



CANADIAN FOOD INNOVATION NETWORK AWARDS \$386K TO FOUR FOODTECH STARTUPS

The four companies are developing food waste, traceability, and processing solutions

GUELPH, ON, MAY 7, 2024 — The [Canadian Food Innovation Network \(CFIN\)](#) is awarding \$386,078 to four foodtech projects through the organization's [Innovation Booster Program](#). Industry will match these funds to create projects valued at \$772,154.

The Innovation Booster funding recipients are:

Project Lead: [ThisFish](#) (British Columbia)

Project Title: TallyVision: Automating Seafood Inspection with Computer Vision Technology

Funding: \$99,256

TallyVision is a new product by ThisFish that uses smart cameras and computer vision to automatically inspect seafood in processing plants. The Innovation Booster project aims to integrate TallyVision into sorting and grading equipment and to develop new computer vision models to estimate fish or fillet weights from images, classify salmon fillet colors, and identify new species. The end goal is to use advanced computer vision to improve inspection accuracy and consistency, while automating sorting to reduce labor costs in seafood factories.

Project Lead: [Knead Technologies](#) (Alberta)

Project Title: Scaling & Quantifying Food Rescue

Funding: \$96,628

Knead Technologies will launch six-month pilots with nine food sustainability agencies to validate and test their food rescue lifecycle management platform. They aim to refine the product based on pilot feedback, optimize its performance, and build a scalable infrastructure that can handle the demands of the commercial market. The goal is to transform the platform from a promising idea into a community-focused impact driver that can be commercialized worldwide.

Project Lead: [Skygauge Robotics](#) (Ontario)

Project Title: Drones for Large Food Processing Tank Inspections

Funding: \$95,237

Skygauge Robotics is using drone technology for ultrasonic inspection of food processing assets. Food processors regularly inspect assets like storage tanks and process piping for integrity. Skygauge's drones replace the need for manual inspections done by teams on ropes, cranes, or scaffolding, which will significantly reduce time, carbon emissions, and costs by up to 90%. The funding will help develop a 360-degree inspection capability based on direct customer feedback from early adopters in the food processing industry.

Project Lead: [Local Line](#) (Ontario)

Project Title: Local Food Sourcing Network (The Network)

Funding: \$94,957

The Local Food Sourcing Network is a platform that connects national wholesale buyers to local food vendors to enhance the agility and adaptability of the food supply chain. The platform integrates digital procurement solutions for seamless coordination of wholesale sourcing, purchasing, verification, invoicing, payment, monitoring, and reporting from various local suppliers. These innovations enable wholesale buyers to scale their local sourcing, diversify suppliers, validate ESG commitments, and meet growing consumer demand for locally sourced food. By addressing the logistical challenges faced by large businesses like Chipotle and Roche Bros -- who are beta users of the platform -- the technology can be adapted for different procurement volumes, increasing the availability of local food in Canada and beyond.

CFIN's Innovation Booster provides funding and support to SMEs to help them accelerate product development, overcome innovation hurdles, and validate market fit. During this ninth round of Innovation Booster funding, CFIN received 30 applications from across the country. In total, 45 Canadian foodtech companies have received \$3,800,784 from this program since 2021.

Across all programs, CFIN has awarded more than \$19.5M to 69 Canadian foodtech projects.

QUOTES

“These projects represent CFIN's commitment to driving innovation in the food industry. Canadian foodtech companies are leveraging transformative technologies and strategic partnerships to revolutionize how food is sourced, inspected, and managed, ultimately leading to a more sustainable and efficient food supply chain.”

– Dana McCauley

CEO, Canadian Food Innovation Network

“Ensuring the sustainability of Canada’s food supply chain is essential and the viability of the sector relies on our industry’s ability to produce, process, store and ship final food products to Canadians. The latest recipients of the Innovation Booster Challenge are tackling complex supply chain challenges and finding innovative solutions to everyday problems. From the deployment of drones for machinery inspection, to software testing companies’ food waste life cycles, these recipients are creating opportunities for long-term sustainability and growth in this important economic sector.”

– The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne

Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry

“These four cutting-edge projects will help strengthen our food supply chains and address some of the challenges the sector is facing. Innovations like these are vitally important and will ensure that our agriculture and agri-food sector remains competitive and resilient for generations to come.”

– The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay

Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food in Canada

"We are excited to receive this CFIN Innovation Booster funding to advance our AI strategy for the seafood processing sector. There is a lot of manual visual inspection in the food processing sector. At the same time, the sector is experiencing severe labour shortages. Our new TallyVision product uses computer vision technology and smart cameras to do continuous, automated inspection that will exponentially increase the amount of inspection data while lowering labour costs. The CFIN funding is going to allow us to expand the use of TallyVision for different types of seafood inspection."

– Eric Enno Tamm

CEO and Co-Founder, ThisFish

"Receiving funding from CFIN is an incredible validation of our vision to revolutionize the global food waste problem. With this support, we're poised to accelerate the growth of our platform, unlocking new opportunities to make a sustainable impact and reshape the future of food management. The expertise and support of industry experts at CFIN will be a valuable resource as we navigate this exciting phase of expansion."

– Audra Stevenson

Sales & Product Manager, Knead Technologies

"We formed Skygauge Robotics in 2016 when we noticed a lack of design innovation in the drone industry. Around the start of the decade, we were promised a very ambitious vision that drones would do any type of job, yet the industry is mostly composed of drones taking pictures and videos for data collection. We realized this stemmed from limitations with current designs. Drones were not stable enough to do more physical work and so we had to invent a new way for them to fly."

– Nikita Iliushkin

Chief Commercial Officer, Skygauge Robotics

"Local Line is honored and excited to have been selected as a grantee of the CFIN Innovation Booster program. This funding will help us bring our Sourcing Network platform to market and in doing so, strengthen the Canadian local food system"

– Cole Jones

Founder and CEO, Local Line

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Innovation Booster provides flexible and rapid support to Small or Medium Enterprises (SMEs) as they address food innovation challenges or technical hurdles that have created barriers to achieving their commercialization goals.

The Innovation Booster is administered by CFIN, which is supported by the Government of Canada's [Strategic Innovation Fund](#).

ABOUT THE CANADIAN FOOD INNOVATION NETWORK

The Canadian Food Innovation Network (CFIN) is a national organization that's stimulating transformative and transferrable innovation within the Canadian food sector. With over 4500 members and counting, CFIN has built the fastest growing and most engaged food business community in the country and their members come from across the globe, representing all parts of the food value chain. [CFIN's free membership](#) includes access to exclusive funding programs, five Regional Innovation Directors, and [YODL](#).

CFIN was established in 2021 and is supported by Government of Canada's Strategic Innovation Fund and Canadian Agricultural Strategic Priorities Program.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

[Innovation Booster](#)

[CFIN Membership](#)

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