



SIX STARTUPS SECURE \$465K FROM THE CANADIAN FOOD INNOVATION NETWORK

The Innovation Booster funding will help Canadian foodtech companies clear key innovation hurdles and accelerate commercialization

GUELPH, ON, MARCH 13, 2024 — The [Canadian Food Innovation Network \(CFIN\)](#) is awarding \$464,518 to six foodtech projects through the organization's [Innovation Booster Program](#). Industry will match these funds to create projects valued at nearly \$930,000.

The Innovation Booster funding recipients are:

Project Lead: GreenCo Robots Inc. (Alberta)

Project Title: Integrated Table Tracking Solution for Quick Service Restaurants

Funding: \$97,922

Since launching in 2020, GreenCo Robots has provided more than 300 robot waiters to Canadian restaurants. Noticing the positive impact of AI and robotics on operational efficiency, they're launching a groundbreaking Table Tracking Solution – targeted for Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs) -- by seamlessly integrating with diverse autonomous robot models, their solution not only addresses critical industry challenges such as labor shortage and efficiency but also elevates the dining experience by transitioning from traditional counter service to personalized table-side hospitality.

This project aims to transform the QSR landscape by delivering heightened efficiency and customer satisfaction. The integrated Table Tracking Solution, when coupled with GreenCo Robots' existing robotic technologies, has the potential to optimize order delivery, minimize wait times, attract new customers and enhance overall dining experiences.

Project Lead: Cheffer Technologies Inc. (Ontario)

Project Title: Intelligent Menu-Planning Assistant

Funding: \$94,415

Cheffer aims to revolutionize the foodservice industry by empowering operators through data-driven efficiency. This project will leverage cutting-edge data science and AI to develop a proof of concept of Cheffer's Intelligent Menu-Planning Assistant. The goal is to enable chefs to proactively choose optimal ingredients during menu planning, such as by highlighting opportunities to leverage the highest value ingredients available, forecasting for waste reduction, and highlighting sustainable and local options. This initiative promises to elevate culinary decision-making, enhancing operational efficiency, and sustainability in the food service sector.

Project Lead: Profillet (Nova Scotia)

Project Title: Pilot Trials of Plant Based Nutritious Catfish

Funding: \$94,107

Profillet is on a mission to craft a plant-based fish fillet analogue that authentically mirrors the taste, texture, and nutritional composition of raw channel catfish. Their product, now a finalist in the 'XPrize - Feed the Next Billion' competition, replicates the protein and polyunsaturated fatty acid content of catfish. Leveraging algal and plant proteins, along with starch hydrocolloids, Profillet enhances texture and mouthfeel in comparison to existing plant-based seafood. Collaborating with food formulation experts, they're advancing from bench prototypes to a pilot-scale production of 2-3 fillets, selecting the best for a subsequent 300-unit production run.

Project Lead: Dispension Industries Inc. (Nova Scotia)

Project Title: Intoxication Detection System for Unattended Alcoholic Beverage Kiosks

Funding: \$89,562

Dispension specializes in secure, self-service kiosks for canned beer and ready-to-drink beverages. Their key innovation is Intoxivision -- a groundbreaking intoxication detection system that uses thermal imaging for real-time analysis of a person's intoxication level. This project aims to develop an intoxication detection model, create a real-time detection device, undergo regulatory compliance reviews, and document the findings. The goal is to advance Intoxivision to commercial readiness, enabling Dispension's beer kiosks to operate fully unattended in stadiums and venues, offering a contactless and secure solution for dispensing alcoholic beverages.

Project Lead: Transport Genie Ltd. (Ontario)

Project Title: Smart Real-Time Gas Sensors Development and Integration

Funding: \$60,107

Transport Genie is advancing their sensor technology by integrating gas measurement capabilities—specifically for Ammonia, Carbon Dioxide, and Ethylene in parts per million—alongside temperature and humidity monitoring. This innovation aims to enhance precision and minimize risks during transportation events, offering real-time insights. Monitoring Ethylene is crucial, especially as it's released during fruit and vegetable ripening. The incorporation of these sensors not only opens new revenue streams, but also addresses sustainability concerns. Transport Genie's Canadian-designed, manufactured, and assembled sensors have the potential to play a vital role in reducing food waste through instant alerts and improved situational awareness.

Project Lead: JAKS Automation Inc. (British Columbia)

Project Title: Robotic Paneer Handling & Packaging System

Funding: \$28,405

JAKS Automation is implementing an advanced robotic pick-and-place system in a paneer production facility. Their cutting-edge system adeptly handles three sizes of paneer – small, medium, and large – utilizing a food-grade precision suction-based robotic end effector. Integrated with a state-of-the-art machine vision camera, the system accurately identifies and retrieves paneer from a conveyor. This seamless process optimizes production by efficiently placing paneer into packaging units, ensuring precision and reducing waste from mishandling.

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 eighth round of Innovation Booster funding, CFIN received 31 applications from across the country. In total, 43 Canadian foodtech companies have received \$3,597,393 from this program since 2021.

Across all programs, CFIN has awarded more than \$19M to 65 Canadian foodtech projects.

QUOTES

“These six projects represent CFIN’s vision for a future where new ideas and technologies create a more efficient, sustainable, and customer-centric food industry. As we introduce intelligent solutions, autonomous robots, and state-of-the-art technologies, it’s clear that Canadians aren’t just embracing change in the food sector -- we're the ones driving it.”

– **Dana McCauley**

CEO, Canadian Food Innovation Network

" Our government is positioning Canada as a global leader in food innovation. That’s why we support the Canadian Food Innovation Network to grow small and medium enterprises bringing innovative technologies to markets. These projects will provide Canadian businesses with invaluable insights on integrating advanced robotics and intelligent machine learning into their current business models to the benefit of both industry and Canadians.”

– **The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne**

Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry

“Innovation is vitally important to the success of our foodtech sector. Projects like these will help drive efficiencies, increase sustainability, and address key challenges in Canada’s agricultural industry.”

– **The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay**

Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food in Canada

"At GreenCo Robots, we are committed to reshaping the future of dining experiences. Robots were invented by humans so that humans don't have to be robots. Our Table Tracking Solution represents the culmination of our dedication to innovation and our relentless pursuit of excellence in addressing the evolving needs of the restaurant industry."

– **Liang Yu**

President, GreenCo Robotics

“From the entire Cheffer team, we want to express our gratitude to CFIN for their support of our Intelligent Menu-Planning Assistant project. This award has made it possible for us to double down on building technology that can multiply the value we deliver to hospitality and foodservice operators across Canada. Thank you!”

– **Milton Calderon Donefer**

Co-Founder and COO, Cheffer Technologies

"Profillet is proud and overjoyed to receive assistance from the Canadian Food Innovation Network through their Innovation Booster program. This funding serves as a signature of approval from one of Canada's leading funding groups of cutting-edge food product development. The allocation will also help ensure our plant-based catfish fillet replicates taste, texture and nutrition of conventional catfish with best-in-class authenticity."

– **Greg Potter**

Co-Founder, Profillet

“The support CFIN has offered through the Innovation Booster, will help Dispension expedite the commercialization timeline for our exciting Intoxivision technology, enabling our SmartServ kiosks to operate fully unattended in stadiums and large venues around the world.”

– **Corey Yantha**

Founder + CEO, Dispension Industries

“Innovation isn't just about pushing boundaries; it's about addressing real-world challenges. With our integrated gas measurement capabilities, we're not only reducing risks during transportation events and combating food waste but also offering companies enhanced options for sustainability practices and mitigating losses. It's all about fostering a more resilient and conscious supply chain.”

– Ashby Green

CEO, Transport Genie

"We are thrilled to be supported by CFIN as we make strides in advancing the adoption of modern robotics and automation in the food and beverage industry in Western Canada."

– Adon Portman

Principal, JAKS Automation

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. CFIN has over 4,000 members from across the food value chain -- including manufacturers, processors, distributors, operators, tech companies, funders, and innovators – and connects the Canadian food ecosystem to fresh insights, ideas, and technologies to grow their business and increase their innovation capacity. [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

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