

Invest-AI

● Overview

Invest-AI is a division of IVADO Labs with the mission to help Quebec companies, in particular small and medium businesses, increase their performance by integrating and applying Artificial Intelligence (AI) techniques in their processes. In addition to the advisory services provided, Invest-AI manages a \$ 35 million co-investment program aimed at helping these companies take the next step in AI. This investment program is a powerful lever to accelerate the adoption of artificial intelligence technologies within Quebec companies so that they contribute even more to the socio-economic growth of Quebec.

Invest-AI has four (4) main objectives:

1. Improve productivity & competitiveness of Quebec business through application of AI;
2. Enable companies to implement AI solutions developed in short term (max two years);
3. Provide businesses with the capacity to maintain the AI solutions developed;
4. Catalyze AI transformation to other parts of the business.

● Services

As a growth partner, Invest-AI can support companies in many ways:

- Financial support of the AI project by reimbursing partial project costs;
- Advice to properly frame business problems for the use of AI techniques;
- Connect with firms specializing in AI likely to participate in project the implementation;
- Support the company at the business and technical levels during and after projects.

● Co-Investment Program

Invest-AI co-investment program reimburses part of the project costs. These refunds are paid quarterly once the money has been spent and following the completion of AI project milestones. These contributions are non-refundable and do not exceed 50% of the total eligible project costs.

Invest-AI can contribute up to a maximum of \$ 1 for every \$ 1 invested by the private sector in a project. The fund can thus repay up to a maximum of 50% of total eligible expenses if the remaining eligible expenses are paid by the company. At least 30% (preferably 50%) of the required investment should come from the private sector. Depending on the size of the projects, Invest-AI can contribute between \$ 10k and \$ 1m. A firm cannot accumulate more than \$ 1 million in non-repayable contributions during the first term of the fund (end 31-3-2023).

Eligible Firms

In order to submit a project to Invest-AI for financial assistance, the bidder must:

- be a profit-making enterprise legally incorporated under the laws of the Quebec Government or the Government of Canada and must operate a facility in Quebec for the production of goods and services;
- have a minimum of 10 full-time equivalent employees paid by the company;
- generate sales revenue;
- have a project related to the application of the AI that can directly improve the performance of the firm; and
- hold the intellectual property that will result from the project.

The following clienteles are not eligible:

- companies controlled directly or indirectly by a government (provincial or federal);
- municipal entities or businesses majority-owned by a Crown corporation;
- companies under the protection of the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act or the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act;
- companies registered in the Quebec Business Register that do not qualify for public contracts; and
- businesses that, in the two years preceding the application for financial assistance, failed to meet their obligations in relation to a previous grant from the Government of Quebec after having been duly notified.

It is important to note that Invest-AI's financial assistance program is discretionary and that eligible companies and their project (s) are selected on the basis of merit. A summary assessment of the firm and its project is first made by Invest-AI to decide if the company can submit a proposal. After this qualification, the company is invited to prepare a proposal that will be evaluated at both the business and technical levels.

Eligible Activities

Companies qualified by Invest-AI may submit an AI project related to some of the following eligible activities:

- the development or improvement of products or processes using AI;
- carrying out activities and preliminary studies necessary for the planning of the AI project (e.g. feasibility study for the implementation of AI solutions);
- proof of concept (prototyping);
- the testing and validation of AI-based solutions (e.g. AI prototype tests)
- development, adaptation and validation of AI-based solutions to enable demonstration of these models in real-life situations with potential customers;
- acquisition, digitization, cleaning and organization of data to be used by the IA solutions (ex: as part of a machine learning project);
- quantification and verification steps to obtain certifications for an AI-based solution;
- the intellectual property protection activities resulting from the AI solutions developed; and
- coaching activities for the project carried out by AI specialists.

Eligible Project Costs

Expenses deemed reasonable and essential to the completion of the project detailed below are eligible:

- direct costs of the labor assigned to the project;
- subcontracted technical work;
- professional fees for specialized AI services including coaching;
- direct costs of supplies;
- direct costs of equipment and licenses (e.g. computer), calculated taking into account the proportion between the duration of the project and the life of the equipment or license;
- equipment rental costs;
- costs of acquiring studies or other documentation;
- costs of collecting, acquiring, digitizing, cleaning and organizing the data used by the AI solutions;
- fees for obtaining a certification of the AI solution;
- intellectual property costs resulting from the AI application project, including those related to patent applications, such as fees for a patent agent. These fees can also be for:
 - the acquisition of intellectual property rights or licenses,
 - research on the state of technology already covered by Canadian and foreign intellectual property prior to the possible filing of a patent, in order to validate the novelty of the innovation to be patented,
 - preparing opinions on the potential for registration, counterfeiting and validity of industrial designs,
 - patent and industrial design registration and integrated circuit topography applications, in Canada and abroad,

- research on certifications or approvals necessary for the use of the product, if applicable;

Eligible expenses can be reimbursed up to a maximum of 50% upon presentation of proof of payment. Invest-AI can lower the reimbursement percentage of some expenses.

All other expenses are not eligible, including:

- costs not directly attributable to the project;
- administration, operation and rent costs;
- benefits and contributions plans;
- sales and marketing expenses;
- costs of participation in exhibitions, conferences and fairs;
- operating costs not directly related to the project;
- travel, accommodation or meal expenses;
- subcontracting costs not related to the project or non-technical;
- the costs of building or buying a building or land;
- fines and penalties;
- losses on investments, contracts, doubtful debts, various taxes (e.g. sales taxes);
- expenses and depreciation related to facilities;
- depreciation of unrealized appreciation of assets;
- donations, gifts, events;
- expenses incurred before the filing date, including expenses for which the company has made contractual commitments;
- debt service, repayment of future borrowings, capital loss or replacement, payment or amount disbursed as capital;
- operating expenses in the normal course of business;
- recurring fees such as annual subscription fees and software update fees;
- expenditure for maintaining intellectual property;
- acquisition or land development expenses;
- acquisition, construction and building expansion expenses;
- transactions between companies or related parties; and
- membership fees to organizations.



Contact Us

For advice or to apply for financial assistance, an employee of the company should contact Invest-AI by email at invest-ai@ivadolabs.com

A director of Invest-AI will then discuss with you the needs of your company and possible AI solutions. Please note that for the qualification of an application for co-investment, Invest-AI will require, among other things, a copy of the financial statements of your company.