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**Program Overview**

In the digital age, the growth of the economy goes hand in hand with the increased threat of cyber attacks. In 2022 ~ 85% of Canadian organizations fell prey to a successful attack, putting our critical infrastructure and national security at risk. Over the past decade, Canada has set its sights on positioning the nation as a global leader in cyber security supporting advanced research, fostering digital innovation and developing the relevant skills and knowledge that will make our graduates competitive in the new innovation economy.

Lab2Market Cybersecurity was developed to aid in this endeavour by improving Canada’s research commercialization performance. The program does this by supporting researchers in the early stages of development, providing the resources, training, and guidance needed to take their cyber security innovations to market.

*As a participant in Lab2Market Cybersecurity you will receive:*

1. $15,000 in funding.
2. Training from innovation leaders.
3. The opportunity to assess product-market fit.
4. Access to advisors, industry experts, and funders.
5. Access to a vast entrepreneurial network and community.

**Tentative Schedule**

Lab2Market Cybersecurity brings a scientific approach to entrepreneurship to help researchers assess and reduce the commercial risk associated with their projects. Participants will form hypotheses about their potential customers, their business model, and their market entry point. These hypotheses are then validated through market research. The data collected is analyzed, adjusted, and then iterated upon. In this way, participants gain clarity on both the commercial feasibility of their project and their path to market. The program is four months in duration and is broken up into three distinct training phases.

- **Phase 1**
  - Jan-Feb 2023
- **Phase 2**
  - Feb-Mar 2023
- **Phase 3**
  - April 2023
Phase 1: Pre-Program January 16 – February 10, 2023
The focus of the Pre-Program is to introduce participants to the world of deep-tech entrepreneurship and inspire them to take the first steps toward commercialization. Participants will be welcomed into a community of like-minded and driven individuals with diverse research backgrounds. They will hear from successful founders who have been there and done it and will learn the principal market research methodologies and techniques put into practice throughout the core-program.

Phase 2: Core-Program February 13 – March 31, 2023
The Core-Program is where participants “get out of the building” and put the learnings from the Pre-Program into action. This is an intense and fast-paced period, but participants will be supported by a vast entrepreneurial network of advisors, industry experts, and business resources from across the country.

In addition to receiving market research support, participants will also receive in-depth presentations on various entrepreneurial topics, the purpose of which is to bring new information to light, form and refine hypotheses, and help analyze the data.

Phase 3: Post-Program April 3 – April 18, 2023
In the Post-Program participants will analyze their findings to determine the appropriate path forward for their projects (see Program Deliverables). This will also be a time to celebrate the successes of the cohort as a community.

Program Deliverables
One of the primary reasons that entrepreneurs fail at starting a business is that there is no market need for what they are building; 35% of entrepreneurs fail because they are labouring under the assumption that their technology is addressing a real problem, but they have never engaged with their perceived customers. Lab2Market Cybersecurity is designed using the world’s best methodologies and frameworks to help our participants run viable experiments with the market to gain actionable data. These experiments will come in the form of stakeholder interactions:

Primary Market Research: 100+ Stakeholder Interactions
Note: A stakeholder is any person, organization, social group, or society at large that can affect and/or be affected by your business.

Throughout the Core-Program, participants can be expected to conduct as many as 100 stakeholder interactions. These can be with potential customers, the end-users of the product or service, industry experts, and other stakeholders. The predominant form of these stakeholder interactions will be interviews, however, depending on the stage, nature, and associated risk of the project, the form, and purpose of these interactions may vary.

Determine a Path Forward
By the end of the program, the objective is to determine the appropriate path forward for the project. Once the data is collected, the potential path(s) could be:
1. To start a company – Participants will now have to think through future funding, team formation, incorporation, etc.

2. To conduct further market research – Either the current idea does not meet a market demand for the hypothesized application, or there is not enough information to support a definitive path forward. Therefore, the team will continue their research efforts to validate the current market or find another application for their technology.

3. To license the technology developed – Participants will develop the technology to a point where it is attractive for potential partners, including the creation of a competitive bidding environment.

4. To continue the research and development of the project in academia – This can be true for various reasons, including lack of funding, other priorities of the team, market research data, and more.

All of these options are considered to be successful outcomes for the program, should they be backed by strong market data.

Eligibility Criteria & Program Expectations

Applicants must apply in teams consisting of a(n):

Entrepreneurial Lead (EL) – A full-time graduate (Masters or Ph.D.) student or postdoctoral fellow within five years of having finished their graduate degree. The EL is expected to work on the project full-time (20-40 hours/week) over the duration of the program, representing the team in all training sessions and leading all activities.

Technical Lead (TL) – The principal investigator of the research project. The TL is expected to participate in select training sessions and assist the EL throughout the program. The TL must be Tri-Council Funding eligible.

Lab2Market Cybersecurity will service research teams from across Canada. All Mitacs partner institutions are able to apply.

Projects must be focused on cybersecurity.

What is cybersecurity? Simply put, cybersecurity is a discipline focused on protecting systems, networks, and programs, against digital attacks.

Applicants must be Mitacs funding eligible.

The program is funded in part through a modified Mitacs Accelerate program. As a result, applicants must be Mitacs funding eligible. If you are unsure of your eligibility please contact your respective Mitacs BD or Wesley Kosiba - Lab2Market Learning and Recruitment Specialist at wkosiba@ryerson.ca
Application Process & Important Dates

1. **L2M Applications:** Close October 28th, 2022 at 11:59 PM EST
2. **L2M Team Interviews:** Selected applicants will participate in team interviews tentatively running from October 31st - November 4th. It is mandatory that both the Entrepreneurial Lead (the student) & Technical Lead (the faculty researcher/PI) attend. The interview will assess the team’s dynamic and overall program fit.
3. **Mitacs Accelerate Proposal:** Shortlisted applicants will work with their respective Mitacs BDs to complete a Mitacs Accelerate proposal.
4. **Mitacs Accelerate Proposal Submission:** Accelerate packages will be submitted to Mitacs. Deadline TBD, approximately November 18, 2022.
5. **L2M Program Approval:** Applicants will be notified of their approval for Mitacs funding and full acceptance into the L2M program by December 23, 2022.

Use of Funds

Of the $15,000:

- **$10,000** is to be paid to the Entrepreneurial Lead as a stipend over the duration of the program. It is expected, as stated above, that the student works full-time on the project. This includes all program-related activities and deliverables (see above).
- **$5,000** will be held by the Technical Lead for program-related expenses. These expenses must be tri-council funding eligible.