

Helping Social Entrepreneurs Scale Up

Applications Open for Social Enterprise Zone and Social Enterprise Pitch Competition

TORONTO, MARCH 1, 2017 – The Ontario Government, through the Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE), is now accepting applications for two highly popular features of its annual Discovery conference: the Social Enterprise Zone (SEZ) and the Social Enterprise Pitch Competition. The [Social Enterprise Zone](#) will showcase 24 Ontario-based social enterprises, helping them make valuable connections to potential investors, partners and customers. The application deadline is March 24, 2017 at 12 noon, and applications can be made on the [OCE Discovery website](#).

“Social enterprises occupy a special spot in business, tackling societal problems while contributing to the economy,” says Brad Duguid, Ontario’s Minister of Economic Development and Growth. “By showcasing our promising social entrepreneurs at Discovery, we’re helping them to transform their ideas into viable businesses, scale up their ventures, and raise the bar for the way we do business in Ontario.”

Five to eight social enterprises selected for the SEZ will be invited to enter the [Social Enterprise Pitch Competition](#). Those companies will pitch live for a chance to win \$25,000 in business development funding and legal services. This award package includes a \$10,000 award from the Ministry of Economic Development and Growth, a \$5,000 award from the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC), and a \$10,000 legal services package from law firm Norton Rose Fulbright to assist with further development of their business.

Last year’s winner was [Wastenot Worm Farms](#), a social enterprise that creates a biofertilizer from food waste. A highlight reel from last year’s Pitch Competition can be found [here](#).

“We are delighted to be able to give Ontario’s social entrepreneurs this unsurpassed opportunity to display their ingenuity and commitment in creating businesses that address social challenges and help improve quality of life for people,” says Dr. Tom Corr, OCE’s President and CEO. “This component of Discovery always attracts great interest and is an ideal forum for exhibitors to promote their business ideas.”

To enter the pitch competition, interested companies should submit a two-minute video or pitch deck (maximum 15 slides) outlining the problem the venture aims to solve. This includes the social and environmental impact, the market, a competitive analysis, traction, revenue model and any unique items that OCE should know about the business.

This year’s [Discovery Conference](#) runs May 15-16, 2017 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. For more information, please visit [www.ocediscovery.com](#).

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About Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE) Inc.

OCE drives the commercialization of cutting-edge research across key market sectors to build the economy of tomorrow and secure Ontario's global competitiveness. In doing this, OCE fosters the training and development of the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs and is a key partner with Ontario's industry, universities, colleges, research hospitals, investors and governments. A champion of leading-edge technologies, best practices and research, OCE invests in sectors such as advanced health, digital media and information communications, advanced manufacturing and materials, and cleantech including energy, environment and water. OCE is a key partner in delivering Ontario's Innovation Agenda as a member of the province's Ontario Network of Entrepreneurs (ONE). Funded by the Government of Ontario, the ONE is made up of regional and sector-focused organizations and helps Ontario-based entrepreneurs rapidly grow their company and create jobs.