



## C3 Network

# START A BUSINESS

### Program Guidelines

#### OVERVIEW

C3 Network along with its partners, with funding from Ontario Ministry of Research and Innovation, is pleased to present the C3 Network **Start a Business** program that will provide a maximum of \$40,000 in cash and \$100,000 in advisory services, software, lab equipment, and commercialization support to assist in the creation of commercially-focused digital media projects in the cities of Toronto and Pickering.

This **Start a Business** program is intended to seed the development of individuals to create new projects and provide opportunities for emerging entrepreneurs to develop their digital media ideas and establish strategies for business growth.

Projects supported through **Start a Business** will receive incubation space in either the City of Toronto or the City of Pickering.

Successful applicants will also receive strategic support on an as needed basis to ensure that they are in a position to advance their future goals as digital media business owners including:

- A series of business plan development workshops
- Access to advisors providing business mentorship
- Access to advisors providing production mentorship
- Access to university labs and faculty
- Incubation space
- Registration to the [Canadian Innovation Exchange](#)

#### OBJECTIVES

C3 Network will provide seed funding for digital media startups. Seed funding is the earliest stage of venture funding. It pays the expenses while the business gets started.

The goal of the **Start a Business** program is to get a couple of digital media projects through the first phase. This means: getting the businesses to the point where they have built something impressive enough to raise money on a larger scale.

While supporting the successful applicants, the cities of Toronto and Pickering will pilot digital media business incubators and make plans to establish permanent facilities in downtown locations.

## **SPONSORING PARTNERS**

- City of Pickering
- City of Toronto
- Communitech
- Digital Arts and Technology Association (DATA)
- Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD)
- University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT)

## **APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY:**

The **Start a Business** program is open to Ontario based digital media entrepreneurs that form partnerships to create project teams. Eligible partners include the following:

- [DATA](#) members
- OCAD students and faculty
- UOIT students

Project teams must consist of no more than four partners and no less than two, and may consist of any combination of eligible partners.

A project team must have one partner that is a key contact. The key contact must be available a minimum of 20 hours between June 1 and December 31, 2009 to participate in business plan development workshops.

Project teams may submit more than one application, but the key contact must be different.

The project must focus on the development of proprietary property that is based in either digital media technology or content—or both.

On acceptance into the **Start a Business** program, all project team partners will be required to sign an agreement covering the terms of their participation in the program.

## **PROJECT ELGIBILITY**

The **Start a Business** program is looking for the best digital media project ideas that need seed funding to establish new businesses based on the development of proprietary software or content. Software or content is considered proprietary if partners are the originators of the project, the holders of copyright or have obtained copyright permission to adapt any material for the project, or the holders of a patent or have obtained legal rights to further develop or modify software for the project.

Projects must be completed by the end of December 2009.



Game projects originating from UOIT students will be eligible to receive faculty advisory services from UOIT's Faculty of Business and Information Technology as well as use of the Gaming Lab, including equipment and software access, plus assistance from UOIT's Office of Technology Transfer to assess the final product for commercial viability and support to safeguard intellectual property.

Mobile content and services projects originating from OCAD students will be eligible to receive advisory services from the Mobile Experience Innovation Centre (MEIC) focusing on user experience and usability design as well as assistance from OCAD's Office of Research and Graduate Studies to assess the final product for commercial viability and support to safeguard intellectual property.

The **Start a Business** program will **NOT** support the creation of the following projects:

- Projects that are primarily intended to promote companies and corporate agendas
- Projects that are created on a fee-for-service basis

## **BUDGET REQUIREMENTS**

The **Start a Business** program will provide an award up to \$20,000 per successful applicant. The award can represent up to 100% of the project budget. The award is non-repayable. Additional financing above and beyond the **Start a Business** financial support is permitted. Applicants may include deferrals/donations in the budget along with signed letters confirming these contributions.

The cash award is tied to the following two deliverables:

- A business plan
- A prototype

Both deliverables must be finished before the end of 2009. The due dates of the deliverables will be negotiated with sponsoring partners based on an approved project plan.

The cash award is intended to cover the living expenses of the partners while they are building their business plan and prototype.

## **DECISION CRITERIA**

Applicants will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Extent to which they meet the applicant and project eligibility criteria
- Viability of the project
- Quality, originality and creativity of the project
- Market strengths of the project
- Motivation and skills of the partners



- Extent to which the project team's objectives for participating fit with the program

## WHAT SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS GET

- Financial support of up to \$20,000. The award will be drawn down over the course of the program as project teams reach established milestones
- Access to business plan development workshops
- Individual consultations with advisors who will provide guidance to assist project teams in positioning themselves for growth as business owners and developers/producers of digital media technology/content. Program administrators will consult with participating project teams to secure appropriate advisors
- Incubation space in either the City of Toronto or the City of Pickering
- UOIT students will have access to UOIT's game lab and advisory services
- OCAD students with projects in the mobile content and services space will have access to advisory services provided by MEIC and OCAD
- Registration to the Canadian Innovation Exchange

## TIMELINE AND APPLICATION PROCESS

The program's administrators will assess applications for eligibility. Eligible applications will be forwarded to a jury of industry leaders who will determine which projects best meet the criteria of the program. The jury will review the submissions to determine a shortlist of up to six projects. Applicants will be notified as to whether their project was short listed within three weeks of the application deadline. Short listed applicants are required to pitch their projects to the jury approximately one week after receiving their invitation to participate in the pitch. The key contact must be present at this pitch meeting. After the pitch meeting, the jury will select applicants to participate in the **Start a Business** program. The jury is not required to make any minimum number of awards. All decisions are final. C3 Network reserves the right to cancel the adjudication should applications be insufficient in overall quality or quantity to warrant it. Applicants are not to direct any questions or comments to the jury members in advance of deadline or following jury decisions.

The timeline for the program is as follows:

- Applications must reach C3 Network via email to [startabusiness@c3ontario.com](mailto:startabusiness@c3ontario.com) by 5 p.m. on April 30, 2009
- Successful applicants will be notified of the status of their applications within one month of the deadline
- Business plan development workshops will run July to October 2009 (exact dates to be determined)
- Projects must commence development/production by June 15, 2009
- Projects must be completed by December 31, 2009



Applicants are required to deliver the following items as part of their application package:

- Completed application form
- Completed resume on c3ontario.com
- Rights agreement(s) showing the project team partners have the right to produce the project (if applicable)

## **SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS**

On acceptance into the **Start a Business** program, project teams will be required to sign an agreement covering the terms of their participation in the program. The agreement will outline specific deliverables that will include but is not limited to a copy of the project's business plan, copies of any marketing materials prepared, and assessment of the program, and a demonstration of the prototype.

Program administrators must be notified of any significant changes in the project as defined in the contract and if applicable, changes will require consent.

Participants will be required to provide feedback on the results of their participation in the **Start a Business** program no more than one year after its conclusion.

## **HOW TO APPLY**

All partners in the project team must have their resumes on c3ontario.com and submit a completed application form to c3network@c3ontario.com before 5 p.m. on April 30, 2009.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

If you have any questions regarding your project's potential eligibility, please contact:

Kathleen Webb  
Project Director, C3 Network  
Communitech  
416-878-8876  
c3network@c3ontario.com

To stay informed of program news and updates, please be sure to join our Start a Business mailing list accessible at:

Send an email with the word "SUBSCRIBE" on the subject line to:  
EMAIL: c3network@c3ontario.com

