

Get grants that support smart packaging developments

Elliot Schiller

Ottawa is increasing funding for commercializing innovations

It doesn't require a visionary to know that smart packaging will play a major role in industry and consumer products over the next decade. If your company is thinking of investing in developing smart packaging, or has what you consider to be a really good idea, but are worried about the financial expenditure required to explore it, the good news is that there are federal non-refundable funds available to support your efforts.

The latest federal budget has introduced many new incentives for research and development. For the business sector, the three primary programs that support innovative new ideas are the Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP), Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF) and the Scientific Research and Development Program (SR&ED). These programs support small- to medium-sized enterprises, or as Ottawa calls them, SMEs, with the objective of increasing their capabilities to develop and commercialize their innovations. In the case of IRAP, this support has been increased to as much as \$10 million from the previous \$500,000 threshold for funding, with overall government investment in the program of \$700 million over the next five years.

SIF was introduced in the summer of 2017. In Budget 2018, this funding was narrowed down to supporting only projects that are worth \$10 million or more. At the same time, if your work is done in collaboration with academic institutions, the good news is that Budget 2018 intends to expand support for such endeavours.

Follow the scientific method to increase odds of securing funds

For most companies in the printing industry, innovation is done in-house and not in collaboration with others, so, let's concentrate on the IRAP and SR&ED opportunities available to your business.

While in many ways IRAP and SR&ED are complementary, there are significant distinctions between the two programs. IRAP supports innovation and business product and process improvement projects. Funds are provided to businesses as the approved project is in progress, generally on a monthly basis. Also, IRAP projects can be funded for up to 50% of the project cost while SR&ED funding is targeted at specific costs and is much more financially limited. SR&ED funding sometimes takes as long as 18 months after the work has been completed to be received. On the other hand, SR&ED funding is available to all companies of all sizes regardless of whether they have or do not have IRAP funding or whether their

innovative endeavours are successful from either a development or marketing perspective, with limited excess bookkeeping requirements.

What the two programs have in common is an expectation that work for an innovation must be done according to a disciplined and well-documented systematic investigation. The expectation is that projects are to be done in a logical fashion with steps that include a proposed hypothesis, experiments to prove or disprove that hypothesis, a study of the results, a refinement of the hypothesis, a set of new tests to prove the refined hypothesis and a continuation of this cycle until a result is achieved or abandoned in favour of a different approach or, in the case of SR&ED, an acknowledgement of failure. This is the same scientific method that scientists follow in their R&D endeavours.

The IRAP and SR&ED fund suppliers, the National Research Council of Canada and the Canada Revenue Agency respectively, look for proof that a systematic investigative life cycle was followed before awarding any funding to applicants. It is therefore important that you train your shop floor innovators to follow the steps outlined in this article. As I often explain to our clients, it need not be an arduous task, but should include a few sentences here and there to indicate what you intend to do, what you have learned, or what failed processes you can eliminate. Considering that most staff has smartphone type technology in their pockets, there are many easy ways to document and share your work and your findings.

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Elliot Schiller is a Director at Toronto's Teeger Schiller Inc., a firm specializing in government funding and systems selection/implementation. His clients receive over \$5 million annually to support ongoing business innovation. E-mail eschiller@teegerschiller.com, visit www.FundingHelp.ca or phone 1-888-816-0222 Ext. 102

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David Teeger

Director

David Teeger C.A., C.A. (S.A.) graduated as a Chartered Accountant in South Africa, and upon arrival in Canada he obtained his Canadian C.A. designation and joined Richter & Associates, a management consulting firm, where he concentrated his practice on various business sectors including household goods, fashion, automotive parts, public associations, and retail chains. He performed many roles in his 15 years at Richter, including managing the professional services organization in North America and all business operations throughout Europe.

David's professional capabilities include computer audits, feasibility studies, system analyses and assistance in the selection, negotiation and implementation of computerized solutions.

As a founding partner of Teeger Schiller Inc., he has focused his practice on consulting to management. His team of professionals has helped businesses select and successfully install a variety of ERP business solutions and add-on systems including business intelligence solutions to give new life to existing computer systems. David's clients not only rely on him to successfully manage the implementation of their new systems, but to manage the change that occurs in their organizations as a result of the use of these new tools.



Elliot Schiller

Director

Elliot Schiller, Ph.D., C.M.C. began his career as a Chemical Engineer working for Grumman Aircraft, in Long Island, New York. He obtained his Ph.D. at the University of Pittsburgh with funding from the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, and, after being awarded a Presidential Fellowship, he went on to perform research and development activities at Brookhaven National Laboratory.

Since coming to Canada, he has primarily assisted consumer products and retail organizations in a variety of strategic management initiatives, traveling around the globe on behalf of his clients. In 1987, Elliot joined Richter & Associates, and it is here that he first met David Teeger.

As a founding partner of Teeger Schiller Inc., he has focused the SR&ED / Grant Division on obtaining grants and tax incentives for over 100 companies in the small to medium sized business sector. His team has provided services to the discrete / processing manufacturing, material development, textiles, apparel, automotive and computer sciences sectors. Annually, Teeger Schiller Inc. secures more than \$5 million in government funding to assist its clients in having their business initiatives supported by government funding.



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