

Strategic Plan

2022-2025



Land Acknowledgment

The Edmonton Regional Innovation Network respectfully acknowledges that we are situated on Treaty 6 territory, traditional lands of First Nations and Métis people.

Who We Are

The Edmonton Regional Innovation Network (ERIN) is a coalition of organisations in the Edmonton region that support innovation start-ups and enterprises. The ERIN support service providers programs aimed at assisting innovation companies improve market readiness with the goal of increasing profitability and longevity.



Mission

We exist to help entrepreneurs start and grow innovative businesses.



Vision

To create a Regional Innovation Network (RIN) that is accessible, inclusive of diverse thoughts and ways of doing, and meets the needs of the innovation ecosystem.



Goals

1. Meaningfully connect the ecosystem by guiding innovative businesses to opportunities that match their assessed Business Level.
2. Build a sustainable Regional Innovation Network by developing and implementing a long-term governance model and succession plan.
3. Build trust in the innovation community with accessible and transparent front-facing processes and systems.

Values

Accessibility

We recognise that accessibility is different for everyone and strive to understand the visible and invisible barriers to access to create a RIN for Edmontonians.

Transparency

We are honest, fair, and ethical in all our activities so that we can position ourselves as a leader in the regional innovation community.

Diversity

Diversity increases different perspectives, and we commit ourselves to creating a RIN that embraces diverse voices at all levels of the decision-making process.

Accountability

We lead by example and set clear expectations guided by achievable goals.

We take ownership of the responsibilities and resources entrusted to us.

Collaboration

We build and nurture strong relationships that will have a positive impact on Edmonton's innovation community.

1. Meaningfully connect the ecosystem by guiding innovative businesses to opportunities that match their assessed Business Level.

The ERIN is primarily funded by Alberta Innovates and is tasked with growing and supporting Edmonton's community of tech-enabled entrepreneurs. A key part of managing the sector is improving data collection and sharing.

Strategy

Activities

- Improve ERIN database and information architecture to allow for the smooth tracking of entrepreneurs referred to service providers.
- Adopt a responsive approach to monitoring entrepreneurs referred to service providers through follow-up surveys and escalate as needed.
 - Apply an evidenced-based approach to the vetting and approval of funding applications.
 - Continuously explore opportunities and gaps within the sector.
 - Review the forms currently being used by the Committee and amend accordingly for smart information capture.
 - Establish a standardised approach to evaluating applications by providing the Committee with briefing notes ahead of meetings:
 - Purpose
 - Background
 - Key Considerations
 - Financial Implications
 - Recommendation
 - Conclusion

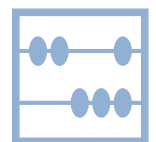


Threats

- Accessibility of storage platforms.
- Data security.
- Resistance to change.
- Process intensive.

Solutions

- Create an ERIN database outside the Edmonton Unlimited digital platform.
- Move all forms to a central CRM to simplify the data capturing and analysis process.
- Limit access to sensitive data.
- Seek buy-in before full implementation.
- Record new processes, make them accessible, and educate affected groups and persons.



2. Build a sustainable Regional Innovation Network by developing and implementing a long-term governance model and succession plan.

Key Indicators of Success

Indicator (What)	Measure (How)	Timeline (When)
Streamlined processes.	Time taken to approve applications. Number of entrepreneurs connected to level appropriate resources.	Applications are approved within 3 weeks of receipt. Note: It is the expectation that contact is made with the applicant throughout the process to communicate the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acknowledgment of receipt of application within 1 week. 2. Status of the application or any challenges or issues with the application within 2 weeks. 3. Notice of outcome within 3 weeks. Referrals completed within 2 business days and follow-up initiated after 3 weeks.
Growth on TRL (Technological Readiness Level) for active entrepreneurs.	TRL measured as per the Alberta Innovates established guidelines (Appendix 1) and other tools used, as necessary (Appendix 2), to enhance results.	
Reduced duplication of services.	Updated list of service providers (including area of focus).	List updated every 6 months.
Reduced resource gaps.	Client feedback.	Client survey sent out every 6 months.
Responsive network of service providers.	Rainforest scorecard	Metric consulted as needed.
Fully utilised Rainforest metric.	Report consulted to guide decision-making.	Pull survey report annually and support Rainforest data gathering as needed.



Outcomes

- Positive change in ERIN's influence.
- Ecosystem resilience.
- Improved employment trends.

Any good organisation has a solid foundation. The ERIN aims to streamline services and its processes, introduce policies, and develop strategies to engage the innovation community in a meaningful way.

Strategy

Activities

- Develop a standardised on-boarding and off-boarding system for the Steering Committee and Sub-Committees.
- Increase engagement of persons wanting to become involved through a mentorship program and monthly members meetings.
- Explore funding opportunities through grants, events, private sector contributions, and private donations.
- Develop and implement a communication strategy.
- Conduct a committee audit with a view to noting representational gaps and strategically attract underrepresented members of the innovation community.
- Explore the increased use of subject matter experts to provide advice as needed.

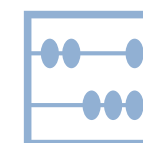
Threats

- Stretched human resources.
- Competitive funding pool.
- Limited financial resources to implement communication plan.
- Gaps are not easily apparent and underrepresented groups are hard-to-reach.
- Limited pool of volunteer subject matter experts.
- Shift in political priorities.
- Global economic uncertainties.



Solutions

- Embrace automation, when necessary, with regards to routine administrative processes and data capture for reporting purposes.
- Create a tiered engagement approach where involvement is increased with time and interest.
- Scale-back communication approaches to match finances.
- Reach underrepresented communities through service partners representing their interests.
- Improve relationship with government funder and actively take part in meetings.



Key Indicators of Success

Indicator (What)	Measure (How)	Timeline (When)
Improved transition processes	Time taken to fill Committee vacancies	Initiate recruitment at least two months prior of the intended fill date.
Increased membership.	10% increase in membership annually.	Measure membership trends bi-annually.
A sustainable ERIN.	Updated policies, procedures, and operational plan.	Updated annually.
An annual revenue intake of over \$1.5 Million Dollars.	Funds received.	At least one new grant application completed annually.
Increased visibility.	The ecosystem's engagement with established touchpoints (applications received, website analytics, social media analytics, brochures, newsletter analytics, etc.	Reports generated monthly.
A diversified Committee.	Inclusion of at least one member of the equity deserving community on the steering committee and subcommittees.	Board gap analysis completed at least one month prior to an election.
Developed communication plan.	Communication plan in place.	Communication plan completed by 31 March 2023 and updated bi-annually.
An engaged ecosystem.	The ecosystem's engagement with established touchpoints (applications received, website analytics, social media analytics, brochures distributed, newsletter analytics, etc.	Reports generated monthly.

Outcomes

- The ERIN Steering Committee and Sub-Committees demonstrate accountability and commitment to the community.
- The innovation community seeks out ERIN involvement.
- The innovation community positively supports the ERIN as a key initiator of programming and provider of community support.



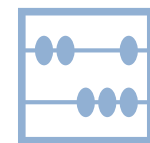
3. Build trust in the innovation community with accessible and predictable front-facing processes and systems.

The ERIN acknowledges that trust can only be earned through predictable and transparent processes. Also, stakeholders cannot trust what they do not know. Consequently, the ERIN is focused on increasing its visibility at meetings, embracing opportunities to collaborate with other Regional Innovation Networks to drive the Edmonton innovation community and meeting its fiduciary responsibility.

Strategy

Activities

- Create a data capture model that meets the divergent expectations of funding partners.
- Participate in networking events and Alberta RIN meetings.
- Collaborate with RIN partners on cross-cutting initiatives.
- Share best practices and positively contribute to the growth of service providers and other RINs.
- Invite persons from the innovation community and service providers to share their experience on specific issues, gaps, and wins at the ERIN Steering Committee level.
- Regularly engage ERIN membership and local community.



Threats

- Lack of common ground between reporting requirements.
- Conflicting engagements.
- Unwillingness to collaborate

Solutions

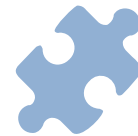
- Merge and expand on data capturing tools to improve comprehensiveness.
- Provide adequate notice for potential networking events.
- Adhere to the principles of transparency by ensuring that all recommended initiatives are objectively scrutinised based on cost and impact on the community.
- Slowly build a relationship with service providers and other RINs.

Key Indicators of Success

Indicator (What)	Measure (How)	Timeline (When)
Increased confidence in ERIN as an effective fund manager.	Funding accessed.	Renewal of funding cycle.
Programs meet the needs of entrepreneurs.	Count of entrepreneurs served by ERIN through funded programs.	Information pulled monthly.
	Client feedback	Client survey sent every 6 months.

Outcomes

- The ERIN is seen as credible in the programs and organisations it supports to innovators, service providers, and funders.
- ERIN has access to long-term funding and renewed funding agreements to support successful programs.
- Innovators and service providers collaborate with the ERIN to identify service gaps and create new and refine old programs to the benefit of innovators.



Appendix 1

TRL Tracking

The following guide will be used to track the advancement of a client through the stages of Technology Readiness. The date will be recorded when a client graduates to a new level.

TRL	
Level 1	Basic principles of concept are observed and reported: At this level, scientific research begins to be translated into applied research and development. Activities might include studies of publications of a technology's basic properties.
Level 2	Technology concept and/or application formulated: At this level, invention begins. Once the basic principles are observed, practical applications can be explored. Activities are limited to analytical studies.
Level 3	Analytical and experimental critical function and/or proof of concept developed: At this level, active research and development is initiated. Activities might include integrating components that are not yet integrated.
Level 4	Component validation in a laboratory: At this level, basic technological components are integrated to establish that they will work together. Activities include integration of "ad hoc" hardware in laboratory.
Level 5	Component validation in a simulated environment: At this level, basic technological components are integrated for testing in a simulated environment. Activities include laboratory integration of components.
Level 6	System/subsystem model or prototype demonstration in a simulated environment: At this level, a model or prototype is developed that represents a near desired configuration. Activities include technology testing in a simulated operational environment or laboratory.
Level 7	Prototype ready for demonstration in an appropriate operational environment: At this level, the prototype should be at a planned operational level and be ready for demonstration in an operational environment. Activities include prototype field testing.
Level 8	Actual technology completed and qualified through tests and demonstrations: At this level, the technology has been proven to work in its final form and under expected conditions. Activities include developmental testing and evaluation against operational requirements.
Level 9	Actual technology proven through successful deployment in an operational setting: At this level, application of the technology exists in its final form and under real-life conditions, as seen during operational tests and evaluations. Innovation under operational conditions continues.

EDMONTON REGIONAL INNOVATION NETWORK

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