

CENGN Announces First in Series of Living Lab Partnerships with UBC

The CENGN Living Lab Initiative includes access to the Smart Agriculture Living Lab, where Canadian startups and scaleups can test and validate their solutions.

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<https://www.cengn.ca/fr/information-centre/nouvelles/communiqués-de-presse-fr/cengn-annonce-le-premier-partenariat-dune-serie-de-laboratoires-vivants-avec-lubc/>

Today, CENGN announced the first partnership under its national Living Lab Initiative, collaborating with the University of British Columbia (UBC) to advance Canadian innovation.

Through the partnership, the CENGN Living Lab Initiative will now include co-funded access to the Smart Agriculture Living Lab, powered by UBC Farm. The Living Lab will enable Canadian

startups and scaleups to test and validate their cutting-edge products and services in critical sectors like agriculture, robotics, and applied artificial intelligence, accelerating their path to market readiness.

Supported by a \$45 million investment from the Federal Government's Strategic Response Fund (SRF), CENGN's national Living Lab Initiative aims to help over 100 Canadian startups and scaleups looking to prepare their innovative products and solutions for commercialization and



industry adoption.

By offering access to advanced infrastructure, expert support, and real-world testing environments, the CENGN Living Lab Initiative drives technology adoption across key economic sectors. It plays a critical role in boosting Canadian industry competitiveness, fostering new Intellectual Property, and fueling the growth of the country's most promising technology ventures.

CENGN Launches Smart Agriculture Living Lab, Powered by UBC Farm

As Canada's Centre of Excellence in Next Generation Networks, CENGN drives the innovation and adoption of advanced networking technologies in Canada through connected infrastructure, technical expertise and services, talent development, and the nurturing of a thriving innovation ecosystem.

The organization has expanded its services to include access to Smart Agriculture Living Lab facilities, including the UBC Smart Farm. This facility provides five hectares of prime testing ground for agricultural technology solutions that boost productivity, enhance climate resilience, optimize nutrient and water use through precision tools, modernize irrigation systems, and apply data and AI to improve farm decision-making.

The facility combines real-world farming environments with advanced connectivity infrastructure, including LTE and 5G networks.



"By partnering with CENGN, UBC is taking a leading role in supporting the Canadian innovation ecosystem. UBC's Faculty of Land and Food Systems has a rich history of research innovations in agriculture and food, and we are proud to provide access to our facilities as a living lab. Working collectively with CENGN, we aim to drive the commercial success of Canadian startups and introduce new transformative technology across one of Canada's key economic sectors." David Kitts, Dean pro tem, Faculty of Land and Food Systems, UBC.

Federal Government's ISED Invests \$45 Million

Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada (ISED)'s \$45 million investment in CENGN aims to expedite the technology transformation of Canadian industry while directly supporting Canadian innovators through Innovation and Adoption Projects. The initiative provides co-investment funding up to \$250,000 CAD for startups and scaleups and up to \$500,000 CAD for projects with an adoption focus.

"Canada's agricultural sector has always been a source of strength and innovation. By investing in initiatives like the Smart Agriculture Living Lab partnership with UBC, we are empowering Canadian startups to develop, test, and deploy advanced agri-tech solutions that drive productivity, sustainability, and climate resilience. This partnership unlocks new growth opportunities for entrepreneurs, delivers cutting-edge technology to our farmers, and helps secure Canada's place as a global leader in smart, connected agriculture." The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions.

This funding is expected to provide a major return on investment, including

- A significant boost in GDP growth
- The creation and safeguarding of critical tech jobs in Canada
- The launch of innovative Canadian products in the global market
- The generation of disruptive and impactful Canadian IP patents
- Sales growth and substantial follow-on investment for participating Canadian startups and scaleups
- Acceleration of Technology Readiness Levels for participating Canadian companies
- The entry of skilled professionals into critical digital technology roles nationwide

"The Smart Agriculture Living Lab proves AI's powerful potential to reimagine farming and agri-tech in Canada. By equipping startups to innovate with advanced resources, CENGN is helping accelerate the deployment of sustainable, intelligent agricultural solutions. These efforts position Canada as a frontrunner in merging technology and agriculture for a better future." The Honourable Evan Solomon, Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario.

The announcement was a welcome sign of BC's growing leadership in applied AI and the

importance of leveraging emerging technologies to address the agriculture industry's most pressing challenges.

"B.C. is strengthening its position as a competitive player in the global AI space as more startups and scaleups take their innovations to the next level of commercialization. The launch of the CENGN Living Lab in our province, with the support of UBC, is a clear reflection of that momentum. As the use of AI-powered tools gains greater interest among businesses, this Smart Agriculture Living Lab will help advance our government's commitment to fostering innovation, supporting commercialization, training the next generation of talent; and thereby, attracting more capital investments for our businesses." The Honourable Rick Glumac, BC Minister of State for AI and New Technologies.

"The CENGN Living Lab Initiative will enable BC innovators to tackle the major challenges and opportunities facing the agriculture industry, including the integration of robotics into operations and the development of smart irrigation systems, to name a few. Our Ministry looks forward to collaborating with CENGN and UBC to empower the province's innovation ecosystem to lead the way in Smart Agriculture solutions." Mark Raymond, Executive Director, BC Ministry of Agriculture.

Empowering Canada's Agriculture Innovation through CENGN Living Labs

Chris Joyce, Vice President, Business Development and Marketing of CENGN, explains the concept behind the CENGN Living Lab Initiative:

"By leveraging our comprehensive program services and funding alongside our partner's real-world smart agriculture testing environments, we enable Canadian innovators to bring their cutting edge technologies to market faster and with greater confidence. This initiative strengthens Canada's position as a global leader in agriculture, robotics, advanced communications, and applied AI technology. These technologies are key to transforming connected systems across industries and supporting the country's economic resilience and long-term growth."

Startups and scaleups can access these services through an Innovation Project, where they utilize CENGN Living Lab environments and expertise to test, validate, and certify their solutions for market entry or expansion. Alternatively, a startup can participate in an Adoption Project, where they work directly with a potential customer to test and validate their solution against the customer's needs and requirements.

Uniting a Pan-Canadian Innovation Ecosystem

Through CENGN, the Living Labs are connected to a greater pan-Canadian ecosystem of tech-leading organizations, innovation hubs, and sector-focused organizations. This ecosystem enables the accessibility and promotion of CENGN Living Lab services to startups and scaleups

nationwide, ensuring all innovative Canadian companies can apply for a project.

“CropMind is an AI-powered precision agriculture platform that helps fruit and specialty crop growers improve yield prediction, disease detection, and resource efficiency. A CENGN project on the UBC Farm will enable our organization to ensure its scalability and reliability for large-scale adoption. Access to the Farm’s 5G and edge computing infrastructure is essential for validating our solution’s immediate forecasting and disease alert features.” Damilare Odumosu, CEO, CropMind.

Resources:

CENGN Living Lab Initiative – <https://www.cengn.ca/strategic-innovation-fund/>

ISED SRF Program – <https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/ised/en/programs-and-initiatives/strategic-response-fund>

UBC Smart Farm – <https://ubcfarm.ubc.ca/>

CropMind - <https://cropmind.ca/>

Smart Agriculture Living Lab, Powered by the UBC Farm - <https://www.cengn.ca/living-lab-initiative/smart-agriculture-living-lab>

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CENGN – Canada’s Centre of Excellence in Next Generation Networks

CENGN, Canada's Centre of Excellence in Next Generation Networks, drives innovation and adoption of applied AI, IoT, and advanced networking technologies through its Living Lab Initiative, technical expertise, and partner ecosystem. Through our services, we enable the digital transformation and competitiveness of the Canadian industry and the commercial growth of Canadian digital technology solutions. CENGN provides access to real end-user environments and the end-to-end testing services and expertise that accelerate validation, demonstration, commercialization, and adoption of digital innovation solutions across Canada and the globe.

Our unique expertise and positioning as a neutral third party in an ecosystem of technology, innovation, government, and academic partners, paired with a long track record of overperforming on program mandates, have made CENGN a trusted leader in delivering Government initiatives that support network technology innovation.

For more information on the CENGN Living Labs or for general inquiries on CENGN, please

contact services@cengn.ca.

UBC

The University of British Columbia is a global centre for research and teaching, consistently ranked among the top public universities in the world. Since 1915, UBC's entrepreneurial spirit has embraced innovation and challenged the status quo. UBC encourages its students, staff and faculty to challenge convention, lead discovery and explore new ways of learning. At UBC, bold thinking is given a place to develop into ideas that can change the world.

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