



#BCTECH: Progress

FOR MORE INFO AND SUCCESS STORIES VISIT: bctechstrategy.ca

From forestry to family, **B.C. TECH** is a part of our everyday lives.

The British Columbia tech sector is an integral part of our growing, diverse and strong economy. That's why it's one of the target sectors in our B.C. Jobs Plan and why we released the **#BCTECH** Strategy in January.

The tech sector supports businesses throughout the province, from mining to movies, and everything in between. Technology is essential to business today, so the stronger the sector is, the more competitive business becomes.

Tech doesn't just support our businesses; it supports our lives. Everything from education, entertainment, environmentally-friendly practices and cutting-edge health treatments are strengthened by the latest developments in technology. Supporting the tech sector improves quality of life and puts British Columbians first.

The **#BCTECH** Strategy is built on three pillars:

Capital

Talent

Markets

Since releasing the strategy, we have begun or accomplished all 50 of our goals. Take a look at some of the highlights below.

Capital

WE WILL IMPROVE ACCESS TO CAPITAL AND CONTINUE TO SUPPORT OUR COMPETITIVE TAX SYSTEM AND RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT.

Early **investment** in a **growing** company can be the difference between **success** and failure.

That's why, after government conducted a venture capital review that sought input from close to 200 companies, agencies and experts in the field, we created the \$100-million BCTECHFund. It addresses the early-stage or "A-Round" funding gap.

Kensington Capital Partners was selected through a rigorous procurement process and is preparing to make investments in B.C. companies in order to help them access the early-stage funding they need to grow their businesses and create jobs.

- ▶ In fall 2015, we announced the new venture capital fund – the BCTECHFund. The fund will focus on investments in digital media, information communications technology (ICT), life sciences/health-care technology and clean technology.
- ▶ The 2016 Budget included a \$5-million tax credit increase to the *Small Business Venture Capital Act* for a total of \$35 million. This increases the total amount of equity that can be raised annually from \$110 million to \$116.6 million.

- ▶ Since January 2016, \$29.8 million has been provided through the BC Knowledge Development Fund, for a total investment of more than \$610 million in research and innovation since 2001. Two examples of recent projects include: New state-of-the-art equipment for the BC Childhood Diabetes Research Centre to enable new discoveries in diabetes prediction, treatment and prevention and new state-of-the-art infrastructure for supramolecular materials characterization to address energy and production storage issues in B.C. by transforming waste crab shells or wood pulp to create innovative materials with exceptional properties.
- ▶ The Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research funded 28 Research Trainee – Post-Doctoral Fellowship awards in the 2016 competition in biomedical, clinical, health services and population health categories, helping to attract and retain some of B.C.'s brightest emerging health researchers.
- ▶ Genome BC and the BC Tech Association collaborated to support the future of healthtech in B.C. through an innovative new program intended to advance growth-stage healthtech and life-sciences companies.
- ▶ IDMTC applications approved for registration from January 1, 2016 to September 20, 2016 have increased by 16% over the same time period in 2015. DAVE credits certified by Creative BC from January 1, 2016 to July 31, 2016, have increased by 83% over the same time period in 2015.



Talent

WE WILL DEEPEN THE B.C. TECHNOLOGY TALENT POOL.

Technology companies need **a solid talent base** if they are to continue to grow

their businesses, and with them, B.C.'s economy. We recognize this fundamental need, which is why the **#BCTECH** Strategy and B.C.'s Skills for Jobs Blueprint are working together to ensure that B.C.'s home-grown grads have the skills, experience and creativity they need to find meaningful tech careers and support the industry. We are re-engineering education, beginning in Kindergarten, through to post-secondary, to ensure that students are getting not just the knowledge they need, but work experience and exposure to tech careers – especially at the post-secondary levels.

- ▶ To ensure that new degree programs, including those in tech-related fields, have co-ops, \$1.3 million was invested in co-op education in March 2016.
- ▶ The 2025 Labour Market Outlook added Computer Engineers and User Support Technicians to the Top Opportunity Occupations, and an updated profile of Science and Technology occupations has been published on: www.WorkBC.ca/Industry.
- ▶ \$600,000 was provided to the tech sector for customized labour market information and strategies as part of the Sector Labour Market Partnership Program.
- ▶ Students completing programs related to the technology sector are now eligible for B.C. Completion Grants for Graduates.



- ▶ Government announced a new technology stream of the Canada-BC Job Grant (CJG) at the **#BCTECH** Summit. This represents up to \$4.5 million over the next five years to support employers and organizations in the tech sector to provide skills training to their employees.
- ▶ The Canada-BC Job Grant invested \$235,000 with tech sector employers last year. Another \$1 million is available in 2016/17 under CJG Priority Sectors.
- ▶ Funding was provided for 10 sites of coding academies at nine post-secondary institutions.
- ▶ Funding for a foreign qualifications recognition project resulted in Immigration Pathways to Careers in Technology (IMPACT). IMPACT helps both employers and employees maximize the potential of workers who were trained outside of Canada.
- ▶ Optional coding modules were implemented for grades 6-9 in September 2016, so that every child has the opportunity to learn coding by Grade 9.
- ▶ Government announced \$6 million for coding and curriculum implementation last June.
- ▶ The Province launched new Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Careers, and Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies curricula for grades K-9, with embedded creative thinking competency, in September 2016.
- ▶ Government announced up to \$11.8 million for the new UBC Undergraduate Life Sciences Teaching Laboratories.
- ▶ March 21-25, 2016 was proclaimed as Technology Skills Appreciation Week.
- ▶ Since the Skills for Jobs Blueprint was launched two years ago, 25% of post-secondary operating grants targeting high-demand occupations has resulted in more than 1,000 Full Time Equivalent (FTEs) student spaces aligned with tech occupations to date; additional FTEs are targeted in 2016/17 and 2017/18.
- ▶ The Provincial Nominee Program, B.C.'s only direct immigrant selection tool to attract global talent, has streamlined application assessment and introduced an online registration and application system. As a result, processing times for applications in the Skills Immigration stream now take only two to three months from date of receipt—a considerable improvement and among the best in the country.

Markets

WE WILL MAKE IT EASIER TO ACCESS NEW MARKETS.

In order to expand markets, we asked companies how we could help. They told us that smaller tech companies in particular need help navigating the export services available so that they can access the financing they need, or ensure they are developing their products for the right markets. A new government pilot project, Export Navigator, will help growth-oriented businesses become successful, profitable exporters by providing them with access to community-based export advisors who will provide a personalized, step-by-step approach to exporting. From the moment a company considers exporting, to the time that they've successfully secured new customers overseas, we will ensure they have been connected to the appropriate programs and services at every stage of the export process.

Equally important is selling here at home, so we are improving access to government's procurement system.

Government has already eased some of the administrative burden by creating a two-page RFP document and has launched the BC Developers' Exchange Initiative to increase collaboration between B.C.'s Technology Industry and B.C.'s public sector as well as enhance the commercialization success of B.C. tech innovation. We understand that there are many new, creative products and services being developed in the province, and we want to ensure increased access to government for these companies.

- ▶ The inaugural **#BCTECH** Summit was a huge success, engaging over 3,500 participants across all levels of industry, government and academia. Over the course of two days, the **#BCTECH** Summit facilitated 228 B2B meetings between 42 B.C. Small and Medium sized Enterprises and 92 technology buyers in industry and government. The **#BCTECH** Summit 2017 will be March 14–15, 2017. Visit: <http://bctechsummit.ca/>
- ▶ Over 600 businesses responded to the Province's survey on export barriers and services, and more than 40 businesses were interviewed by the Province or participated in one of three roundtable discussions. Export Navigator, mentioned above, aims to address concerns raised by the business community, making it easier for all business, including those involved in tech, to find and use services that will help advance their export goals. The one-year pilot, launched in October 2016, provides services in four communities across B.C.
- ▶ Sector Investment and Export Plans have been completed for clean tech, digital media, and ICT applications for smart cities, life sciences, aerospace, and natural resource technologies.
- ▶ BritishColumbia.ca, B.C.'s trade and investment website, is fully launched.
- ▶ \$6 million in funding is to be released upon completion of the Okanagan Centre for Innovation in Winter 2017; approximately 75% of the commercial space is accounted for already by leasing agreements.

Markets

WE WILL MAKE IT EASIER
TO ACCESS NEW MARKETS.

- ▶ Supported by the Ministry of Agriculture, the BC Innovation Council started an agri-tech accelerator. BioEnterprise is a contract partner in that collaboration. Together, they are working on the growth and expansion of businesses in B.C.'s emerging Agritech sector.
- ▶ Once connectivity projects under the current provincially-funded program have been implemented, we will have achieved 97% of our stated goal of 100% of British Columbians with access to high-speed Internet connectivity by the end of 2021.
- ▶ The Province's investment will reach up to \$52 million in a home health monitoring partnership. Home health monitoring will improve access for British Columbians with complex care needs to their health-care providers by using technology to help manage their health conditions.
- ▶ The Ministry of Health commissioned a consultation with the Life Sciences Sector to better understand opportunities for health sector and life sciences collaboration.
- ▶ The use of short form RFPs over standard length RFP's has increased from last year – from 23% in fiscal year 2015 to 30% in fiscal year 2016.



The **#BCTECH** Strategy Moving Forward

The **#BCTECH** Strategy is a living document. As progress is benchmarked and consultations point us in new directions, so too will the strategy change to reflect that direction. This work will be informed by short and mid-term indicators that will show the immediate economic impact of the **#BCTECH** Strategy on long-term indicators such as GDP and employment growth. As a result, we look forward to announcing new goals, and of course, more progress, at the next annual **#BCTECH** Summit in March.

Great opportunities are here in B.C. – and with this strategy to guide our investments, our opportunities will only continue to grow.

Full list of targets

CAPITAL		IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
INVESTING IN A NEW VENTURE CAPITAL FUND			
1	\$100 million investment to expand the availability of venture capital in B.C. and address the early stage (A-round) funding gap (though we also recognize the need for access to capital at later stages for continued company growth)		*
CONTINUE OUR COMPETITIVE TAX RATES AND CREDITS			
2	Increase the number of B.C. technology companies claiming the Digital Animation or Visual Effects (DAVE) credit or the Interactive Digital Media Tax Credit (IDMTC)	*	
3	Continue B.C.'s Small Business Venture Capital tax credit program which provides \$35 million of tax credits annually	*	
CONTINUE TO BUILD A STRONG RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT IN B.C.			
4	Genome BC will continue to facilitate turning important insights from genomics into new diagnostic and treatment services	*	
5	Attract and keep top research talent in B.C. to generate the development and application of new ideas in areas of key importance to the health system through funding to The Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (MSFHR)	*	
6	Revised the B.C. Knowledge Development Fund criteria to focus on provincial government priorities		*
7	Provide funding to post-secondary institutions to increase commercialization potential		*

TALENT		IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
INDUSTRY-FOCUSED PROGRAMS IN THE POST-SECONDARY SYSTEM			
8	Target funding to programming that supports occupations in demand in the technology sector as part of government's initiative to re-engineer 25% of operating grants to support high-demand occupations	*	
9	Align student financial aid funding to expand eligibility for the B.C. Completion Grant for Graduates to include students completing programs related to the technology sector		*
10	Continue to promote the use of the B.C. Tech Co-op grants as part of the BCIC Tech Works program	*	
11	Recognize the importance of hands-on experience for students – proposals for new technology-related degree programs will need to include co-operative education or work integrated learning components	*	
TIMELY AND RELEVANT LABOUR-MARKET INFORMATION			
12	Provide better information to career educators and their students about a wider range of careers in B.C. tech	*	
13	Support the technology sector to customize labour market information, strategies, and tools that address labour market priorities as part of the Sector Labour Market Partnerships Program	*	
14	Include an annual provincial 10-year forecast of job openings by occupation, including technology sector occupations, in the B.C. Labour Market Outlook		*

TALENT		IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
APPLIED LEARNING AND ENTREPRENEUR DEVELOPMENT			
15	Support technology sector employers to train/up-skill new and existing employees with supporting funding from the Canada-BC Job Grant		*
16	Build on the first round of coding academies hosted at five public post-secondary institutions		*
17	Build on the Mechatronics Technology Entrepreneurship Incubator at SFU	*	
18	Encourage use of the BC Innovator Skills Initiative as part of the BCIC Tech Works program	*	
19	Support Mitacs programs that enable graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to undertake applied research projects relating to their expertise within industry		*
20	Ideas from Campus to Industry program – in partnership with the Okanagan campus of UBC, government has funded industry/post-secondary institutions (PSI) consultations targeted on identifying actions to increase partnerships between industry and PSIs in the Interior	*	
STREAMLINED IN-MIGRATION PATHWAYS AFTER B.C. HAS MAXIMIZED OUR LOCAL TALENT			
21	Help technology companies that need to recruit and access workers from outside Canada through the B.C. Provincial Nominee Program and work with the federal government to improve their permanent immigration pathways	*	
22	Work with other provinces and the federal government to improve labour mobility and increase our ability to attract workers to B.C.		*
23	Provide funding for a foreign qualifications recognition project that will help new immigrants fit their skills into alternative, in-demand careers in B.C.'s technology sector		*
24	Promote the federal government's Express Entry program for workers with in-demand technology skills	*	
DEDICATED PROGRAMS IN THE K-12 EDUCATION SYSTEM			
25	Phase in new K-12 curriculum over three years beginning this school year, allowing the opportunity for over 600,000 students across the province to experience new learning standards in mathematics, sciences, and other curricula. These standards develop the foundational knowledge and skills for success in the B.C. technology sector and other technology-enabled sectors	*	
26	Once the new curriculum is implemented in 2016/17, every student will have the opportunity to learn coding by the end of Grade 9		*
27	New Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies education: an experiential, hands on learning through design and creation that includes skills and concepts from Information Technology and Technology Education	*	
28	Promote creative thinking as a core competency across the entire curriculum, including technical and business education	*	
29	Increase the number of high school students earning elective graduation credit for participating in Work Experience Electives in the technology sector	*	
30	Give students increased access to work integrated learning programs in the technology sector enabling them to earn credits toward high school graduation while also earning credits towards a post-secondary certificate or diploma	*	
31	Support student opportunities to learn coding in school and outside school through courses and special activities such as the Hour of Code	*	

MARKETS		IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
MAKING IT EASIER TO SELL TO GOVERNMENT			
32	Centralize a procurement program of green technologies to accelerate their adoption by local government and other public sector organizations (for example the LED Street Lights Across BC procurement program)	*	
33	Increase the demand for clean tech solutions through the Carbon Neutral Capital Program for ministries, K-12 schools, health authorities, public post-secondary institutions, provincial Crown corporations and agencies	*	
34	Continue to streamline procurement processes analogous to the process used to create the short-form request for proposals. A streamlined General Services Agreement is currently being piloted	*	
35	Continue to update plain language, online procurement resources for tech companies looking to do business with government, including guidance, videos and templates	*	
36	Introduce modern technology and tools to automate and streamline the entire procurement process	*	
37	Continue to explore the use of the Open Procurement Hub – a leading edge planning approach allowing us to collaborate with the vendor community in an open/live moderated forum to answer questions about the contractual needs of government	*	
38	Provided an opportunity for B.C. technology companies to participate in face-to-face networking discussions with key government decision makers as part of the B2B meetings at the #BCTECH Summit 2016 in order to discuss opportunities for innovation and future partnership. This opportunity signals the initial kick-off for ongoing discussions		*
39	Continue the experiment at https://bcdevexchange.org to understand how new approaches to open data, open source code, open Application Program Interfaces (APIs) and open innovation can bring about both new business ideas and streamlined ways for the public sector to buy software innovations	*	
40	Establish a working group involving the Ministry of Health, industry and health sector partners to develop policy, strategies and tools that will enable uptake of innovations that improve outcomes, productivity and sustainability of the healthcare system	*	
MAKING IT EASIER TO SHARE IDEAS			
41	Start work to identify specific examples of where access to data across and within public sectors can be united in ways to improve public policy and programs, and inform next steps for increasing data available to B.C. companies to boost economic growth (BC Centre for Data Innovation)	*	
42	Okanagan Centre for Innovation – with provincial funding of up to \$6 million, it will provide low-cost, flexible space for startups who have graduated from the Accelerate Okanagan Venture Acceleration Program and are still at a venture stage. Construction is underway and is scheduled for completion in early 2017	*	
43	BC Agrifood Venture Acceleration Program – technology and agrifood entrepreneurs can now benefit from the program		*
MAKING B.C. THE MOST CONNECTED PROVINCE			
44	Committed to providing high-speed Internet access to 100% of British Columbians by the end of 2021	*	
45	Improve the reliability of high-speed Internet access for northern and coastal communities	*	
FACILITATING BUSINESS GROWTH THROUGH EXPORTS			
46	Make it easier to find and use services offered by government that equip businesses to expand and sell to new markets	*	
47	Improve our competitiveness by developing Sector Investment and Export Plans, one each for life sciences, cleantech, ICT, and digital media		*
48	Realize a 10% increase in the number of tech companies connecting with buyers outside of B.C. by delivering targeted activities in our key markets, including international trade shows, government-led trade missions, and through international marketing	*	
49	BritishColumbia.ca – new features on the province's digital hub for promoting B.C.'s sectors, communities and opportunities to the world		*
ENCOURAGING COMMERCIALIZATION			
50	Increase adoption of cleantech through government's LNG technology fund, as well as legislation stating that the entire B.C. public sector be carbon neutral by reducing its greenhouse gas emissions to net zero each year	*	