

New Call-For-Proposals Announced

Effective March 1st 2003, the Funding Consortium is inviting proposals in both research and development.

This secondary call is intended to complement the primary call held each fall by the consortium. A significant portion of research activity is not tied to a one-cycle-per-year format. A second application opportunity gives both funders and researchers a chance to fill in gaps, look at new opportunity, and spread out the work load.

The second new feature is the addition of a development call. This expands the joint funding opportunities beyond the realm of analytical science. Projects here may range from market development to investment attraction, or from extension to commercialization. Development applications need to be both strategic in scope and broad in benefit to the industry.



At present ACIDF has five partner organizations in the consortium. Contacts for our partners are Freda Molenkamp (AARI), Darcy Fitzgerald (ALIDF), Bill Buchta (DLFOA), John Christensen (Ag & Food Council), and Ross Bricker (AVAC). In expanding the frequency of calls and including the development areas we hope to increase the partnership at the round table. That is a significant step toward a "one window" project application approach.

The new call-for-proposal is on a tight time line. For the secondary round we will accept full applications only, and applications will be accepted only on official electronic forms. This call closes April 1st 2003 and successful applicants will be notified by June 1st 2003.

Applications, guidelines and priority documents will be available from the Funding Consortium website at "www.fundingconsortium.ca".

For information on deadlines and time lines see the table later in this newsletter or check the website.

Challenges for An Entrepreneur

Lance VandenBorn is the entrepreneur behind Thompson Valley Farms. He designs and markets some unique cooking oil, soap and body cream products and is concentrating on the Edmonton regional market. Lance shares some of his experiences carving a new niche in the market place.

By Lance VandenBorn, Thompson Valley Farms

Building an industry around hemp has been full of surprises. Starting with near complete brand awareness in our target market and a huge supply of seed available, things seemed pretty rosy. Many traditional new crop and product development problems seemed largely managed. Three years later, everything is different.

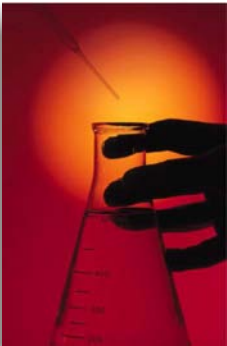
With the large supply at hand, we immediately discovered that existing manufacturing equipment failed nearly every time. From the sheer strength of the fibers to the peculiarities of the seed, we needed to use some really creative approaches to problem solving. In doing so, we also found a few rather uniquely marketable products ranging from food oils to soaps.

The Downtown Farmer's Market in Edmonton has been great for us as has our regular table at the Strathcona Farmer's Market.. As they attract a real cross section of consumers, we could test different packaging, different products, and measure consumer price points quite effectively. We got to know our customers and they told us what they wanted. They liked glass.

A Canadian-made square glass bottle was a big hit. The look is tall, green and elegant. Customers were buying, retailers were calling, and promptly the manufacturer of the bottles went out of business.

A few months later the United States took a run at us with the embargo. Every American customer immediately cancelled all their orders.

Canadian markets still looked promising in spite of the international situation. We contracted 80 acres of hemp production last year, then got set back with a really bad drought. We haven't been able to source sufficient safflower seed. We have contracted acres of hemp, flax and safflower in hopes of meeting our needs for the new crop.



In spite of adversity, we continue to develop our products and markets. ACIDF has agreed to support a launch of a diversified product line. We expect to have four Alberta grown cold pressed oils ready for market in a few months, possibly by the time you read this.

Although our efforts have been focused on hemp, ACIDF funding will provide us a more diversified scope and add legitimacy in the eyes of distributors and grocery retailers. This combined with our communication and contact with our customers should expand our position in the Edmonton market.

Keep an eye on the shelves for “Thompson Valley Farms” brand food oils, soaps and cosmetic creams. Our new lines of products from hemp, flax and safflower should be available in the Farmer's markets soon, and in the Edmonton-area mainstream grocery in October. They are products grown, processed, designed and supported in Alberta!

Grant Application Calendar 2003 - 2004

Secondary Call-For-Proposal Calendar - Spring 2003

	<u>Research Activity</u>	<u>Development Activity</u>
March 1 2003	Call for FULL research proposals	Call for FULL development proposals
April 1st	Research full proposals due	Development full proposals due
	Technical reviews	
May 15th	Consortium Round Table	
June 1st	Funding Decisions (Secondary Call)	

Primary Call-For-Proposal Calendar - Fall 2003

	<u>Research Activity</u>	<u>Development Activity</u>
September 1 2003	Call for research PRE-proposals	Call for FULL development proposals
October 1st	Research pre-proposals due	Development full proposals due
November 1st	Request full research proposals	Technical reviews
November 19th		Consortium Round Table
December 1st	Full Research Proposals due	Funding Decisions (Primary Call)
January 19 2004	Technical Reviews	
February 17th	Consortium Round Table	
March 1 2004	Funding Decisions (Primary Call)	



www.fundingconsortium.ca

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Contact us through our website at www.acidf.ca, e-mail at doug.walkey@acidf.ca, or by telephone at 403 782-8034.