (Feb 2, 2026)
- **Step 2: EOI Submission** (March 2, 2026)
- **Step 3: EOI Screening | Notification** to successful EOI applicants to submit **Full Proposal** (March 30, 2026)
- **Step 4: Full Proposal Submission** (April 27, 2026)
- **Step 5: Project Review and Scoring**
- **Step 6: Final Approval by CMC Board of Directors | Results Announced to Applicants** (Jun 2026)

What is the EOI screening process?

FABrIC internal reviewers will screen applications to ensure they meet the Pass/Fail criteria. The seven (7) elements of the **Challenge project Pass/Fail Criteria** are described in full in the challenge guide. In summary:

- Organizational – eligibility to apply.
- Alignment with FABrIC and Challenge call objectives.
- Project budget along with sources of funding.
- Market / commercialization summary.
- Ability to execute the project.
- Benefits to Canada.
- Need for FABrIC funding.

What information must be included in the EOI submission?

EOIs **must include**:

- A completed Fabrication Process Development Challenge Expression of Interest (EOI) (online form).
- An executed Attestation and Signature Template (uploaded online).

Reminder: The EOI Template is intended as a planning tool and may not be used for EOI submission. EOIs must be submitted through the FABrIC Challenges Portal, hosted on the Blackbaud platform. The template outlines all questions so that you might prepare responses prior to **entering the information online**, within 5 parts:

1. Lead organization information,
2. Co-Lead organization information,
3. Collaborator organization information,
4. Project overview information (title, description, current and expected TRL, commercial opportunity, etc.), and
5. Project budget and sources of funding.

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What other supporting documents may be included for a complete EOI submission?

Recommended (optional) supporting documents:

- Letters of support from collaborators and other interested parties are encouraged to strengthen the application.
- To help illustrate the new products being developed through process updates funded under this project, applicants may include diagrams or images that explain the project and its outcomes. A 1-page PDF can be uploaded to the portal for this purpose.

What support does FABrIC Challenge provide for prototyping?

FABrIC **Challenge Support** provides support to Ultimate Recipients for fabrication and packaging services, including multi-project wafer runs, logistics management, and chip finishing.

Specific to fabrication challenges, CMC Microsystems can provide no-cost support such as PDK development and development support along with consolidation and GDS layout of simulated components. Deployment of PDK and MPW services to other users is available under a separate service agreement and is not covered as FABrIC Challenge support.

For further information, see the challenge guide or contact challenges@fabricinnovation.ca.

What are FABrIC Intellectual Property (IP) Strategies for Challenge Projects?

The FABrIC Intellectual Property Strategy (IP Strategy) is structured to deliver maximum possible benefits to Canada. Ownership of all foreground IP created through a FABrIC project must remain in Canada and be used for the benefit of Canada for a minimum of five years after the completion of the project.

Fabrication Challenge recipients will be required to offer access to the resultant process to the Canadian ecosystem.

FABrIC maintains an **IP Registry**, restricted to FABrIC Members, from which general information about IP generated through FABrIC investments may be disseminated more broadly to members, subject to conditions articulated in any existing collaboration agreements.

How does FABrIC support equity, diversity and inclusion?

Projects that support and/or advance equity, diversity and inclusion receive additional assessment points. CMC Microsystems, manager of FABrIC, is committed to the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion and the Government of Canada's 50-30 Challenge.

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FABrIC Membership and Accounts

Why become a FABrIC Member?
FABrIC Membership connects individuals and organizations with FABrIC Challenges (funding), Innovation Platform initiatives (training, events, and services), and ecosystem development opportunities. FABrIC Membership is required to access FABrIC's Member Portal (mandatory to respond to Challenge Calls).

Note: CMC Microsystems Membership is **not** required to become a FABrIC Member. Membership in CMC is related to governance, limited to organizations interested in furthering the purposes of CMC (the Corporation), and consists of organizations whose application has received the approval of CMC's Board of Directors.

Q & A – Your Questions and Answers

Updated: 2026-02-20

Q: Does a project need to address *both* "expanding and leveraging Canadian Research Institute prototyping capability" and a "silicon photonics–related process"?

A: No. Projects should fall under one of the published themes (or both):

1. Expanding and leveraging Canadian Research Institute commercial prototyping capability (in MEMS, compound semiconductors, quantum, or photonics), or
2. A silicon photonics–related process.

Projects may address one or both categories. Meeting either category is sufficient for eligibility.

Q: Can applicants submit multiple Expressions of Interests (for multiple different projects)?

A: Applicants are not restricted from submitting more than one EOI. However, FABrIC will *typically* only fund one project per Ultimate Recipient per round.

Q: Are there restrictions on top-up funding, for example, sources of funding, or new sources vs. funding that is already underway?

A: FABrIC funding covers up to 40% of the total project cost.

Applicants are expected to leverage funding from other sources, including private, federal (e.g., SRED, NRC-IRAP, NSERC, ISED-SIF, Mitacs, etc.), provincial and municipal.

Industry: The maximum funding from all Government sources (including FABrIC) cannot exceed 75%. Applicants are expected to contribute at least 25% of project funding. All planned and secured funding must be identified in the EOI but does not have to be in place before the project start date.

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Q: Are in-kind contributions allowed to be included as part of the project funding?

A: No, all project contributions must be cash contributions. You may include in-kind contributions in the narrative to indicate that in-kind support is available as a resource, but this can't be included in the project budget.

Q: How is the 10% of "work performed outside of Canada" measured?

A: All project work must be performed in Canada, unless otherwise pre-approved in writing. A maximum of 10% of work (percentage of total project cost eligible for reimbursement) may be performed outside of Canada with pre-approval. Eligible expenses must comply with the requirements that are described in the challenge guide.

Q: Could you give examples of projects that enable and leverage Canadian Research Institute commercial prototyping capability?

A: A project that allows general Canadian access to Canadian Research institute processes (e.g. MEMS, Compound Semiconductors, Photonics, and Quantum) by creating PDKs and allowing MPW access and has the potential to create successful Canadian commercial products for domestic and international markets.

Another example would be Improvements to existing process at a Canadian University that allows the equipment to produce prototype components to advance commercialization of a product for the lead or co-lead AND these process improvements could be leveraged by other Canadian organizations that do not directly compete with the lead or co-lead's product.

Q: Could you give examples of projects which involve Silicon Photonics processes?

A: Enhancing and/or expanding silicon photonics processes by e.g. adding new active or passive devices, applications circuits, integrating other compound semiconductors to create successful Canadian commercial products for domestic and international markets.

Another example would be to develop a new process, for example using new materials, which can be used by the Canadian ecosystem and international companies to develop novel products in Canada.

Q: Is the $1M available funding applicable to the Lead/Co-Lead(s) individually, or the aggregate amount of the project?

A: The funding available for the Challenge is for the total aggregated amount of one project.

Q: Is collaboration with academic and other Canadian organizations a requirement for moving to a full proposal?

A: Collaboration is not a pass/fail requirement; however, at least one of either the Lead or Co-Lead organizations must be a SME (<500 employees).

Note: Lead and Co-lead organizations must demonstrate that they have sufficient resources to carry the project to conclusion. Please see Challenge Project Pass/Fail Criteria (Table 1) and Challenge Project Selection Criteria of the challenge guide.

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Q: Will projects invited to submit a full proposal have access to the PDK of the specific technology for semiconductor design from CMC?

A: CMC will provide Challenge Project support services, which may include final DRC, chip finishing, etc. and will manage all logistics and interfacing with Fabs for MPWs, etc. CMC will also either provide access or support gaining access to PDKs, depending on the technology node that is needed. For further information contact challenges@fabricinnovation.ca.

Q: Does a post-secondary researcher need to collaborate with a SME as a Co-Lead, or can we apply independently as a Lead?

A: Academics may participate; however, they must also have a SME participating as a signatory to the project agreement(s). The SME and academic (participating as a Lead or a Co-Lead) have essentially the same project-related roles and requirements (bring at least 60% of funding to the project, have a business case and commercial opportunity, ability to complete the project, etc.). It must be clear how both the academic and the SME will commercialize the resulting product(s).

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