

FedDev Ontario investments drive innovation and growth in Niagara Region

From: [Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario](#)

News release

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Nearly \$13 million to diversify and strengthen the local economy, enhance competitiveness in key sectors, and create jobs of the future

September 3, 2019 – Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario

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Today, Vance Badawey, Member of Parliament for Niagara Centre, along with Chris Bittle, Member of Parliament for St. Catharines, announced a total [FedDev Ontario](#) contribution of nearly \$13 million for three Niagara projects that will support economic growth, create good jobs and continue to drive innovation across the region. This announcement was made on behalf of the Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development and Minister responsible for FedDev Ontario.

FedDev Ontario's investments include:

- Up to \$5 million for [Niagara College](#), in collaboration with Vineland Research and Innovation Centre and the University of Guelph, to establish a Greenhouse Technology Network (GTN). The network will bring together greenhouse growers and technology experts to accelerate the development, commercialization and adoption of new, leading-

edge greenhouse technologies. Funding will support collaborative projects, with industry partners to develop and commercialize technology solutions to address various challenges faced by the greenhouse industry. This project will strengthen our greenhouse ecosystem and sustain the competitiveness of the region's greenhouse industry, while helping more than 130 businesses and organizations to commercialize new products or services and scale up.

- Up to \$5 million for [Brock University](#) to establish the Brock-Niagara Validation, Prototyping and Manufacturing Institute (VPMI), a single-site resource to help businesses in the growing bioproducts, bioscience, bioagriculture and chemical manufacturing sectors to scale up and increase their competitiveness. The VPMI will be a state-of-the-art facility providing access to scientific expertise, fabrication and prototyping resources along with training to support seamless commercialization and adoption of technology solutions. This project will help diversify the local economy, while supporting up to 33 businesses to commercialize 47 new products or services.
- Nearly \$3 million for the [City of Niagara Falls](#), in partnership with Ryerson University and Spark Niagara, to establish the Niagara Falls-Ryerson Innovation Hub (NFRIH), a business incubator focused on digital media technologies. Ryerson's successful Digital Media Zone (DMZ) will serve as the model and key resource for designing NFRIH programming and services, while Spark Niagara's existing partnerships and company pipelines will help attract and refer clients. The hub will offer access to expertise, mentorship, research and development and international partnerships to incubate and accelerate the growth of promising digital media start-ups. The funding will support 85 companies, commercialize 12 new innovations and stimulate diversification of the Niagara Falls economy.

In total, these three investments are expected to create and maintain nearly 390 jobs in southern Ontario. The projects capitalize on Niagara's strengths to spur growth across key sectors, including agriculture, clean technology, life sciences and digital technologies, while enhancing collaboration in the region, diversifying the innovation ecosystem, and providing new opportunities for businesses to grow and succeed.

Quotes

"Today's announcement is truly exciting news for the Niagara region. The Government of Canada is committed to strengthening southern Ontario's innovation economy by investing in the start-ups and entrepreneurs of this region. This project will create a more diverse economy for Niagara, boosting our strong agri-business and digital media sectors, while adding good jobs for the region we call home."

– Vance Badawey, Member of Parliament for Niagara Centre

"These projects build on our long history of research and innovation, and ensure that we keep pushing the boundaries to benefit the Niagara economy. Our region continues to join forces and collaborate with our post-secondary institutions to keep jobs and opportunities local. In particular, the project announced today for Brock University is a perfect example of how this institution brings together expertise in biology and chemistry to uniquely tackle challenges."

– Chris Bittle, Member of Parliament for St. Catharines

“The Government of Canada has an ambitious plan to help make Canada a world leader in innovation. By making strategic investments like these to diversify our regional economies, we are sharpening Canada’s competitive edge in the new global economy.”

– The Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development and Minister responsible for FedDev Ontario

“The impact that this announcement has on Niagara Falls is colossal. The Ryerson Innovation Hub will elevate Niagara Falls, bring us an esteemed educational partner in Ryerson and bring critical mass downtown again, as we support students, education and young entrepreneurs in our City. Youth retention, economic diversification and downtown redevelopment are all priorities of this City Council. Thank you to Ryerson President Mohamed Lachemi, Minister Bains, and the Federal Government for seeing this through.”

– His Worship Jim Diodati, Mayor of the City of Niagara Falls

“Niagara College is thankful that the government has so enthusiastically supported our project to create a new Greenhouse Technology Network in Southern Ontario. This ground-breaking new initiative will combine our longstanding tradition of excellence and leadership in the horticultural and agri-business sectors with our experience in conducting world-class applied research to further encourage innovation and develop new technologies in this rapidly evolving field.”

– Dan Patterson, PhD, President, Niagara College

“We are grateful of the Government of Canada’s support in launching this strategic initiative that helps to build the regional economic cluster of the Niagara region and supports the competitiveness of industry across Canada. The VPMI will support applied research and development, innovation and commercialization efforts to help businesses grow and thrive. It will play an important role in Brock University’s strategic priority to partner with business and communities in support the prosperity and vitality of the Niagara region and beyond.”

– Dr. Gervan Fearon, President, Brock University

Quick facts

- Niagara’s strong post-secondary and research network is the driving force that exists between educators, researchers, students and business partners to create a hub of technology-focused ventures.
- Niagara is the third most competitive North American centre for digital media.
- The Niagara region has multiple agri-business processors and value-added agribusiness services that extend their support to the entire industry.
- This year marks 10 years of FedDev Ontario delivering [funding](#) and [business services](#) to support innovation and growth in southern Ontario.
- Today’s investments align with Canada’s [Innovation and Skills Plan](#), which addresses the changing nature of the economy and seeks to create new

opportunities for businesses, as well as Canadians, to participate in the innovation economy, giving them access to the tools, training, support and investments needed to succeed.

Associated links

- [FedDev Ontario](#)
- [Niagara College](#)
- [Brock University](#)
- [City of Niagara Falls](#)

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