

# FORWARD THINKING

CHARTING NEW PATHS  
FOR TOMORROW



**2024-2026**  
STRATEGIC PLAN

# INNOVATION CLUSTER

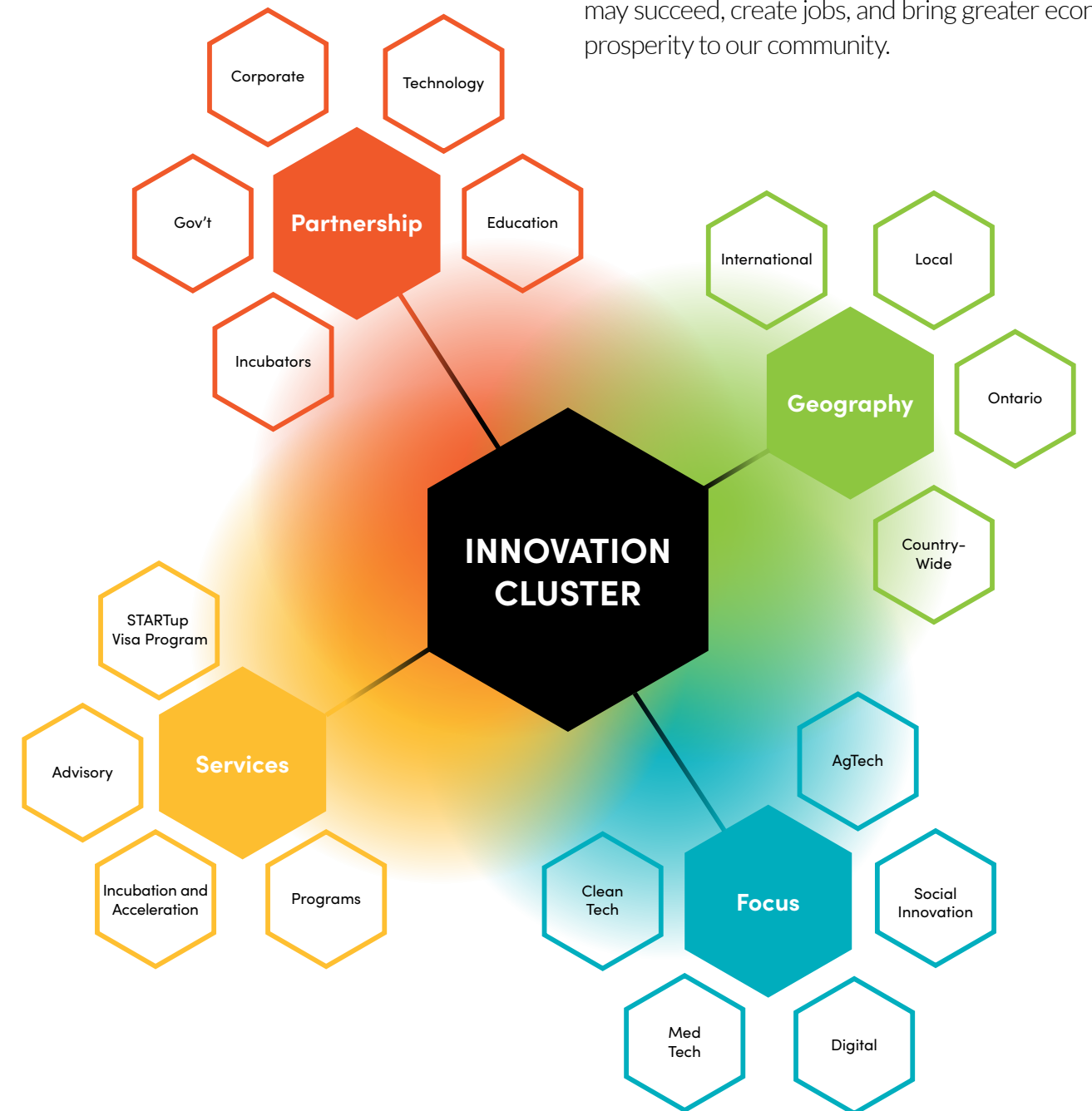
Trailblazers shaping a bold new future for our community.

For 20 years, we have supported entrepreneurs and economic growth in Peterborough and the Kawarthas. Our plan for 2024-2026 is to disrupt the status quo and reinvent our approach, aiming to drive \$10M in economic value and make our region the centre hub for innovation.

2024 » 2026

## OUR ECOSYSTEM

Innovation Cluster Peterborough and the Kawarthas is proud to offer a rich and dynamic ecosystem to attract innovative entrepreneurs to build and grow their businesses in our region. Due to the vast network of partnerships, services, and industry sectors we serve, start-ups in our region, across Ontario and Canada, and from around the globe receive our well-rounded mentorship and support so their businesses may succeed, create jobs, and bring greater economic prosperity to our community.



# MESSAGE FROM THE INNOVATION CLUSTER TEAM

**As we embark on the journey of a new era at the Innovation Cluster Peterborough and The Kawarthas, it is with great pleasure that we present to you our 2024-2026 strategic plan: “Forward Thinking: Charting New Paths for Tomorrow.”**

Over the past two decades, the Innovation Cluster has been integral to our vibrant community, nurturing entrepreneurial spirit and driving innovation. We are immensely proud of the achievements we have accomplished together since our inception in 2004, from fostering a culture of creativity to facilitating economic growth and job creation; we have continuously evolved to meet the dynamic needs of our region.

As we stand on the cusp of our twentieth year of operation, a significant milestone for our organization, we can be proud of our history of achievement but know that we have much to do to continue to drive innovation-focused, entrepreneur-led economic growth.

This transformative plan signifies a bold shift in perspective aimed at injecting fresh energy, enthusiasm, and purpose into our mission. It represents our unwavering commitment to staying

ahead of the curve and shaping a bold future for our community.

Our strategic plan outlines an ambitious framework of goals, focusing on building a prominent and vibrant centre for incubating innovation, streamlining our early-stage programming, driving global client acquisition, partners and funding sources, and expanding our ability to measure our key performance indicators across the organization meaningfully.

With a vision to propel growth and entrepreneurship across our region, we are determined to establish Peterborough and Kawartha Lakes as a Centre of Innovation in Ontario and beyond.

At the heart of our plan lies core values that define who we are and how we operate. With uncompromising integrity, authenticity, and a collaborative spirit, we strive to inspire creativity, agility, and resilience in everything we do. We aim to lead by example, shaping a future where innovation thrives, and success knows no bounds.

As we embark on this journey, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to our partners, stakeholders, and supporters who have stood by us throughout the years. Your unwavering support has been

instrumental in our success, and we look forward to continuing this journey together, hand in hand.

In closing, let us embrace the spirit of innovation, collaboration, and transformation as we chart a course toward a brighter tomorrow. Together, let us redefine the future of innovation in our region and beyond.

*With warmest regards,  
The Innovation Cluster Team*



# EMBRACING TRANSFORMATION

Since our establishment in 2004, the Innovation Cluster Peterborough and the Kawarthas (ICPK) has been dedicated to nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit within our vibrant community. Over the past two decades, we've witnessed significant internal transformations to adapt to the evolving needs of our ecosystem. Today, as we proudly step into 2024, a milestone year for us, ICPK is excited to unveil our latest strategic initiative – Forward Thinking: Charting New Paths for Tomorrow 2024- 2026.

our purpose, and ensuring our strategic endeavors align excitingly with clients, partners, and our dedicated team.

This innovative plan demonstrates our commitment to staying ahead of the curve, signifying a dynamic shift in perspective. Designed to infuse new energy into our mission, it injects a fresh wave of enthusiasm and purpose. Moving beyond tactical changes, we are at a pivotal point of strategic transformation. Our aim is to disrupt the status quo, reinvent our approach, and create a bold future aligned with our mission.

It signifies a paradigm shift, reflecting the advanced, cohesive, and resilient ecosystem in which ICPK operates today. Our team, board of directors, policies, and partnerships have evolved to meet the pace of our clients' needs in a post-COVID world. We've transitioned from a pre-COVID era where physical presence was the norm to a hybrid model of work, where barriers to business are lower than ever.

Motivated by real change, constant improvement, and inspiring creativity, we are trailblazers shaping a bold new future for the community we proudly serve. The name "Innovation Cluster" reflects our commitment to innovating for tomorrow, reinventing



## MISSION

We drive innovation-focused, entrepreneurial economic growth delivered by a passionate team of dedicated professionals. Our clients can achieve their goals and maximize success through unparalleled access to our proven processes and a vast network of industry partners, knowledge experts, government officials, education and funding sources.

## VISION

Propel growth and entrepreneurship across the region by establishing Peterborough and Kawartha Lakes as a Centre of Innovation.

## VALUES

We work with uncompromising integrity and authenticity, inspiring creativity through collaboration, adaptability, resilience, and thought leadership.



## 2023 ACHIEVEMENTS AT A GLANCE:

**+\$5M** IN ECONOMIC IMPACT

**+10** PRODUCTS LAUNCHED

**+100 CLIENTS**  
REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

**+\$3M** IN SALES FROM CLIENT PRODUCTS

**+180** JOBS CREATED

**+23** CLIENT'S PRODUCTS, SERVICES, AND PROCESSES COMMERCIALIZED

**+8 IP** REGISTRATIONS

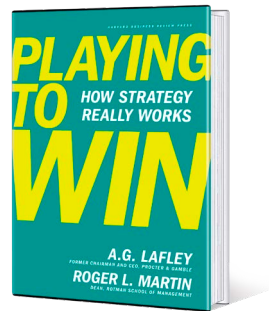
**+30** STUDENTS INVOLVED IN CLIENT AND TEAM PROJECTS

# REDEFINING OUR STRATEGIC APPROACH

Our strategic plan for 2024-2026 has been meticulously crafted through broad-based engagement, ensuring credibility and alignment with the needs of our community.

The process involved collaboration among our Board of Directors, dedicated staff members, and valuable feedback from our clients.

We embarked on a journey to redefine our strategic approach inspired by the book **“PLAYING TO WIN: HOW STRATEGY REALLY WORKS”** by A.G. Lafley, the former CEO of Procter & Gamble, and Roger L. Martin, the former Dean at the Rotman School of Management in Toronto. In 2023, a strategic committee was formed, bringing together diverse perspectives and expertise. Over the course of two intensive days, this committee engaged in extensive brainstorming sessions to chart the path forward for ICPK. Our strategic committee was led by one of the Innovation Cluster’s Board of Directors, Charlie Atkinson, President of The Winning Practice.



*to facilitate our strategic planning workshop with such a dedicated and innovative team. Their strong willingness to explore choice points and possibilities, combined with their rigour and creativity to execute, enabled the realization of the vision and mission to drive innovation and economic development.”*

**Charlie Atkinson,**  
President of **The Winning Practice**



Our discussions were informed by a deep understanding of both external and internal forces shaping our ecosystem. Drawing upon insights from our stakeholders, industry trends, and best practices, we identified key opportunities and challenges. Through this collaborative effort, the **2024-2026 Strategic Plan** emerged—a roadmap that reflects our collective vision and aspirations for the next three years.

As we enter this new era, our team is committed to implementing the strategic initiatives outlined in the plan, driving positive impact and fostering innovation within our community. With a solid foundation built on engagement, expertise, and a shared sense of purpose, we are poised to navigate the complexities of our evolving landscape and seize opportunities for growth and success.

**“Embracing transformation is thematic in the Innovation Cluster’s strategic plan. It was a delight**

# ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

## BUILD A CENTRE FOR INNOVATION



A prominent and vibrant hub for the incubation of innovation.

## ACCELERATE START-UPS AND JOB CREATION



A catalyst for building, attracting, nurturing and retaining companies in the region.

## FOSTER A VIBRANT CULTURE



Welcoming, vibrant, and inclusive, our culture of innovation will continue to balance work and fun while driving success and results that count.

## PROVIDE A DIVERSE NETWORK



Includes many business and technology mentors, as well as funding partners.

# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND FOCUS

## 2024-2026

The strategic framework and focus of Innovation Cluster Peterborough and the Kawartha is centered around an unwavering commitment: to foster the growth of a prominent and dynamic hub for innovation incubation, thereby igniting the success of start-ups and fueling economic expansion within our region. This comprehensive framework serves as our roadmap, guiding the implementation of our vision and mission with clarity and purpose.



### 1

#### WHAT IS OUR WINNING ASPIRATION?

To build a prominent and vibrant centre for the incubation of innovation, to accelerate the success of new start-ups and employment as a catalyst for building, attracting, nurturing and retaining companies in the region, and to foster success with a goal to drive \$10M in economic value. **LET'S MAKE IT HAPPEN!**

### 2

#### WHERE WILL WE PLAY?

Streamline our early-stage programs to target local citizens and start-ups in the region, further focusing on driving global client acquisition. To maximize impact, align our go-to-market strategy with key Ecosystem Partners, Trent University, Fleming College, the Cities of Peterborough and Kawartha Lakes. **LET'S GET TO WORK!**

### 3

#### HOW WILL WE WIN?

Our program is the pinnacle of seamless integration, providing unparalleled access to a proven process, a vast network of industry partners, knowledge experts, government officials, education and funding sources. **LET'S MAKE IT MATTER!**

### 4

#### WHAT CAPABILITIES MUST WE HAVE?

Access to industry partners, fundraising resources, dynamic team and culture, marketing support, business development, prescriptive onboarding process, collaborative workspaces, and capital providers. **LET'S TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL!**

### 5


#### WHAT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS DO WE NEED?

Learning management system, client lifecycle and satisfaction quarterly business review process, customer advisory board, consistent recruitment and retention. **WE MEASURE WHAT MATTERS!**

# 1.1 WHAT IS OUR WINNING ASPIRATION?

At the Innovation Cluster, our leadership philosophy and organizational culture are intertwined, creating a dynamic and forward-thinking environment.


We do things in creative new ways; old ways are left in the past, and we keep up with the latest research to create culture and community inside and outside work.

KEY DRIVERS	INITIATIVES
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be one team with one goal. Be nimble, agile, and purpose-driven with grit.</li> <li>Always provide trustworthy, transparent, authentic, accountable and empowered leaders.</li> <li>Provide a facilitative leadership collective.</li> </ul>
<b>Organizational Culture</b>	<p><b>Collaborative Environment:</b> Encourage teamwork and leverage collective intelligence for innovative solutions.</p> <p><b>Empowerment and Accountability:</b> Empower every team member to take initiative and be accountable for their contributions.</p> <p><b>Facilitative Leadership:</b> Leaders will facilitate, guide, mentor, and support the team in achieving their fullest potential.</p> <p><b>Inclusivity and Diversity:</b> Embrace diversity in all its forms, fostering an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and respected.</p> <p><b>Balanced Approach:</b> Prioritize a healthy work-life balance, ensuring a positive and sustainable work environment.</p>
<b>Programming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a structured, modular, and integrated curriculum.</li> <li>Remain inclusive within our target markets, open and accessible.</li> <li>Offer flexibility through a hybrid delivery (virtual/physical) that creates a more inviting environment.</li> <li>Continue to offer a suite of start-up incubation and acceleration programs.</li> </ul> 

# 2.1 WHERE WILL WE PLAY?

Passionate and innovative entrepreneurs is what gives our organization vibrancy and life, and we are dedicated to attracting the most driven clients from across our region and beyond our borders.

To provide rich programming and opportunities for all the start-ups we support, we value building and fostering solid partnerships with government, corporations, technology specialists and other incubators.

KEY DRIVERS	INITIATIVES
<b>Regional Citizens &amp; Start-ups</b>	<p><b>Sector Specialization:</b> Concentrate on start-ups operating within the Healthcare Technology, Clean Technology, Digital, Agriculture Technology, and Social Innovation sectors.</p>  <p>Healthcare Tech    Clean Tech    Digital    AgTech    Social Innovation</p> <p><b>Regional Focus:</b> Attract entrepreneurs currently residing within our region: Peterborough County, City of Kawartha Lakes, Cavan Monaghan, Northumberland, Hastings, and the Province of Ontario.</p>
<b>Global Client Acquisition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attract, build and foster relationships with national and international partners and clients who will enrich the region and drive a better economy.</li> <li>Attend events, tradeshows and festivals to meet new clients.</li> <li>Explore and engage with Federal Government Programs and funding.</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foster referrals and extend relationships.</li> <li>Work with and build partnerships with government at all levels.</li> <li>Engage and align corporate sponsors, technology partners, and other incubators.</li> </ul>

# 3.1 HOW WILL WE WIN?

Innovation Cluster Peterborough and the Kawarthas’ work toward achieving our Organizational Goals will be done through a well-designed strategy focusing on business development, service repackaging and our team and resources.

KEY DRIVERS	INITIATIVES
<b>Business Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a program and target and secure corporate sponsorships and partners.</li> <li>• Explore Government funding programs; build a government strategy across City, Province, and Federal.</li> <li>• Leverage Board members to the frontline for business development.</li> </ul>
<b>Service Repackaging</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refine our service offerings, focusing on a lifecycle approach to client engagement.</li> <li>• Develop new pricing models and more robust intake selection.</li> <li>• Create an “Applied Innovation” offering.</li> </ul>
<b>Team and Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Align the team with an accountability model.</li> <li>• Focus the team on education, enablement, and empowerment.</li> <li>• Balance resource models and establish budgetary requirements.</li> </ul>



# 4.1 WHAT CAPABILITIES MUST WE HAVE?

To successfully implement our strategy Innovation Cluster Peterborough and the Kawarthas has looked hard at what capabilities we need to achieve our Organizational Goals. Through strategic relationships, maintaining a culture of integrity, and having marketing preparedness, we will be able to bring greater levels of innovation, job creation, and economic growth to our region.

KEY DRIVERS	INITIATIVES
<b>Strategic Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structure programs to connect to industry partners, education, and capital providers to build win-win.</li> <li>• Establish quarterly business review framework and execute on key clients and partners.</li> </ul>
<b>Culture of Integrity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always be accountable, act with grit, use sound judgement and a sense of urgency, strive for success, be agile and fail fast.</li> <li>• Build a teamwork relationship network.</li> <li>• Define our cultural values, personalize the experience.</li> </ul>
<b>Marketing Enablement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create marketing collaterals for internal and external consumption.</li> <li>• Uphold branding and follow our communication plan.</li> <li>• Consult with internal expertise to target industries and expand EXIR's.</li> </ul>





# 5.1 WHAT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS DO WE NEED?

In order to achieve our goals, it is critical that we measure what matters through clients' lifecycle and their journey, execute progress through quarterly business reviews, form a customer advisory board (CAB), and have recruitment and retention KPIs.

KEY DRIVERS	INITIATIVES
<b>Demand Generation and Sales</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build a measurable pipeline with a focus on volume and velocity. Also implement Learning Management System.</li> <li>Establish opportunity tracking with sales stages and categories.</li> <li>Implement digital marketing enabled campaigns - tracked, measured, and managed.</li> </ul>
<b>Quarterly Business Review Cadence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure leadership has accountability for strategic plan metrics, deliverables and KPIs.</li> <li>Conduct a business development review of key activities, pipeline and results.</li> <li>Perform key account reviews of process, potential and KPIs.</li> <li>Establish a Customer Advisory Board.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources and Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on opportunity and velocity.</li> <li>Balance funding with resource needs and build out team based on "crisis of opportunity".</li> <li>Move forward with a philosophy that funding is oxygen to Innovation Cluster Peterborough and the Kawarthas.</li> </ul>

# FORGING PARTNERSHIPS TO DRIVE INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Partnerships are the cornerstone of our mission to drive innovation, economic development, and job creation within our region. As a start-up incubator, we recognize the transformative power of collaboration, and our strategic alliances with institutions like Trent University, Fleming College, corporate partners, government entities, angel investors, other non-profits and city officials are instrumental in achieving the organization's goals. These partnerships support out body of work for a brighter future. As the ecosystem grows and more partners are welcome, the network supports the organization's journey of innovation and growth.

Through our collaborative efforts with partners, the Innovation Cluster Peterborough and the Kawarthas is capable to provide access to resources, expertise, and funding opportunities, ensuring that start-ups have the support they need to thrive and grow.

We welcome prospective partners who share our vision for innovation and economic development, whether they are academic institutions, corporations, government agencies, or community organizations. We want to continue working on a thriving ecosystem where entrepreneurship flourishes, driving prosperity for generations to come.

**Looking ahead, our commitment to continue strengthening current partnerships while cultivating new ones will allow us to enhance the region's impact and reach.**



# WE THANK OUR PARTNERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT

This strategic plan is our roadmap to innovation and transformation.

We invite all stakeholders to engage and contribute to achieving these ambitious goals.

Together, we aim to redefine the future of innovation in our region.



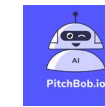
## CORE FUNDING PARTNERS



## CORPORATE PARTNERS



## ECOSYSTEM PARTNERS





[innovationcluster.ca](http://innovationcluster.ca)