

PACIFICAN JGF PROJECT REPORT

2022 - 2024

Healthtech SME Program



Circl.



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circle innovation

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Circle Innovation is grateful for generous support from:

Pacific Economic Development Canada



Pacific Economic Development Canada

Simon Fraser University



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

AGE-WELL



With their continued trust in our mission, vision, and methods, Circle continues to assist and inspire entrepreneurs to find solutions that benefit all Canadians.

Cover image provided by our Industry Partner, Circl Brain.
Circl Brain is a neurotechnology company helping people boost their mental resilience.
<https://www.circlbrain.com/>

Circle Innovation Solutions respectfully acknowledges that we are situated on traditional and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), sə́ilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh), QayQayt First Nation, Kwantlen, qíćə́y (Katzie), Semiahmoo, T'sou-Ke, and Tsawwassen First Nations, kʷikwə́ləm (Kwkwetlem) and Stó:lō Nation.

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WHO WE ARE

Circle Innovation - incorporated as AGE-WELL National Innovation Hub Foundation BC - is a joint initiative from the Networks of Centres of Excellence involving over 30 Canadian entities.

We enable companies to solve technology product challenges, grow revenues, create jobs, attract investment, and deliver innovative technologies to the market.

A leading BC-based Innovation Hub, Circle transforms the Canadian SME ecosystem approach to product development and innovation impact.

Our non-profit organization was created in 2016 by Dr. Sylvain Moreno, Dr. Carolyn Sparrey, Dr. Thecla Schiphorst, and Mr. Michael Harcourt.

Founding members of Circle Innovation are Simon Fraser University, Canada's leading university in research and innovation, and the AGE-WELL Networks of Centres of Excellence, as well as Mike Harcourt, former Premier of British Columbia.

AGE-WELL is a Canada-wide innovation system that is growing Canada's technology businesses through co-creation. It connects over 250 communities, industry, not-for-profit, academic and government partners to 42 university research centres.

Mission

Circle Innovation empowers entrepreneurs and revolutionizes the support ecosystem in Canada's fastest-growing innovation sectors, providing comprehensive, tailored assistance to help solve product development challenges. By addressing innovation barriers, we equip SMEs with the tools to realize their full growth potential, delivering both economic and social benefits.

Vision

Circle Innovation envisions a society where innovation and entrepreneurship thrive, supported by robust community engagement, expertise, and trust, empowering technology SMEs to transform industries and create a sustainable, beneficial economic future for all.

Process

Circle Innovation employs its unique **SWAT Model** of innovation, working closely with technology SMEs to identify and address barriers, break silos with ecosystem partners, and co-design unique solutions for the market. One success at a time!

Circle Innovation identifies overall barriers to growth in the tech ecosystem – the slow rate of innovation in healthcare, obstacles to AI adoption, or declining rates of investment in SMEs. Then Circle develops programs that aim to mitigate those challenges.

In direct conversation with tech SMEs, Circle assesses their needs and ensures that the programs deliver economic and social outcomes—breaking down silos, opening doors, enabling access, and getting innovations to market faster, better, sooner.

01

ABOUT US

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

As we reflect on the past three years, I am immensely proud to share the Circle Innovation Three-Year Report covering our groundbreaking work from 2021 to 2024. This period has been marked by dynamic growth and substantial achievements, notably through the Circle Innovation Healthtech SME Program (CIHS), which was generously supported by PacifiCan, the Government of Canada's economic development agency for British Columbia.

Building on the successful legacy of our PacifiCan-funded Innovation Sandbox Program, the CIHS program was designed to accelerate the Research & Development (R&D) process by facilitating productive collaborations between BC's healthtech SMEs, researchers, and other pivotal stakeholders. By employing our SWAT Model, we tailored our approach to meet the specific needs of SMEs, enhancing their access to existing R&D resources and integrating diverse partners including industry, health authorities, government entities, academia, non-profits, and patients. This innovative strategy not only reduced development timelines but also eliminated many of the critical barriers impeding healthtech innovation.

The impact of the CIHS program has been profound:

- \$4.66 million in support was mobilized from PacifiCan, fueling the expansion and development of emerging technologies in healthcare.
- We exceeded our ambitious targets, supporting 39 SMEs in generating over \$14 million in revenue growth, bringing 101 new products to market, and creating over 100 new jobs in the province.

These accomplishments are a testament to the efficacy of our multi-stakeholder approach to R&D and the resilience of our community during challenging times. The past three years have not only been about meeting the immediate demands of the health tech sector but also about setting a precedent for future innovation.

The CIHS program concluded on a high note, with significant advancements in health tech that reflect our commitment to fostering an inclusive society while addressing the evolving needs of consumers. This success was made possible by the relentless dedication of the Circle Innovation team and the unwavering support from PacifiCan.

On behalf of the entire board, I extend our deepest gratitude to PacifiCan for their support, and to every member of the Circle Innovation team, whose dedication has profoundly impacted the health tech landscape in British Columbia. Your efforts have set a new standard for what we can achieve through collaboration and innovation.

As we close this chapter, we are excited about the future and the potential to replicate our successful model in other sectors and regions across British Columbia and Canada. Thank you for your hard work and commitment. Together, we look forward to continuing to drive innovation that benefits all Canadians.



ARVIND GUPTA, PhD
BOARD CHAIR

CEO'S MESSAGE

I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for what our team has accomplished through our Circle Innovation Healthtech SME Program (CIHS). This period has not only been a testament to our enduring commitment to health innovation but also a demonstration of our team's resilience in overcoming the significant economic challenges posed by the global pandemic and subsequent international and provincial economic difficulties.

The CIHS program, supported by the diligent efforts of our team and the generous funding from PacifiCan, has delivered outstanding results. Despite the hurdles, we have successfully facilitated key developments in the healthtech sector, underscoring our leadership in supporting and growing British Columbia's tech ecosystem. Our unique and proactive approach through the SWAT model has validated the effectiveness of our strategies, leading to significant enhancements in how SMEs bring products to market.

This program has not only met but exceeded expectations, dramatically surpassing our initial targets. While we were entrusted to support the development of 10 new technologies, our efforts resulted in the launch of 101 new products to the market. Similarly, tasked with generating \$8 million in private sector investment, we successfully attracted over \$45 million. These achievements emphasize our pivotal role in supporting SMEs and spearheading economic development in the region.

The success of the CIHS program serves as a solid foundation for our forthcoming initiatives: the RISE in BC investment program, the FAST in BC program focusing on Artificial Intelligence, and the establishment of the Center for Applied AI in BC. Each of these endeavors builds on the proven principles of the SWAT model, tailored to meet the diverse needs of our burgeoning tech ecosystem.

As we move forward, we are not just continuing projects but expanding a proven model of innovation that promises to revolutionize sectors and stimulate economic growth across British Columbia and beyond. The CIHS program is a beacon of what is possible when collaborative partners work tirelessly towards common goals under challenging conditions.

I want to express my deepest appreciation to our team at Circle Innovation. Your dedication, creativity, and hard work have not only driven our success but have also set the stage for the exciting developments that lie ahead. Thank you for your commitment to excellence and for making our vision a tangible reality.

Together, we are not just navigating challenges; we are setting new benchmarks for innovation and economic growth in British Columbia and establishing a model that will benefit all of Canada.

Thank you for your continued support and belief in our mission. We look forward to making even greater strides in the coming years.



SYLVAIN MORENO, PhD
CEO & SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR

OUR METHODOLOGY

SME Workforce And Technologies (SWAT) Model

Innovation emerges into an environment that is ill-equipped to embrace it, inevitably throwing up barriers and friction that limit impact. SWAT smooths the way – proactively **identifying barriers and helping SMEs eliminate them** quickly and efficiently.

SWAT focuses on the SME – their needs and their barriers. Instead of imposing solutions, SWAT adapts to the circumstances, brings SMEs into dialog, and designs a solution appropriate to the moment. Each company is at a unique point in its journey bringing products to market.

Circle Innovation’s unique SWAT Model facilitates co-development of technologies by **breaking silos and connecting industry partners** with the curated participation of public sector, academia, market leaders, service providers and end-users.

SWAT **operates at the speed of business**, meeting SMEs where they live, and brings critical resources to bear in an agile, responsive co-management process. The focus is squarely on the technology SME and the delivery of products to the market.

SWAT also facilitates access to resources, knowledge, and technology to **engage students, professors, and faculty to develop relationships with industry** and support generation of innovative solutions.

Together, the ecosystem works more effectively, developing new technologies and driving economic benefits, addressing skill gaps in technology workers across our region and bringing existing expertise into effective contact with technology business.



“Collaborating with Circle Innovation to bring the Healthtech SME Program to life has been **integral to the growth of healthtech organizations** in the province and influenced the development of varying industry programs. **We have taken inspiration from the successes of the Circle Innovation model and extended its application to the field of agritech through the B.C. Centre for Agritech Innovation**, hosted at SFU. Supporting the growth of SMEs is of paramount importance for the economic well-being of British Columbia.”

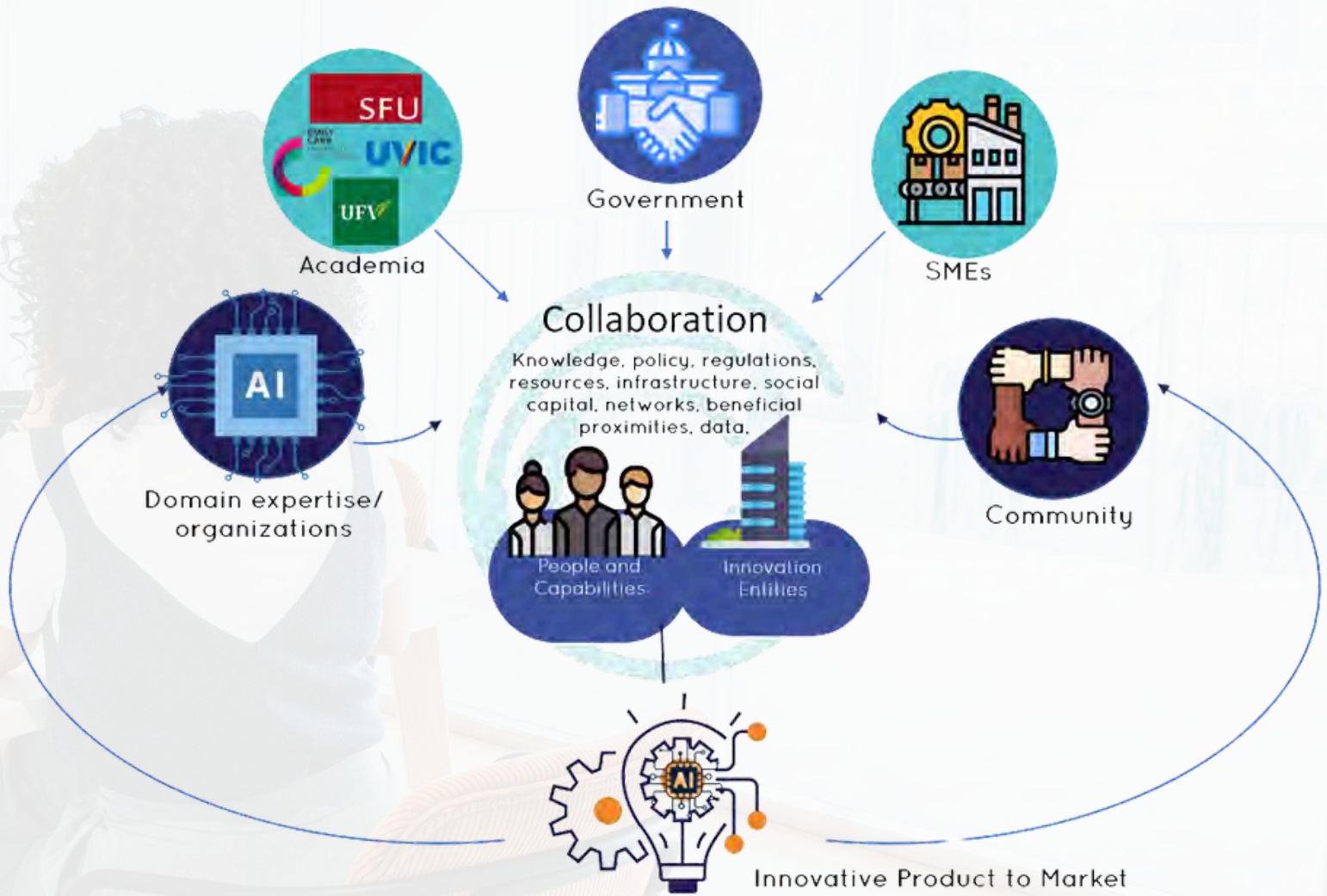
DR. DUGAN O'NEIL, VICE-PRESIDENT, RESEARCH AND INTERNATIONAL
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

OUR METHODOLOGY

Ecosystem Collaboration: Breaking Silos

Within every market, there are a key ecosystem partners who can ensure the success of innovation. Access to them has often been a barrier for SMEs.

SWAT ensures they can reach the right resources quickly without adding undue burden, creating arbitrary hoops to jump, or imposing delays on the pace of business.

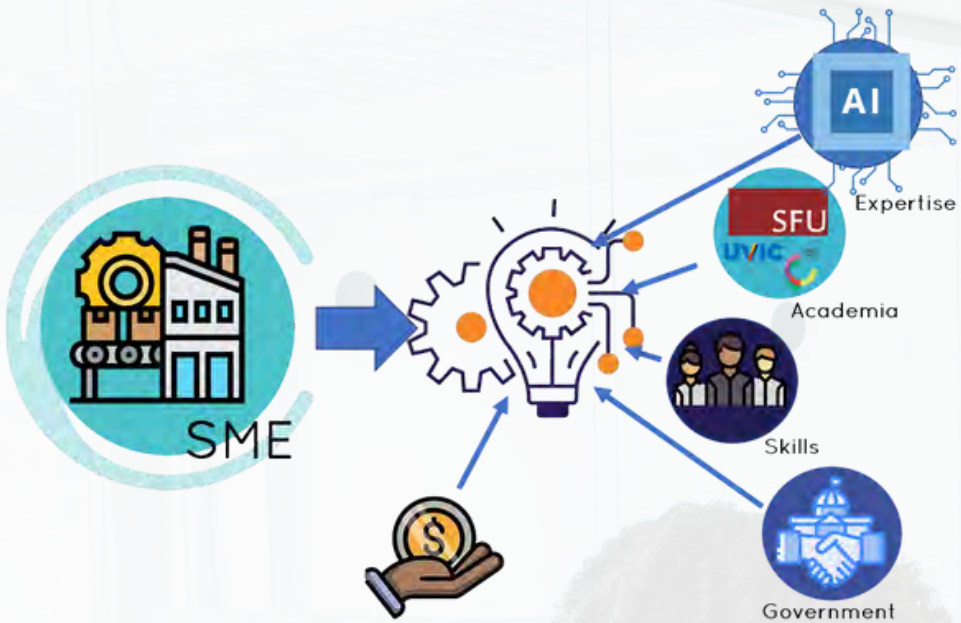


OUR METHODOLOGY

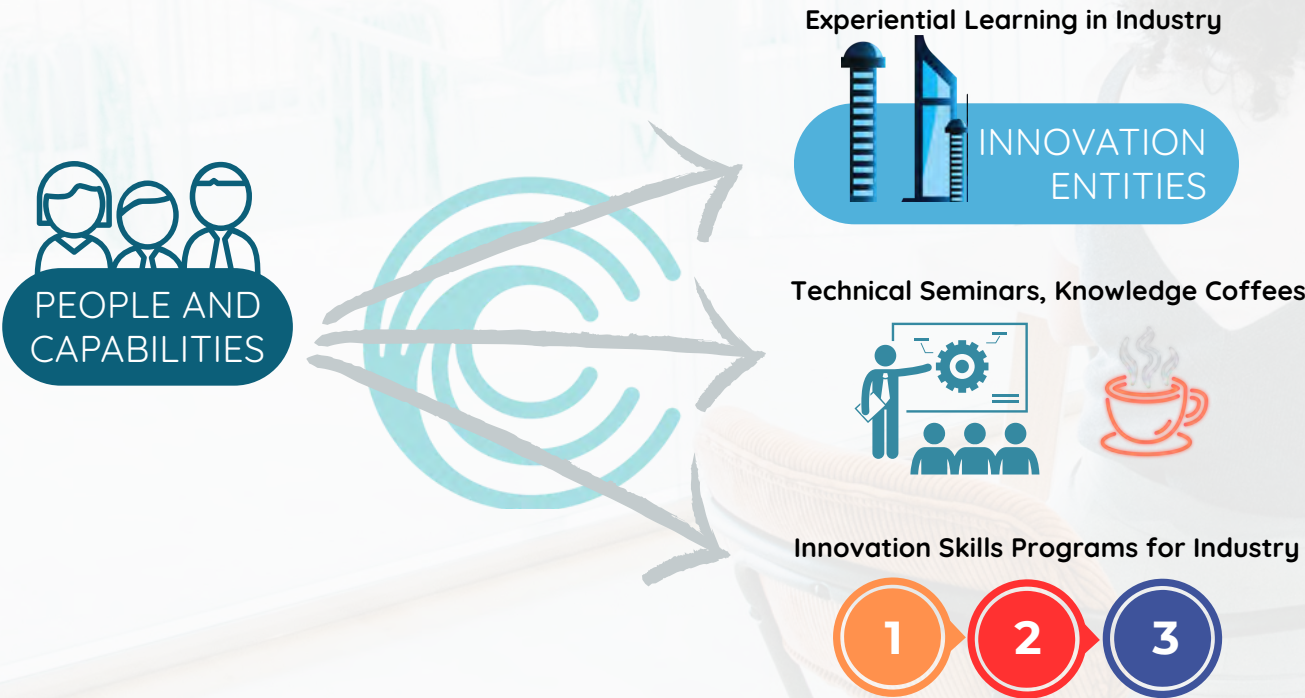
Co-Designed Projects Addressing Identified Barriers

Through ecosystem support, Circle works closely with the SME to identify critical barriers to their commercial success and design the right project.

Resources, expertise, and skills are brought to the table, agreed upon, and then co-funded. All projects are selected on the basis of bringing products to market and having significant impact.



Upskilling and Training of HQP: Delivering Resources



Circle Innovation focuses on experiential training, as well as development of critical skills, to both upskill existing workers and to bring new talent rapidly into industry.

Students work with the Circle team while participating in industry projects, learning the ins and outs of product innovation without burdening or impacting the business.

OUR METHODOLOGY

Steps of the SWAT Model

- 01 Qualifying**
Initial discussion with industry to assess eligibility and learn about product development challenges.
- 02 Assessing Needs**
Identify barriers to impact, product needs, existing resources, and resource gaps.
- 03 Designing Project**
Develop and design industry-led product development projects to shorten time-to-market.
- 04 Assembling a Project Team**
Assemble a stakeholder team to support the project. This includes skills and talent, domain experts in academia, government, healthcare, and community.
- 05 Resourcing, Co-Funding, and Launching**
Project management ensures deliverables meet specifications and resources are available, including training, talent, key partners, and co-funding.
- 06 Managing and Executing to Deliverables**
Timeline to market is shortened and commercial viability is enhanced with successful project completion and new stakeholder partnerships.



“Circle’s scientific expertise, funding networks, and academic partnerships helped us to build a strong foundation for our groundbreaking exoskeleton technology, which not only offers independent human mobility but also revolutionizes the standard of care for patients and clinicians.”

DR. SIAMAK ARZANPOUR, CO-FOUNDER AND CEO
HUMAN IN MOTION ROBOTICS

02

CIHS PROGRAM

CIHS PROJECT OVERVIEW

With support and generous funding from **PacifiCan**, the Government of Canada's economic development agency dedicated to British Columbia, Circle Innovation introduced a new product development collaboration program called the **Circle Innovation Healthtech SME Program (CIHS)** in 2022.

Following from the successful legacy of our PacifiCan-funded Innovation Sandbox Program, which ran from 2019 to 2022, the CIHS program was designed to facilitate Research & Development (R&D) projects between BC healthtech Small and Medium Enterprise companies (SMEs), researchers, and other key collaborators, to bring products to market faster.

CIHS used our SME Workforce and Technologies (SWAT) Model to respond directly to the specific needs of SMEs, rather than trying to fit them into a uniform process. Our model reduced the new technology development timeline by improving company access to existing R&D, and by bringing together industry, health authorities, government, academia, non-profits, and patients as needed. This unique approach to ecosystem development removed critical barriers to innovation that faced many Healthtech SMEs.

Using this tailored, co-creative approach, Circle fuelled the expansion and development of emerging technologies in healthcare with \$4.66 million in support from PacifiCan.

The partnership between PacifiCan and Circle Innovation helped BC SMEs generate new jobs and train B.C. workers. The funding also supported the growth of SMEs and generated increased revenues throughout the province.

We set ambitious targets to measure the success of the CIHS program. In most cases, our outcomes far exceeded our initial goals. Read on for details on the amazing success of the CIHS program!

💰 **\$4.66M**
FUNDING FROM
PACIFICAN



Pacific Economic
Development Canada



PROJECT OUTCOMES

Challenges in Industry

Health technologies enable better access to health care and drive our province’s high-tech, green economic growth. Small, agile businesses dominate this market, but some struggle to grow their businesses to the global stage. Issues include limited financial resources, filling highly skilled jobs, and limited access to key stakeholders that define product success within complex healthcare systems.

Solution

The CIHS Program addressed these challenges by:

- creating multistakeholder teams focused on successful product development;
- supporting and managing industry-led R&D collaborations; and
- reskilling employees with in-demand skills for the health tech market.

Collectively, the CIHS program provided on-demand support to SMEs, reducing their upfront costs and barriers, and mitigated risks to compete in the Healthtech economy.

Goals for Project Outcomes

In our funding proposal to PacifiCan, we set the following stretch goals for the CIHS program. With the support of PacifiCan funding, private sector investment, and our unique SWAT methodology, we aimed to meet or exceed the following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) over the course of the 2 year project.

CIHS PROJECT TARGETS

40 SMES ASSISTED

\$14M IN SME REVENUE GROWTH

\$9M IN PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT

10 NEW PRODUCTS OR SERVICES BROUGHT TO MARKET

85 HQP JOBS CREATED

600 HQP TRAINED

18 INDIGENOUS HQP TRAINED



KPI SNAPSHOT



101

PRODUCTS TO MARKET



\$14.8M

SME REVENUE GROWTH



GOAL ACHIEVED



39

SMEs ASSISTED



GOAL ACHIEVED



\$45.6M

PRIVATE INVESTMENT



507%

OF TARGET



109

HQP JOBS CREATED



120%

OF TARGET



964 / 14

HQP/INDIGENOUS HQP
TRAINED



161%

OF TARGET

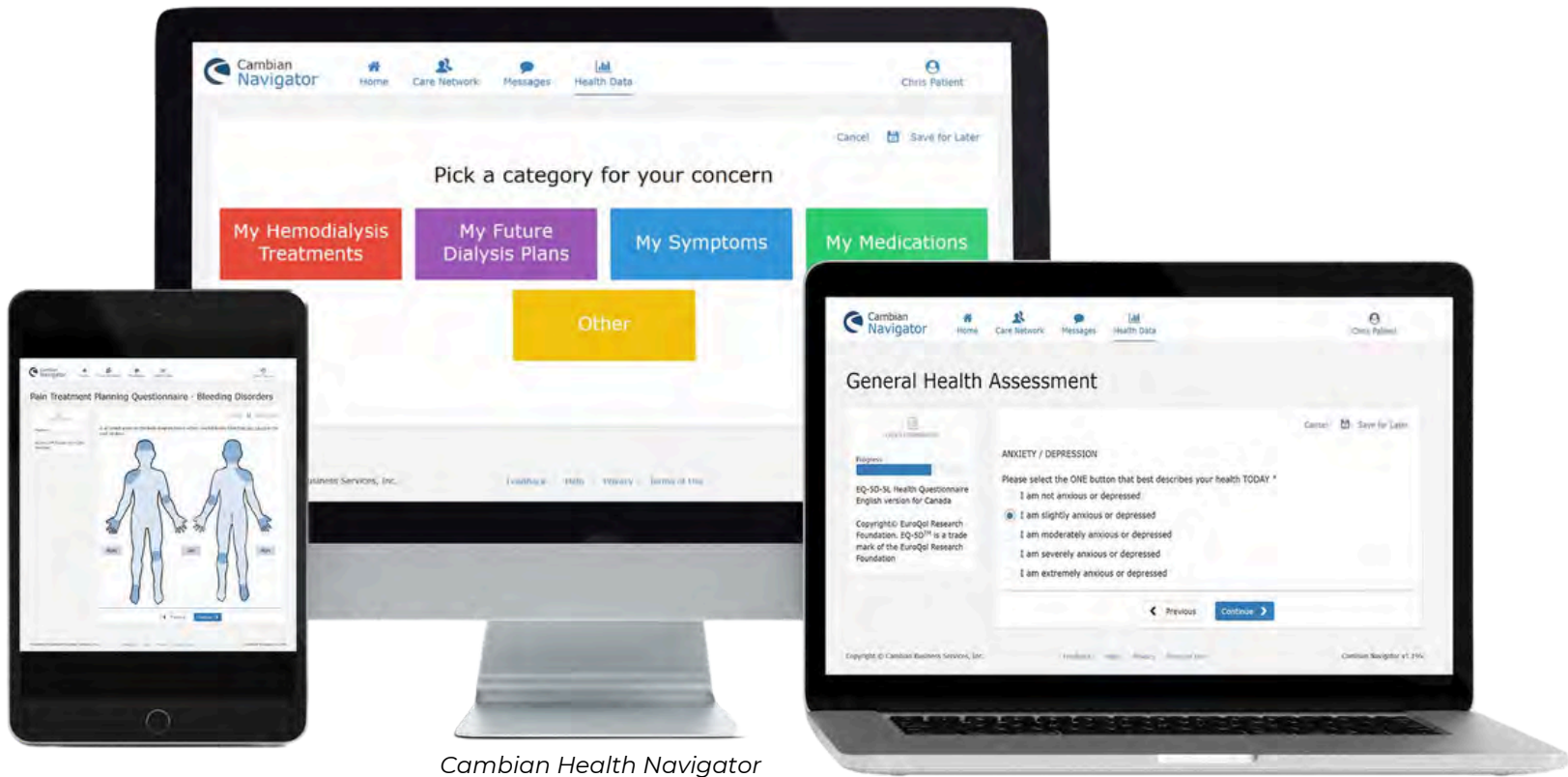
YEAR ONE - 2022/2023



The program began with initial pilots involving companies such as **Cambian** and **myMomentum**, which helped to test and refine our methods and procedures. These pilots provided valuable insights into the innovation process, and specifically highlighted the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Continuous development of the CIHS program was guided by feedback from our pilot company partners, ensuring that their unique requirements and projects were addressed.

The CIHS program emphasized efficient and agile processes to adapt quickly to changing requirements and opportunities. Recognizing the unique needs and projects of SMEs was a cornerstone of the program, allowing for tailored support and solutions.

The official launch of the program marked the beginning of a structured approach to innovation within the sandbox, and a dedicated team was built to support the program, including Loki Jorgenson, Maha Rehal, Chris Carvalho, and Malcolm Kennard. By the start of year 2, a regular process of project development and launching had been developed.



Cambian Health Navigator

YEAR TWO - 2023/2024

The second year of the CIHS program saw a rapid build-up and execution of projects, with the largest overall project being **Human in Motion Robotics** delivered in 3 phases.

Year two peaked with 32 projects running concurrently, showcasing the team's capacity to manage multiple initiatives effectively.

Training events were developed that delivered on key themes – cybersecurity, Indigenous tech companies, data sovereignty, diversity in health, and training outreach.

The VIPSS panel with One Feather provided valuable insights into Indigenous views on data sovereignty (e.g. OCAP). The cybersecurity summit and VIHA Hackathon provided training opportunities for SMEs.

The research agenda series was a milestone accomplishment – partnering with SFU to deliver a 3 month long series of facilitated workshops that explored emerging issues in healthcare through the perspectives of distinct members of the ecosystem.

The year concluded successfully, meeting and exceeding key performance indicators (KPIs) – such as 500% of target investment and 1000% the number of products to market – demonstrating the program's effectiveness in achieving its goals.

Projects by **Tuktu Care**, **MetaOptima**, and **Altumview** are presented in the next section.



Human in Motion Robotics XoMotion™ Exoskeleton

03

CASE STUDIES

CASE 01 - TUKTU CARE

Tuktu is on a mission to bridge the gap that currently exists in the family caregiver support system.

Tuktu Care is a community-powered care provider based in British Columbia that connects individuals needing support with safe, local companions for everyday tasks such as shopping, cleaning, and transportation.

Its platform is meant to help older adults age comfortably in their own homes, while supporting social workers, nurses, and care givers with additional on-demand part-time help for low-touch care needs.



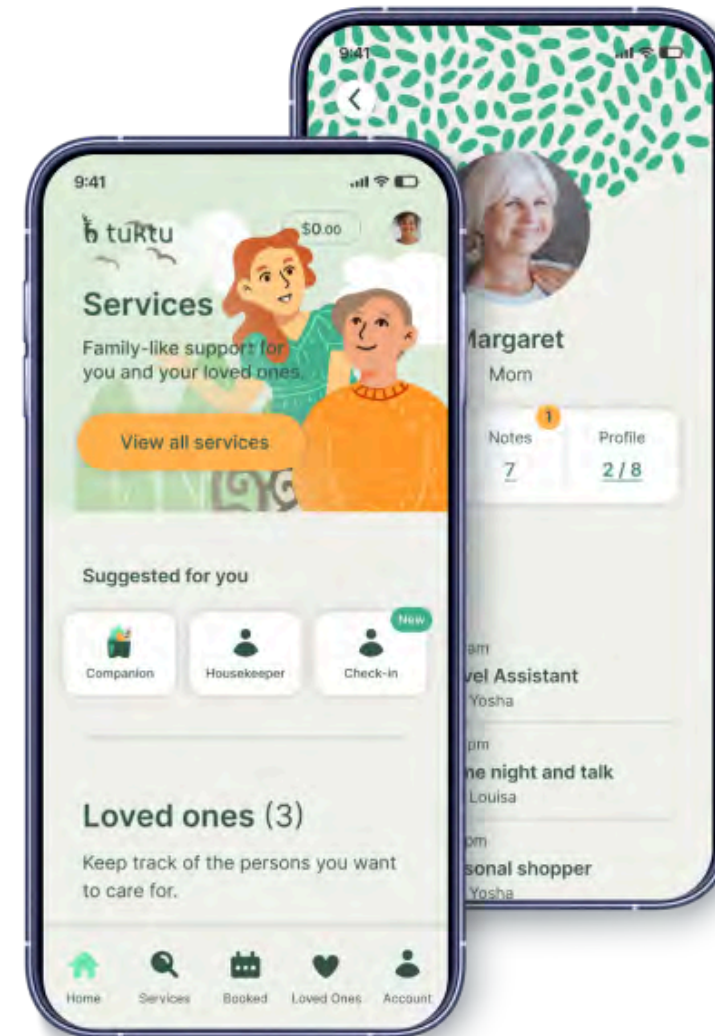
Circle Innovation provided co-funding through the Healthtech SME Program to help finance and support the growth and scalability of Tuktu's technology across BC and beyond.

Circle helped Tuktu collaborate with existing organizations performing similar roles for BC's seniors, raising awareness for its application.

In partnership with the City of Surrey, Circle facilitated knowledge sharing among senior residents who might want to learn more about Tuktu's digital resources.

The Tuktu platform offers an on-demand, curated marketplace that matches clients with companions who provide personalized, empathetic service with lower costs and flexible terms. The service is managed through a secure web and mobile app, ensuring that providers are vetted, trained, and insured.

Tuktu Care has plans to expand as the non-medical care market grows, projected to reach \$35 billion in the U.S. and Canada by 2030.



OUTCOMES FOR TUKTU

\$200,000

Annual revenue increase

\$475,000

Incremental private sector investment

5

Products delivered to market

2

Employees hired

CASE 02 - METAOPTIMA

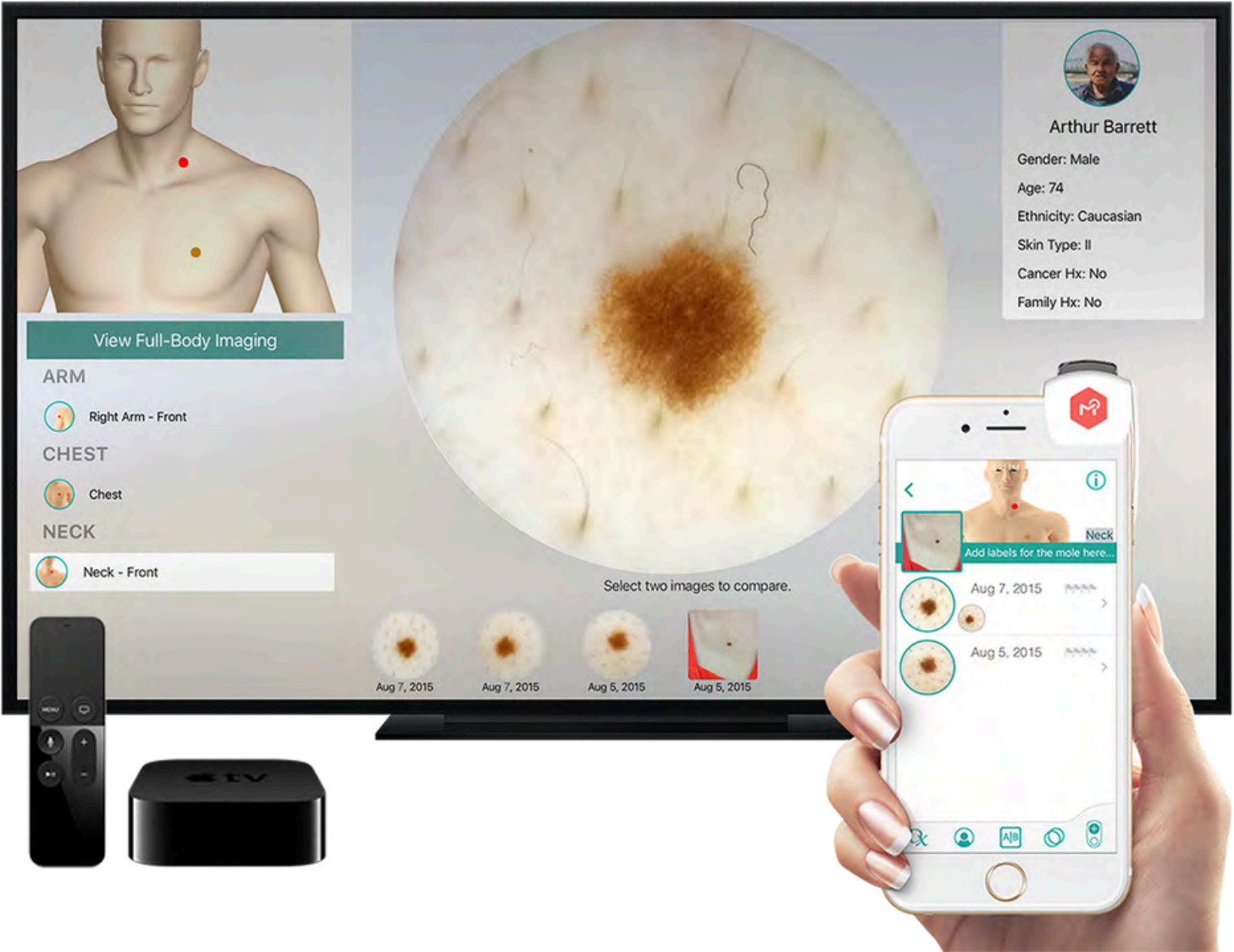
MetaOptima is a fast-growing digital health company based in Vancouver, Canada that strives to empower people with advanced technologies to lead a healthier and happier life.

Founded in 2012, CEO Maryam Sadeghi and CTO Majid Razmara established a company dedicated to revolutionizing the dermatology and skin care industry with advanced, effective, affordable and intelligent tools.



MetaOptima has developed a SaaS technology that can be attached to Canadians’ smartphones, allowing individuals to use a mobile app to capture and record photos of potentially cancerous moles. The images can then be shared with a dermatologist using cloud-based technology, eliminating months of wait time for a specialist visit, and receiving a near-instant diagnosis in the process.

MetaOptima’s core product, DermEngine, uses image-based AI to help dermatologists remotely zero in on potential cases of skin cancer such as melanoma.



l-r: Thomas Philpott, COO, Circle Innovation; Maryam Sadeghi, CEO, MetaOptima; Sylvain Moreno, CEO, Circle Innovation.

MetaOptima and Circle were among ten Vancouver-based organizations that received a cumulative \$25.7 million investment from PacifiCan in March 2023.

In partnership with Circle Innovation, MetaOptima applied funding from the Healthtech SME Program to a) achieve FDA approval for DermEngine AI; b) reduce costs with Go-To-Market commercialization of their AI-powered products; and c) outsource to third party consultants support to manage prospective clinical trials.

For this partnership, Circle Innovation assisted MetaOptima with the testing and optimization of its latest AI diagnostic platform, while also acting as the project and cost management center, ensuring successful completion of all project deliverables, while de-risking the project through its cost-sharing program.

MetaOptima not only takes pride in their bold vision to save lives and contribute to better healthcare outcomes, but also work hard to build a successful company, and create jobs and develop tools that make the world a better place for patients, doctors, and businesses.



OUTCOMES FOR METAOPTIMA

\$2.3M

Annual revenue increase

\$20M USD

Incremental private sector investment

30

Workers upskilled

4

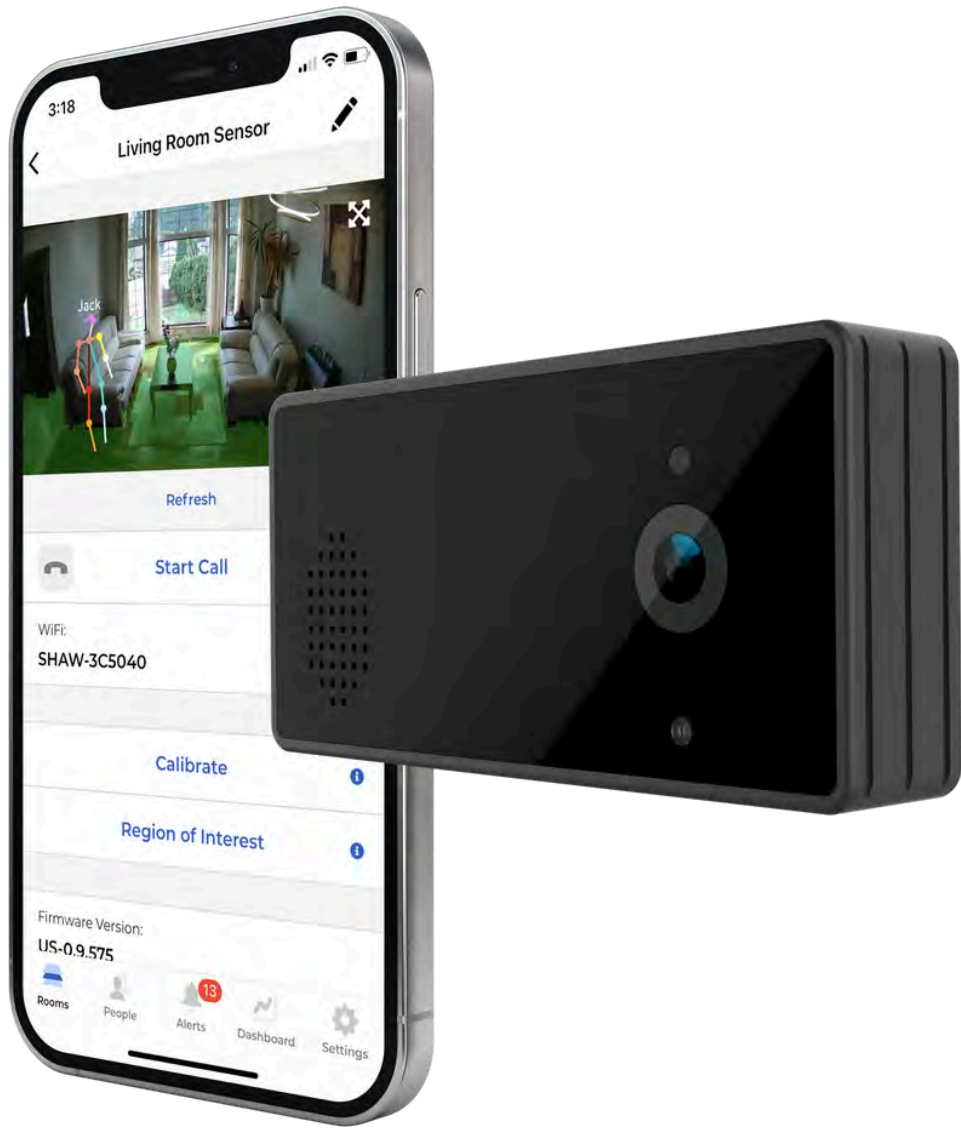
HQP jobs created

CASE 03 - ALTUMVIEW

AltumView, an AI company founded in 2016 in Vancouver by Prof. Jie Liang of Simon Fraser University, specializes in senior care solutions.

The company developed the Sentinare smart activity sensor, which uses AI to monitor seniors’ activities, collect health data, and alert caregivers during emergencies, all while preserving privacy by transmitting stick figure animations instead of video.

Recognized as a CES 2021 Innovation Awards Honoree, AltumView’s sensor is also featured in Amazon’s Alexa Together emergency service for seniors.



AltumView’s application only displays people as stick figures, allowing families and care providers to monitor aging adults while in their bedrooms and bathrooms, where an otherwise undetected accident is more likely to occur.

While safeguarding the privacy of patients and caregivers, AltumView’s sensors can also protect the wellbeing and safety of older adults, providing peace of mind to the families.

Circle Innovation worked with Altumview’s team to develop further enhancements to accelerate the commercialization of AltumView’s core technology.

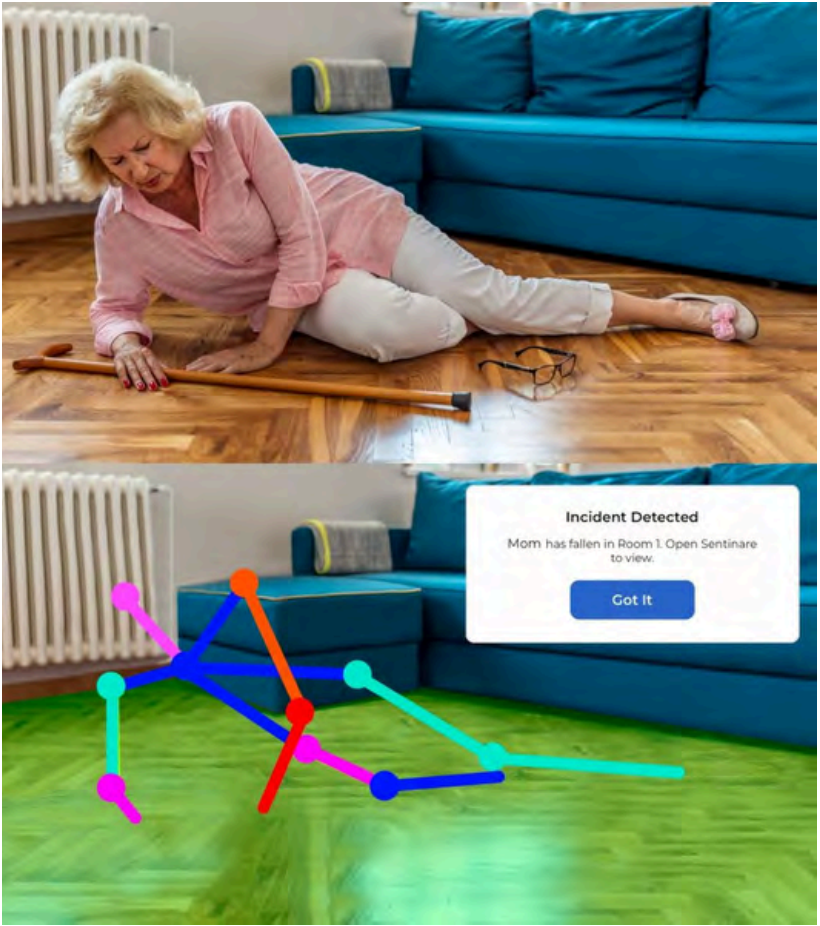
Through Circle Innovation’s Healthtech SME Program, AltumView received co-funding support to keep costs associated with phased trials and data generation manageable and ensure achieving required levels of performance.

AltumView benefitted from working with Circle for the development and strategic implementation of a B2B strategic framework, identifying and engaging companies invested in trialing Sentinare 3, AltumView’s third-generation smart activity sensor launched in July 2023.

Altumview already had an agreement with Amazon to endorse the use of AltumView’s Sentinare as one of only three fall detection devices for its Alexa Together emergency service, and Sentinare has received the best review among the three devices.

In addition to the US and Canada, AltumView’s Sentinare has also made its way to Australia, Italy, China, Korea, and Japan.

This project further developed key AI-enabled features of movement and activity detection, ensuring further adoption globally.



AltumView aims to scale up its sales to reinforce its leadership in smart sensor care. The company is also 1 of the 5 Canadian companies chosen for the Canada-UK AgeTech Innovation Exchange Program.

OUTCOMES FOR ALTUMVIEW

\$400,000

Annual revenue increase

\$5M

Investment attracted

2

New capabilities launched to market

4

HQP jobs created

04

RESEARCH & TRAINING

SFU SPARREY HEALTHTECH WORKSHOPS



Between December 2023 and March 2024, Simon Fraser University and Circle Innovation hosted seven workshops to identify challenges for a range of stakeholders including patients, researchers, clinicians, industry leaders, government, and policy-makers. Circle brought key private industry partners to these sessions and collaborated with SFU to ensure the inclusion of Indigenous stakeholders.

These workshops were part of a Health Research BC Convening & Collaborating project led by Dr. Carolyn Sparrey, aimed at identifying and prioritizing healthtech needs in BC. Insights from six sessions culminated in a seventh co-creation workshop, bringing together all stakeholders to generate an innovative path forward in health technology.



Dr. Carolyn Sparrey

CIRCLE INNOVATION CYBERHEALTH TRAINING SUMMIT



In October 2023, Circle Innovation partnered with Kobalt.io to host a Cyberhealth training and networking event at Venture Labs for tech industry leaders, entrepreneurs, technical team members, students in technology and healthcare, and others.

With Kobalt.io and other stakeholders, Circle Innovation facilitated this cybersecurity program intended to enhance the competitiveness of B.C.'s healthcare sector, while supporting critical advances in cyberhealth.

It featured a breakfast networking hour, 2-3 hours of presentations and discussion, and a lunch networking hour.

Speakers ranged from compliance consultants and cybersecurity experts to industry leaders who have adopted SOC2, investors, and others.

Presentations were given on the current state of cybersecurity, rising threats and opportunities from AI, perspectives on data sovereignty, and insights into how to prepare for the future.



Sponsored by circle innovation SFU VentureLabs

VIPSS: PRIVACY & SECURITY SUMMIT



Circle Innovation took part in the 26th Annual Vancouver International Privacy & Security Summit in March 2024. This fully in-person summit offered a platform for up to 750 security and privacy professionals from around the world to discuss important issues on how we securely live, work, and play as the move to digital platforms accelerates.

Senior Director of Innovation & Strategy, Loki Jorgenson, led a panel of 4 cybersecurity companies through a 90-minute training session for 200+ attendees. The discussion addressed the topic of data sovereignty, specifically through the lens of Indigenous values and perspective. This was led by CEO Lawrence Lewis of One Feather (Victoria, BC) who provided insight into his company’s efforts to enable voting, entitlement, and healthcare access through digital data sovereignty tools and frameworks.



HUMAN FACTORS FOR AI IN HEALTHCARE



AI has the potential for greatly improving healthcare. Much has been said about the benefits of AI for healthcare related to patient outcomes, surveillance, safety, and improved decision making. This training session examined some of the challenges and opportunities for AI in healthcare, specifically taking a human factors perspective. Historically a number of issues around adoption of AI have been encountered in relation to human factors (e.g. how to practically integrate AI technologies into healthcare settings and clinical practice).

Circle Innovation engaged Andre Kushniruk, PhD, FACMI, is the Director and Professor in the School of Health Information Science at the University of Victoria to lead this unique training session. It uniquely anticipated the challenges of AI adoption within BC Healthcare and provides key strategies to prepare healthcare workers for its impact.



VTJ TALKS: DISRUPTING BC HEALTHCARE

In partnership with Vancouver Tech Journal and Convergence, Circle held a targeted workshop featuring Dr. Steven Reynolds to address the barriers to development of innovations within the healthcare realm and what SMEs in British Columbia (and across Canada) can do to engage reluctant clinicians and gain their support. For Healthtech startups, gaining access to the healthcare system can feel like a search for the holy grail. Even companies that are fortunate enough to have physicians or nurses on their leadership team struggle in finding partners within the system to facilitate use, do evaluations, and provide user feedback.



Dr. Steven Reynolds & Dr. Loki Jorgenson

TOUCHPOINT 2023



Touchpoint conference 2023

SIAT’s TouchPoint collective was engaged to design and conduct a stepwise mentorship, portfolio review, and internship program designed to upskill and showcase HQP participants to better meet the needs of industry partners. The milestones of the activity included: designing a program to meet key objectives, selecting HQP and industry partners, and delivering the event with active industry involvement.

05

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Circle Innovation's key communications, marketing and public relations initiatives during the CIHS project aimed to engage the right stakeholders, as well as raise public and government awareness around the Healthtech SME Program and its success stories.

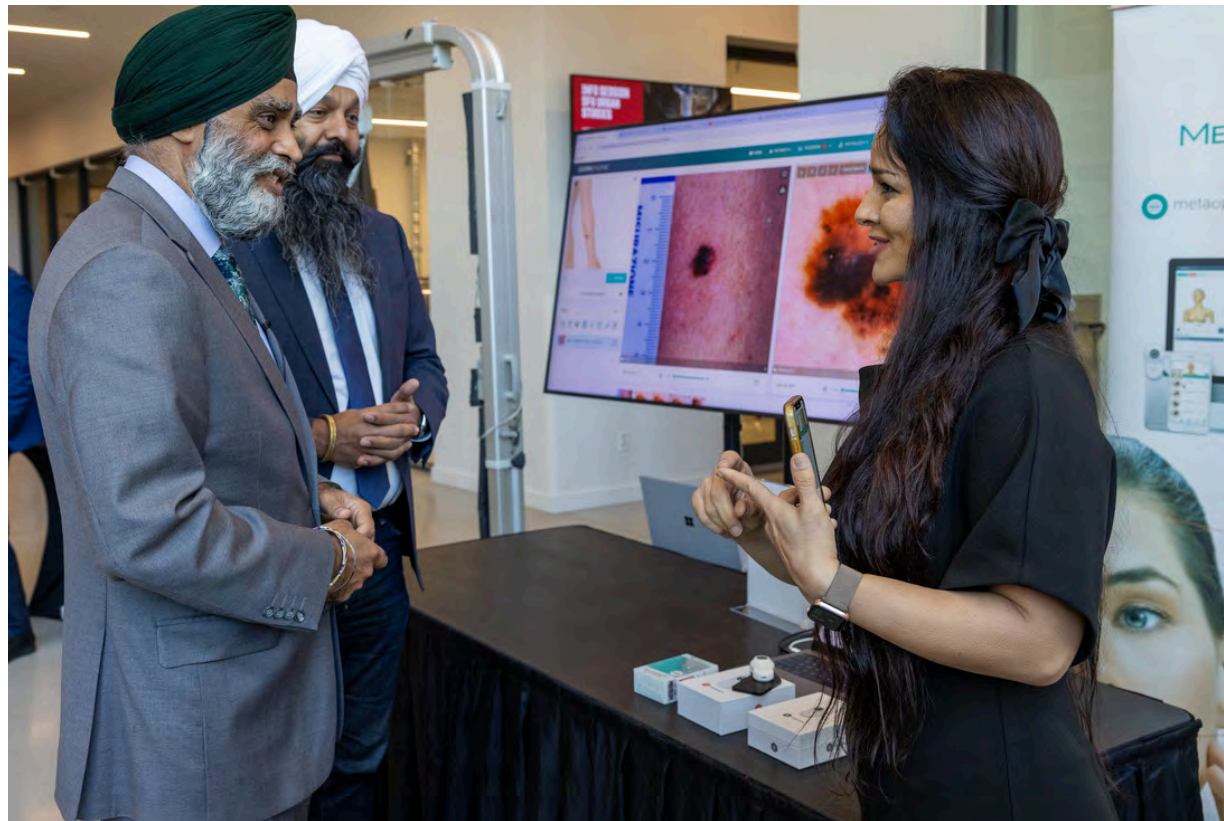
CIHS FALL 2023 ANNOUNCEMENT

Circle Innovation's fall announcement at SFU's Sustainable Energy Engineering Building (SRYE) on November 17th, 2023, enabled The Honourable Harjit S. Sajjan to witness the impact of PacifiCan's funding firsthand. This engaging event featured recipients who benefited from the \$4.7 million in funding granted to Circle Innovation by PacifiCan in March 2023.

During the event, SFU and Circle Innovation provided Minister Sajjan, Surrey Mayor Brenda Locke, and MP Randeep Sarai with an intensive, hands-on experience to showcase how the CIHS program actively supported growth and innovation in BC Healthtech SMEs like Human in Motion Robotics, MetaOptima, AltumView, Tuktu Care.

Other Members of Parliament, healthtech organizations, and key media entities were also invited to attend the announcement, and had the opportunity to explore the captivating technologies that were showcased as part of the event.

As part of the announcement, Circle Innovation also presented the impact of the CIHS program on the competitiveness of B.C.'s healthcare sector, supporting strong economic growth, and enabling critical advances in healthtech.



MetaOptima CEO Maryam Sadeghi presenting to Minister Sajjan and MP Sarai

ISLAND HEALTH CODEHACK



Code Hack was a great opportunity for Circle Innovation to participate at the ground level with patients, clinicians, technologists, and designers to stimulate innovative thinking and solutions for BC health care.

Nearly 120 participants attended the 2-day Code Hack 2024, made possible by valuable support from volunteers, some of whom came from Island Health’s Step Up Youth Program.

Innovation is a key priority for Island Health, with input from staff and patients helping generate new solutions that address healthcare challenges.

Examples of innovation in action include: Code Hack; sensor trials at Island Health washrooms that monitor for toxic drug poisonings; and accessibility features for the Cowichan District Hospital and the Cognitive Health Initiative, a visionary project focused on research and care for patients living with cognitive health issues.



Island Health Code Hack 2024

MCMMASTER HEALTH FORUM

In collaboration with AGE-WELL, Circle Innovation’s CEO and Scientific Director, Dr. Sylvain Moreno, was invited to take part in the McMaster Health Forum, which convened a series of four horizon-scanning panels with health system leaders from across Canada to identify and prioritize promising health system innovations. Building on this opportunity, Circle Innovation aimed to inform a stakeholder dialogue that was designed to spark action towards an integrated health-innovation system in Canada.



2022 CEO OF THE YEAR AWARD

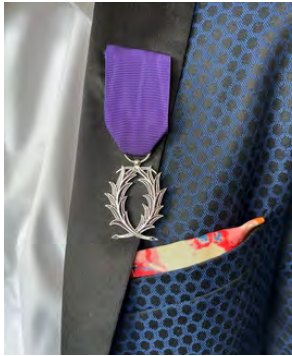
In June of 2022, our CEO, Dr. Sylvain Moreno, was named Digital Health CEO of the Year by CEO Monthly magazine.



Dr. Moreno was recognized with this remarkable award for his service as CEO and scientific director, supporting health technology companies in the creation of innovative new digital technologies, especially those that help to improve health outcomes for senior citizens.

CHEVALIER DES PALMES ACADEMIQUE

CEO and Scientific Director, Dr. Sylvain Moreno, has been inducted as a Chevalier (Knight) of the Ordre des Palmes Académiques of France. The distinguished ceremony took place on May 12, 2025, honouring his exceptional contributions to neuroscience, education, and the advancement of French-Canadian collaboration in scientific research and digital health innovation.



The Ordre des Palmes Académiques, one of France’s oldest and most prestigious civil distinctions, was originally established by Napoleon in 1808 to recognize outstanding service and dedication to education, research, and the promotion of French culture globally. Dr. Moreno now joins the ranks of renowned scholars, educators, and innovators who have received this illustrious honour.



DESHPANDE SYMPOSIUM



Circle Innovation’s SWAT (SME Workforce and Technologies) model is based on knowledge mobilization, applying academic expertise to real-world problems. In addition to our daily work, we led a panel, including SFU and UofT participation, at the annual Deshpande Symposium in Arizona to expose our organization and innovation model to international domain experts. We presented on lessons learnt around promoting innovation in different jurisdictions, and promoted technology alignment between various levels of academia, government, industry, and end-users to solve complex technical challenges. This exposure resulted in a partnership with Virginia Tech’s Center for Tech Commercialization, which is now using the Circle Innovation Model in its own work.

06

STRATEGIC PARTNERS

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY



Simon Fraser University has been a fundamental strategic partner directly and indirectly contributing both to the success of the CIHS project and to Circle Innovation's growth trajectory since the very beginning.

As a founding Member of Circle, SFU has played a pivotal role in our journey and, with that in mind, President Joy Johnson agreed to join our Board of Directors in 2023.

Throughout the two-year project with PacifiCan, SFU has supported Circle Innovation with expertise, institutional influence, access to invaluable resources, hybrid work models in Venture Labs, tools to enhance collaboration, facility support for client engagement, and the full weight of its institutional credibility.

Highly qualified personnel coming from SFU have provided valuable expertise for the CIHS Program's industry partners, increasing the likelihood of new technology developments being successful.

As a further demonstration of the success of the model used in CIHS, Circle provided support to SFU in designing the agtech project that was eventually funded and rebranded as the BC Centre for AgriTech Innovation.



AGE-WELL NETWORK



Circle Innovation’s relationship with the AGE-WELL Network is a clear example of how a not-for-profit’s active involvement in a strategic partnership can connect multiple stakeholders. This national collaboration connects stakeholders in health technology development and academic entrepreneurship to address the challenges faced by an aging population.

As a founding Member of Circle Innovation, AGE-WELL’s endorsement of our organization enabled us to successfully execute the CIHS Program. Their support of two-year initiative has had a positive impact on the well-being and health of British Columbians, and ultimately, Canadians.

In January 2023, Circle Innovation gained new partnerships by attending the official launch of envisAGE, a five year pan-Canadian initiative steered by AGE-WELL and MEDTEQ+.



Later that year, Circle Innovation attended the AgeTech Innovation Week co-hosted by AGE-WELL and MEDTEQ+ where our executive team shared ideas with leaders in the AgeTech sector In Ontario. During the conference, Circle Innovation was able to present its proven innovation model, strengthening our existing relationship with the University of Toronto and fostering new discussions with the National Research Council of Canada, CanAge and YouAreUNLTD.

Circle is proud to be part of the network created by AGE-WELL, envisAGE, and MEDTEQ+ and to help it leverage its community, industry, academic, and government partners to grow Canada’s health technology businesses and generate innovative systems to help Canada’s seniors age in place.



ROYAL COLUMBIAN HOSPITALS, HEALTH AUTHORITIES

Through on-going business development efforts, relationships have been established at Royal Columbian Hospital with Dr. Steven Reynolds, involving his Advancing Innovation in Medicine Institute. AIM focuses on bringing innovations developed at and through RCH into commercial readiness. It will bring key technologies such as Sanctuary AI’s Phoenix general purpose robot into contact with hospital staff, processes, and environments, in order to help develop its capabilities and validate its utility.



Expanding its relationships into public sector healthcare, Circle has been in discussions with the Digital Lab of John Jacob at BC Children's Hospital to investigate alignments and common interests. As well, Loki Jorgenson has been supporting activities such as the Code Hack event at Island Health, and introducing healthtech SMEs to their Innovation team. Outreach has been made to innovation groups operating within PHSA and Fraser Health, and support for SMEs operating studies and deployments within those health authorities such as Mindful Gardens. As well, meetings with the Ministry of Health have established on-going channels of communications.





07

FUTURE PLANNING

THE ROAD AHEAD FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

With the need for collaboration between academia, community, government, industry, and end users evolving and expanding, our cost-effective, fit-for-purpose solutions are of paramount importance.

Building on the success of the Circle Innovation Healthtech SME (CIHS) program, we have been working to expand the application of our SWAT model beyond the health technology sector.

Our unique industry-focused SWAT model plugs-in SMEs quickly with the right expertise to overcome barriers and deliver new technologies to the market.

In 2023, we expanded our scope to other industry sectors like Agritech, Fintech, Cybersecurity, Robotics, and Agetech, as well as addressing investment challenges for SMEs.



RISE in BC - Reaching Investment through SME Engagement

This unique program connects SMEs with investor and VCs to determine their high-growth potential, readiness for investment and overcome barriers.



LiFE in Canada - Living Innovations for the Elderly

In partnership with a network of national innovation hubs, LiFE focuses on delivering health tech solutions for Canada's aging population.



FAST for BC- Future AI SME Transformation

FAST is an ambitious project with a consortium of stakeholders that positions BC as a leader in applied AI across sectors.

RISE IN BC

Informed by investor input, RISE in BC supports tech SMEs with high growth potential to address critical barriers to investment.

THE PROBLEM

BC technology SMEs face critical barriers to investment, hampering their growth and survival as well as limiting the BC economy.

These barriers include:

- Limited Market Assessment and Development
- Lack of Technology Readiness
- IP, Regulatory, Cybersecurity Hurdles
- Capital Attraction Strategies



Circle Innovation’s ‘**Reaching Investment through SME Engagement**’ (*RISE in BC*) program positions high-growth potential (HGP) SMEs for investment.

Launched in April 2024 with the support of **PacifiCan**’s BizAP RIE funding program, *RISE in BC* works closely with investors and tech SMEs. The RISE program moves potential investment candidates rapidly through recruitment and selection.

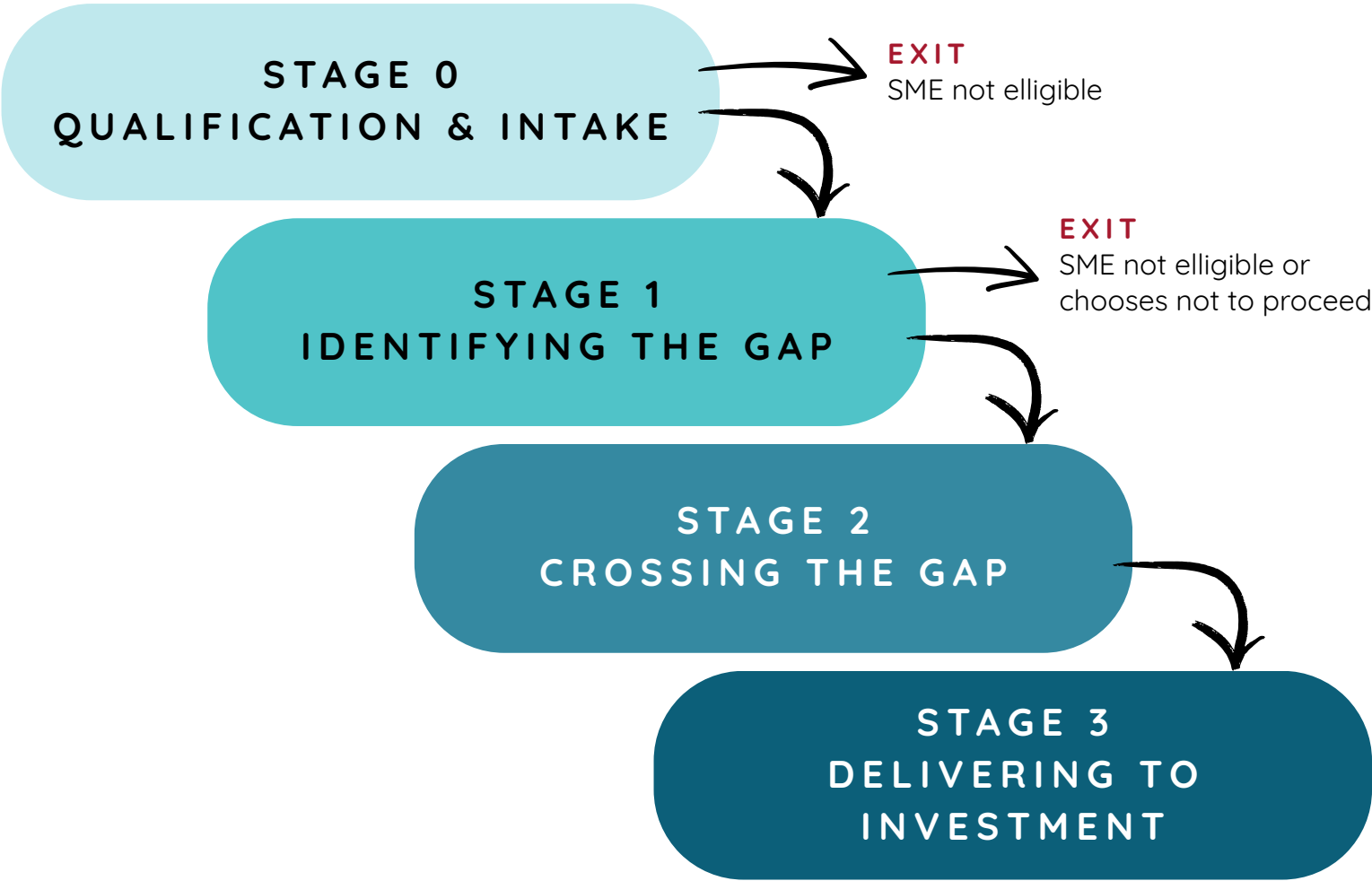
Investors identify any barriers to investment and provide Circle with the foundation to apply its SWAT Model to advance the SME toward investment.

RISE in BC will then facilitate access to strategic partner programs that bring SMEs into contact with potential partners, as well as offering specialized support, training, and resources to help guide SME leadership in navigating their search for investment.

RISE in BC will strengthen British Columbia’s culture of innovation and collaboration by creating a more dynamic and interconnected technology business ecosystem in BC.



REACHING INVESTMENT: HOW IT WORKS



Assessing barriers to investment

Rapid focused due diligence with investor professionals.

Identifying solutions

Collaborating with SMEs to develop solutions to their identified barriers to investment, enhancing their valuation, or increasing their readiness.

Resourcing and co-funding projects

Bringing key resources and co-funding to SME projects that will enhance investment opportunities and lower barriers.

Moving at the Speed of Business

Adapting projects flexibly to meet the needs of the moment and overcome arising technology business challenges.

Breaking silos

Connecting tech SMEs to service providers, experts, researchers, regulatory consulting, key skills, customers, and more – fast!

LIFE IN CANADA

Our *LiFE in Canada* Program facilitates R&D and implementation projects between healthcare SMEs, researchers, seniors living providers, specialists, and the elderly to bring AgeTech products to market faster.

THE PROBLEM

Current healthcare, housing, mobility, and communications sectors in the AgeTech environment, including fundamental Research & Development (R&D), are unable to meet the rapidly growing demand generated by Canada's aging population. Companies developing these needed technologies require support to quickly move these technologies to market, where they can be proven and adopted effectively.



Circle Innovation is proud to be one of 5 Innovation Hubs in the **envisAGE** network, a \$47M initiative funded by Canada's **Strategic Innovation Fund**, and overseen by **AGE-WELL** and **MEDTEQ+**.

In our role as an envisAGE Innovation Hub, we launched a new collaborative program for AgeTech product development in 2024 - **Living Innovations For the Elderly** (*LiFE in Canada*).

LiFE in Canada addresses AgeTech challenges by accelerating the pace of solution development.

The *LiFE in Canada* program co-designs projects between qualified SMEs with AgeTech solutions and key stakeholders in academia, government, centers of excellence, innovation hubs, and end users under real world settings (i.e. hospitals, elder's residences, long term care operators, heath authorities and elders themselves).

This collaborative program delivers projects that integrate innovative solutions and services into living environments to care for older adults, providing support for their caregivers, facilities and society as a whole.

Federal funding for LiFE and envisAGE is provided through Innovation Canada, part of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada

LiFE brings products to market faster, enables their assessment and implementation, and drives improvements in elder care that support Canada's aging population.

LiFE outcomes will lead to effective innovations and leverage the benefits of technology-based solutions that can support older adults to maintain their independence, health, and overall quality of life at home, in institutions and abroad.



National Innovation Hubs



Circle Innovation is thrilled to join the envisAGE network, a partnership that amplifies our shared commitment to bolstering Canadian SMEs. This alliance with organizations nationwide will energize our efforts to catalyze healthcare transformation, benefiting not only our organization but also the people of British Columbia through enhanced access to a national network. At the heart of this initiative is our dedication to empowering older adults and care providers with innovative solutions that uphold their independence and dignity in an aging society. We are honoured to be part of such a transformative initiative.

FAST FOR BC

With a consortium of stakeholders, Circle Innovation is building the *FAST for BC* initiative -- AI productization and commercialization aimed at economic and social impact for SMEs.

THE PROBLEM

The AI-propelled global economic transformation is occurring at an unprecedented rate. Over 400 million workers may be displaced worldwide by 2030.

Many non-specialized tech SMEs operate in silo, disconnected from key AI stakeholders such as universities, governments, NFPs, and front-running industry leaders. They are falling behind.

With a commitment of \$5M from private industry and \$5M from PacifiCan, Circle Innovation with **Simon Fraser University** and over 80 partners propose the **Future AI SME Transformation** (*FAST for BC*) initiative.

In addition to the support from private industry, Circle is working with **PacifiCan** and the **BC Ministry of JEDI** to expand support for *FAST for BC* to \$30M and make it a truly transformative initiative engaging BC's AI ecosystem to establish a centre for Applied AI.

FAST for BC will be designed to catalyze the adoption, commercialization, and diffusion of AI technologies among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), amplifying BC's capacity for innovation, elevating AI leadership, and propelling economic development across regions and the province

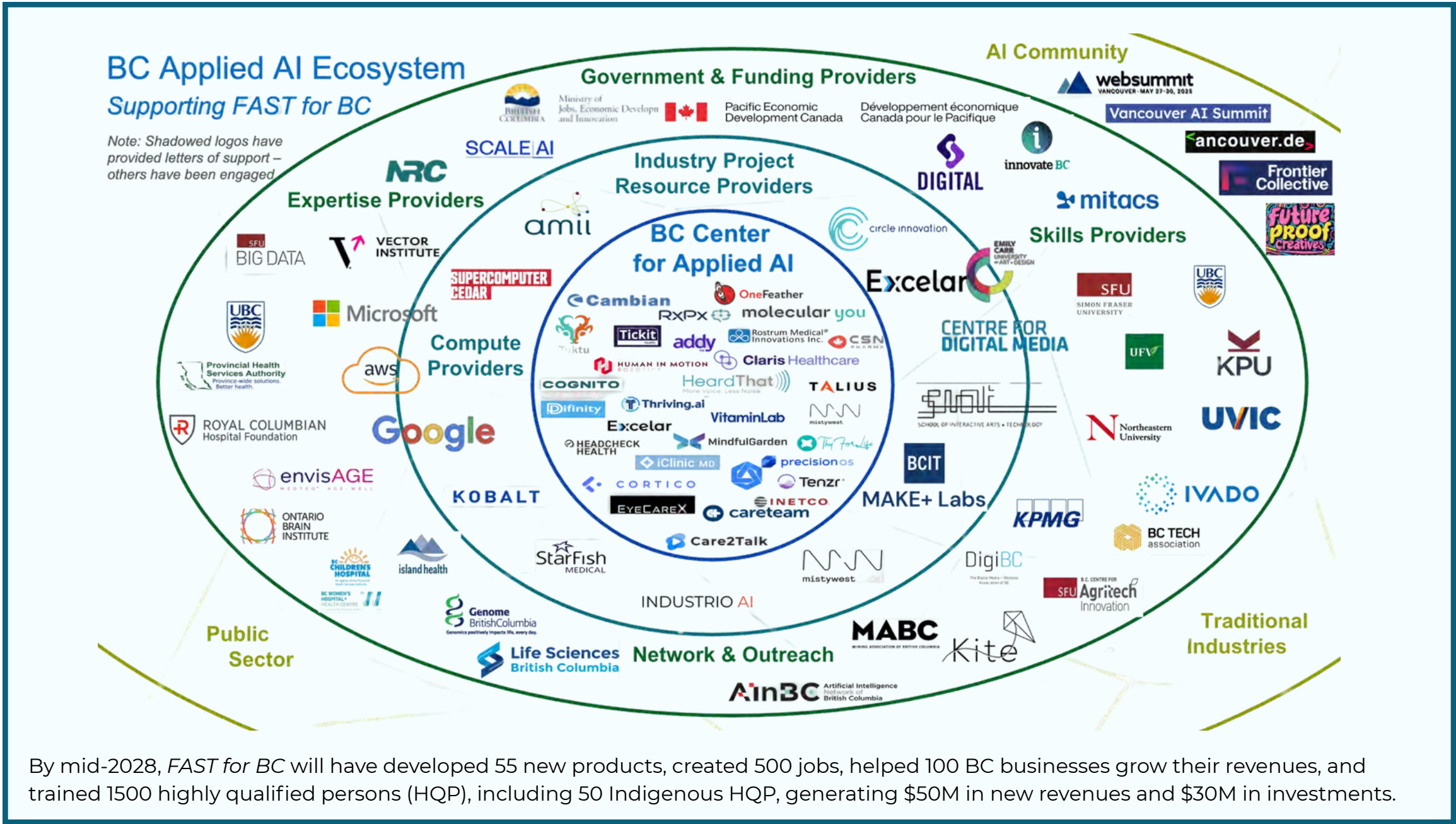


Circle Innovation's *FAST for BC* program applies a proven innovation methodology - SWAT - to help SMEs to overcome AI adoption, productization, and commercialization challenges.

Through our program, SMEs de-risk development by connecting directly with sector stakeholders, testing technologies in simulated and real-life settings to ensure scalability, and leverage regional AI products, services, expertise, and technologies to grow an AI-enabled digital tech cluster in BC.

Prioritizing disciplined execution, decreased time to market, and ensuring product-market fit, *FAST for BC* helps SMEs focus on the drivers for success under intensely competitive conditions.

HQP upskilling, training, and research are engaged within universities and colleges, creating employment while de-risking industry projects by transferring key skills, knowledge, and technologies.



By mid-2028, *FAST for BC* will have developed 55 new products, created 500 jobs, helped 100 BC businesses grow their revenues, and trained 1500 highly qualified persons (HQP), including 50 Indigenous HQP, generating \$50M in new revenues and \$30M in investments.

08

FINAL WORDS

“NEARLY HALF (47%) OF CANADIAN BUSINESSES SAID THEY LACK THE IN-HOUSE EXPERTISE TO VALIDATE AND VERIFY THE ACCURACY OF THEIR AI ALGORITHMS, AND MORE THAN FOUR IN 10 (44%) SAID THEIR DATA SETS ARE EITHER TOO SMALL OR TOO BIG, ARE MISSING DATA, ARE INCORRECT OR NOT PROPERLY FORMATTED.”
– KPMG CANADA TECH SURVEY, SEP 2023

INTO THE FUTURE

The Circle Innovation Healthtech SME program (CIHS) was the genesis of what has become a nationally validated business model – a unique SME-focused program that plugs-in SMEs quickly with the right expertise to develop new technologies in response to consumer demand.

The AI-induced global economic transformation is occurring at an unprecedented rate. As the need for technology alignment between various levels of the government, industry and end users continues to evolve, the need for cost-effective, fit-for-purpose solutions is of paramount importance.

BUILDING FASTER, BETTER FOR BC

BC has been preparing for the intense race to commercialize AI. The Artificial Intelligence network of British Columbia (AInBC.org) was established in 2018 to unify, organize, and catalyze the AI and Machine Learning (ML) communities in British Columbia. BC is home to the broadly focused Digital Technology Supercluster and sector leaders like the Quantum Algorithms Institute.

However, today many non-specialized tech SMEs operate in silo, disconnected from key AI stakeholders. SMEs integrating AI solutions face barriers to AI strategy development, problem identification and definition, data supply and preparation, AI technology and supplier assessment, and trial-and-error product deployment.

“WHILE CANADA HAS BEEN RELATIVELY EFFECTIVE AT GETTING LARGE FIRMS ON BOARD WITH AI TECHNOLOGIES, SMALL FIRMS HAVE BEEN LEFT BEHIND.”
– DAIS REPORT, SEP 2023

Through our programs and our proposed FAST for BC initiative, SMEs de-risk development by connecting directly with sector stakeholders, testing technologies in simulated and real-life settings to ensure scalability, and leverage regional AI products, services, expertise, and technologies to grow an AI-enabled digital technologies cluster in BC. This will increase productivity, address critical sectoral challenges, grow industry revenue, upskill BC talent, create jobs, and directly contribute to BC’s economy.

Circle Innovation’s Future AI SME Transformation (FAST for BC) program applies a proven innovation methodology to help SMEs to overcome AI adoption, productization, and commercialization challenges. FAST actively works with established SMEs to define their projects and navigate BC’s exceptional ecosystem of data/ML/AI experts, academic researchers, and developers to quickly plug-in the right resources.

FAST for BC will increase productivity, address critical sectoral challenges, grow industry revenue, upskill BC talent, create jobs, and directly contribute to BC’s economy.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



Pacific Economic
Development Canada

Développement économique
Canada pour le Pacifique

Canada



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