
Scientific and Innovative Venture Program (SIVP) (including a postdoctoral award) – 2025-2026

BANNER

Sector(s): DGDS, Nature et technologies, Santé, Société et culture

Competition year: 2025-2026

Deadline (application): March 4, 2025 at 16:00 EST

Announcement of results: Spring/Summer 2025

Amount: \$50,000/year

Duration of funding: 1 year, with possibility for renewal

IMPORTANT NOTES!

The SIVP team has streamlined the evaluation process to simplify it and reduce the wait time between submission of applications and the awarding of grants. Several changes have been made to the program rules since the previous edition.

A recording of the information webinar (in French) held on February 10, 2025 from 12:00 to 1:00 EST is available via [this link](#).

If you are an established researcher or a university interested in hosting a budding scientific entrepreneur, please [contact the SIVP team](#) to find out about the minimum hosting requirements.

The e-form is available in the [Fonds de recherche du Québec \(FRQ\) ePortfolio](#). To access the form, you must select the Nature et technologies sector, regardless of the research sector of the proposed project. The form is available under Available competitions, Program Training and internship awards.

INTRODUCTION

This program refers to the [Common General Rules](#) (CGR), which apply to all FRQ programs. Any specific conditions applicable to the SIVP program are detailed here and take precedence over the CGR.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Scientific entrepreneurship in Québec

Scientific companies are built on the commercialization of public research results and the scientific skills of their teams. They benefit from extensive R&D capacity (many have their own laboratories, test benches or prototyping facilities) as well as highly diversified networks that enable them to think up bold projects and make strategic pivots to consider emerging needs.

As a result, such companies are highly agile and many of them are becoming essential to the development of a strong innovation ecosystem in Québec and to the advancement of promising

sectors of activity both here and internationally in the form of cutting-edge technology companies as well as companies with a social and environmental impact.

1.2 Supporting the transition from research to entrepreneurship

The transition from academia to entrepreneurship means leaving one's comfort zone to face new uncertainties and a new culture. The support ecosystem is complex to navigate, making it difficult to find specific support for scientists with innovations stemming from research. Support programs focus on the development of the entrepreneurial project and less on the entrepreneurial attitude and mindset of the person behind it. The reality is that entrepreneurship calls for a different, albeit complementary, set of professional skills to those of academia, and requires rapid contact with the key players specific to the startup's sector of activity. Nevertheless, the development of innovation can benefit greatly from university connections and access to resources dedicated to the advancement of the most up-to-date knowledge. It is therefore a very specific entrepreneurial trajectory that combines support for a new career path, the development of research-led innovation, and the construction of a network that spans sectors and ecosystems.

1.3 Partners consolidating their efforts

The FRQ, Mitacs, V1 Studio and Axelys are joining forces to offer a clearly designed pathway specifically aimed at supporting researchers who want to start a business, whatever their reasons and whatever their journey to entrepreneurship (for details on the partners, see Section 10). With a single application, applicants receive support for their transition to entrepreneurship with the possibility of complementary funding and coaching focused on the individual as much as on the entrepreneurial solution. In the process, the company creates long-term university connections as well as a network with non-academic stakeholders.

IMPORTANT NOTE!

If you are an established researcher or a university interested in hosting a budding scientific entrepreneur, please [contact the SIVP team](#) to find out about the minimum hosting requirements. See Section 4.2.2 for more details.

2. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

2.1 The program has the following objectives:

For applicants:

- Funding and support so they can focus on their business project;
- A clear pathway that facilitates linkage with a host university and an established researcher to help transform their research project into a scientific or innovative startup;
- Personal development.

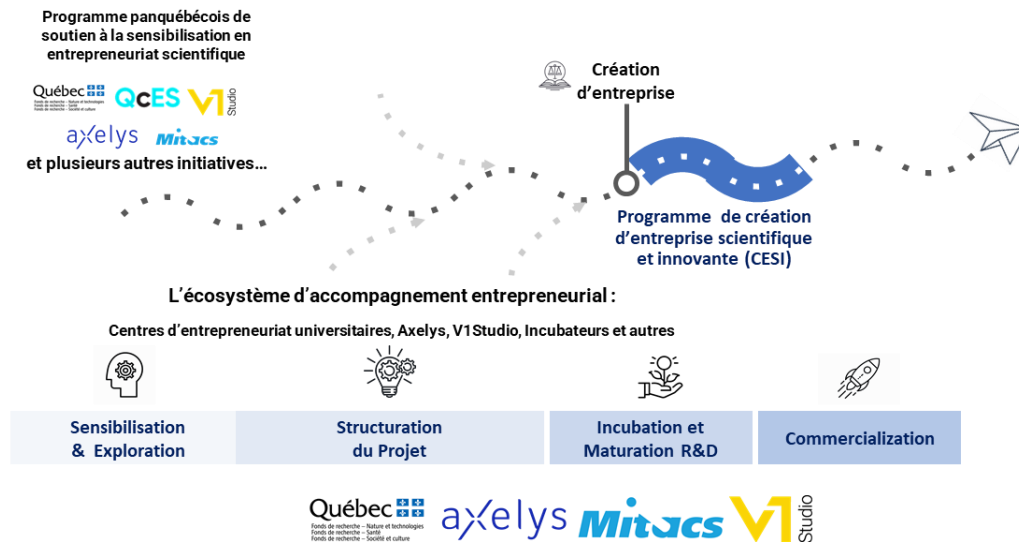
For the ecosystem:

- Assist the academic community in enhancing the existing service offerings for researchers interested in entrepreneurship;
- Address cultural barriers to leverage the university connection as a springboard for the creation of scientific and innovative businesses;
- Promote the transfer of research results to society;
- Enhance the value of scientific entrepreneurship.

2.2 The path to scientific entrepreneurship and the profile sought for the SIVP program

The program is intended for applicants who are already well on their way to scientific entrepreneurship and who wish to create or develop a scientific company around a project requiring research.

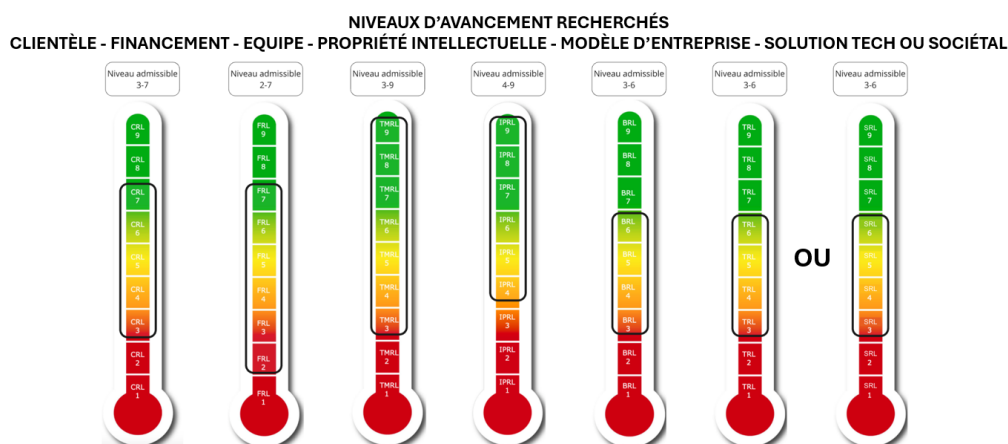
Trajectoire de l'entrepreneuriat scientifique pour la relève en recherche



Applicants are expected to demonstrate that they have:

- basic entrepreneurial skills;
- an innovative project requiring research and development;
- taken steps to become seriously engaged on the path to entrepreneurship.

The SIVP team uses the [KTH Innovation Readiness Level](#) to establish the profile of business projects submitted to the program. Readiness levels eligible to receive funding under the SIVP program are as follows (see the [accompanying document](#) for details):



The program partners encourage applicants from a wide range of backgrounds to apply, regardless of their field or the theme of their research or innovation.

3. ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible, applicants must:

- hold a doctoral degree issued no more than 5 years prior to the year in which the competition opens (e.g. for a competition opening in 2025, doctoral graduates who received their degree on or after January 1, 2020 will be eligible). Applicants who have not yet received their degree but who have submitted their thesis before entering the SIVP program are also eligible;
- have legal status to work in Canada before entering the SIVP program and for the duration of funding;
- have oral and written fluency in French and/or English in order to fully participate in the follow-up process;
- be domiciled in Québec (be present in Québec if selected, available for in-person meetings throughout the duration of funding);
- commit to becoming incorporated at the federal or provincial level with a head office in Québec before entering the SIVP program, if they have not already done so, in order to receive the award if selected for funding;
- in the event of funding, commit to negotiating usage rights for the intellectual property (IP) underlying the proposed project with relevant stakeholders, if applicable;
- commit to becoming a founding member of the company. Upon entering the program and for the duration of funding, the SIVP awardee must hold more than 15% of the shares and the founding entrepreneurs must collectively hold more than 50% of the company, preventing external partner companies from holding a majority of the voting rights or control of the company.

Important notes!

- If an application is selected for funding, final acceptance will be conditional on compliance with the commitments related to incorporation, the negotiation of intellectual property usage rights and the role as founding member of the company.
- Applicants selected for funding will also be required, if applicable, to:
 - demonstrate that they will be domiciled in Québec for the duration of funding under the SIVP program;
 - provide proof that they are allowed to work in Canada. The following are accepted:
 - Canadian citizens: birth certificate or Canadian passport;
 - Immigrants: any of the immigration documents issued by the federal government specified on [this page](#).
- With regard to eligibility period and the requirement to hold a doctoral degree issued in the last 5 years, the following exceptions apply:
 - **Extension:** Applicants who have interrupted or delayed their research training after obtaining their doctorate for reasons such as parental leave, major family obligations, bereavement, a career period outside the research community or health reasons may be granted an eligibility period extension. In the case of an interruption for parental leave, family, bereavement or health reasons, the extension granted is equivalent to **twice the duration of the leave of absence**. In the case of an interruption for a career period outside the research community, the extension granted corresponds to the **duration of the**

interruption. In the case of a slowdown, the Fonds will determine the duration of the extension based on the supporting documents provided with the application.

- **Exemption:** Applicants who have interrupted or delayed their research training because of a disability may be granted an eligibility period exemption. However, a given individual may not apply for a postdoctoral scholarship more than twice after obtaining a doctorate. This exemption is only available to applicants who meet the definition of “handicapped person” in the *Act to secure handicapped persons in the exercise of their rights with a view to achieving social, school and workplace integration* ([CQLR, c. E-20.1](#)).

Exception requests and supporting documents must be submitted with the application form (see Section 4). Applicants wishing to request such an exception are advised to verify the admissibility of the exception with the program manager before submitting their application. The Fonds reserves the right to refuse any exception request that is not adequately justified.

4. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

The e-form must be completed directly in the applicant’s [FRQnet ePortfolio](#), including all sections to be completed and documents to be attached as described below. To access the form, select the Nature et technologies sector, regardless of the research sector of the proposed project. The form is available under Available competitions, Program: Training and internship awards.

You must complete the following sections of the form:

1. **A lay summary of the business project** (maximum 500 words)
2. **A section on your doctoral work** including a description of the link (direct or indirect) between it and the project presented

You will need to attach the following to the FRQnet e-form:

3. **A slideshow (ppt format) describing the business project and its stage of development:** complete the [document provided for this purpose](#) and upload it in the “Application description” section. The following must be included:
 - Description of the problem to be solved by your business project and the importance of solving it;
 - The anticipated impact of your project;
 - The development stage of your project using the six [KTH Innovation Readiness Levels](#) (see the [accompanying document](#) for the French version):
 - Business Model Readiness;
 - Customer Readiness;
 - Intellectual Property Readiness;
 - Team Readiness;
 - Funding Readiness;
 - Technology Readiness or Social Readiness (you may use the KTH Technology Readiness Level or an adaptation designed by [Innovation Fund Denmark](#) to determine social readiness; see the [accompanying document](#) for the French version).
 - Motivation and benefits associated with participation in the SIVP program;
 - Need for linkage with a university.

4. The applicant's abridged CV (maximum two (2) pages), prepared according to the format indicated [here](#), to be uploaded in the "Other documents" section;

5. A copy of the applicant's doctoral degree or official attestation that the doctoral thesis has been submitted, to be uploaded in the "Other documents" section.

Important notes

- Do not include letters of support or recommendation; the process of linking up with universities only begins once the applicant is selected for the SIVP program.
- Although the FRQ excellence award is a postdoctoral-type fellowship, there is no requirement that the host university be different from the one that awarded the applicant's doctoral degree.
- Applicants seeking an **eligibility period exception** (see Important Notes in Section 3) must provide the following:
 - **Justification of request for an eligibility period extension or exemption** (maximum 1 page): the applicant must justify the exception request and provide, in the case of a request for extension, the dates and duration of the interruptions. This document must be attached in the "Other documents" section of the form and **will not be sent to the evaluation committee**.
 - **Supporting documents**: documents supporting the exception request (e.g., medical certificate, disability certificate, child's birth certificate, caregiver tax credit application, official document or letter from employer, etc.) allowing the Fonds to determine the duration of the extension to be granted. These must be attached in the "Other documents" section of the form and **will not be sent to the evaluation committee**. Any supporting document for an exception request submitted in a language other than French or English must be accompanied by a translation.

Applicants seeking an eligibility period exception in relation to the requirement to hold a doctoral degree issued in the last 5 years (see Section 3) must provide the following documents in the "Other documents" section:

- Justification of the exception (maximum 1 page): the applicant must demonstrate having considerable mobility restrictions due to medical reasons, a disability or major family obligations.
- Supporting documents (e.g., medical certificate, disability certificate, child's birth certificate, caregiver tax credit application, official document or letter from employer, etc.). Any supporting document for an exception request submitted in a language other than French or English must be accompanied by a translation.

These documents will not be sent to the evaluation committee.

5. EVALUATION

The SIVP team has streamlined the evaluation process to simplify it and reduce the wait time between submission of applications and the awarding of grants. Several changes have been made to this section of the program rules since the previous edition.

The first stage consists of validating the eligibility of each application. In addition to compliance with the eligibility requirements (Section 3) and the conformity of the documents submitted (as described in Section 4), the attached slideshow (.ppt format) must clearly demonstrate the achievement of the milestones associated with the KTH Innovation Readiness Levels in the slides provided for this purpose. The applicant may be contacted during this process.

Eligible applications are then evaluated by a committee formed in accordance with the requirements of the FRQ and in consultation with the four partners. This committee is made up of members recognized for their skills, expertise and achievements in relation to the objectives of the SIVP program. Given the diverse profiles of committee members, applicants are encouraged to present the project in such a way as to be easily understood by an interdisciplinary and intersectoral committee.

To be recommended for funding under this program, an application must obtain an overall score of at least 70%.

Evaluation criteria

1. Quality of the business project (20%)
 - Clarity of the description of the problem to be solved
 - Clarity and suitability of the entrepreneurial solution proposed to solve the problem
 - Innovative nature
2. Impact of the project (societal, economic, environmental) (20%)
 - Local, national, international
3. Demonstration of the development stage of the project and the team in line with the program's target profile (40%)
 - Stage of development according to the six KTH Innovation Readiness Levels with concrete examples to support the level identified
4. Anticipated benefits of participation in the SIVP program (20%)
 - Potential impact of SIVP funding and support
 - For the applicant
 - For the business start-up
 - For the development of the entrepreneurial solution in line with the action plan provided in the application
 - Motivation and integration of entrepreneurship into the applicant's career plan
 - Demonstration of the need for linkage with the university

6. NATURE OF FUNDING

- An FRQ excellence award with an annual value of \$50,000 (equivalent to a postdoctoral fellowship), paid to the individual. The award is for one year, with the possibility of renewal upon request and approval by the partners and the host university;
- Advice and support for additional funding;
- Once final acceptance has been confirmed, coaching by V1 Studio and, if needed, by Axelys (for more details, see Section 7).

The FRQ award enables recipients to dedicate their time to developing the company (business and marketing strategy, business and partnership development, market validation, etc.) and building on their key skills (business coaching, coaching in cross-disciplinary skills, knowledge of intellectual property, etc.).

Mitacs Accelerate funding can be added to support the development of the innovation at the core of the business project. This funding also secures additional resources and expertise and consolidates the necessary linkage with the university. Please refer to the current rules presented on [the Mitacs website](#).

Axelys provides consulting and support services in technology development, intellectual property management and innovation transfer to all public research institutions in Québec. Its experts bring their skills to the SIVP program, including support and access, where appropriate, to the *PSOv2d* maturation program, the *ElevateIP-momentumPI* program, and other relevant programs. Axelys supports the development of the innovative project and its compliance in several areas.

The V1 Studio team specializes in personal development during the transition from an academic project to an entrepreneurial venture. It draws on its ties with universities and a large number of incubators and accelerators to identify specific opportunities for scientific companies in the ecosystem. The V1 Studio team provides support from the moment the recipient enters the SIVP program, including personalized plans for skills development, project advancement and linkage with the ecosystem, as well as follow-up meetings to update objectives (for more details, see Section 7).

Important notes!

The FRQ excellence award is for the exclusive benefit of the person selected for the SIVP program and should not be used to finance projects submitted to other government programs, including programs offered by the Ministère de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et de l'Énergie (MEIE), the Fonds du développement économique (managed by Investissement Québec) or any other organization mandated by the MEIE, including Mitacs and sector-based industrial research groups.

The private contribution necessary for obtaining Mitacs funding as mentioned in the SIVP program must come from a funding source that is independent of the FRQ excellence award. It is the applicant's responsibility to communicate with the SIVP program team regarding the project's financial structure should any additional funding be considered in order to remain eligible for the FRQ award.

7. FOLLOW-UP

Following a SIVP program orientation meeting with V1 Studio, a personalized annual plan is drawn up, including plans for skills development, project advancement and linkage with the ecosystem. Coaching meetings are scheduled every two weeks. Targets and milestones are reviewed quarterly, and a debriefing session, supported by a committee of experts, is held after nine months to determine whether renewal should be considered.

A progress report, the format of which will be communicated in due course, must be sent to the FRQ.

8. IMPORTANT DATES, ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS AND EFFECTIVE DATE

- Information webinar: February 10, 2025 from 12:00 to 13:00 EST. Here is [the link](#) for the webinar.
- Deadline for submission of applications: March 4, 2025 at 16:00 EST
- Announcement of final acceptances and entry into the program: late spring – early summer 2025

These rules apply to the 2025-2026 financial year.

9. TERMS OF THE FUNDING

The FRQ excellence award

To retain the award, persons entering the SIVP program must:

- Comply with the conditions related to domicile for the duration of the award;
- Comply with the rules and expectations set out by the host university;
- Have made an initial thesis submission at the start of the award and meet the requirements for obtaining their doctoral degree at the time of the second instalment;
- Dedicate themselves full-time to the creation of their company. An annual vacation period is allowed and must be prearranged with V1 Studio upon entry into the SIVP program in order to integrate it into the project advancement plan and quarterly targets;
- Be present for periodic meetings with V1 Studio;
- Comply with the rules related to concurrent funding (Section 9.1);
- Comply with the rules related to paid employment (Section 9.2).

Failure to comply with these rules may result in the cancellation of the award. If, for exceptional reasons, these conditions cannot be met, the FRQ must be notified as soon as possible and will determine whether the award should continue or be cancelled.

9.1 Concurrent funding with the FRQ award

This award may not be held concurrently with:

- Merit-based scholarships from Canadian funding agencies such as the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Canada Council for the Arts (CCA), etc.;
- Merit-based scholarships from Québec funding agencies such as the Fonds de recherche du Québec (Société et culture, Santé and Nature et technologies sectors), including Inventech program grants (FRQ-Axelys partnership), Science Impact (managed by Esplanade and funded by the FRQ) and Grad2VC (managed by Front Row Venture and funded by the FRQ), the Conseil de recherches en pêche et agroalimentaire du Québec (CORPAQ), etc.;
- Scholarships from the Canada Council for the Arts (CCA) or the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec (CALQ) for the same project.

This award may be held concurrently with:

- Private sector and internal university scholarships.

The FRQ excellence award under this program is for the exclusive benefit of the person selected for the SIVP program and should not be used to finance projects submitted to other government programs (see Section 6 for details).

9.2 Paid employment under the FRQ award

A person entering the SIVP program may accept additional paid employment provided that:

- the position does not exceed 250 hours of work per four-month period;
- the employment does not interfere with the achievement of the objectives set out in the plans for skills development, project advancement and linkage with the ecosystem.

The FRQ considers that teaching a 45-hour course is equivalent to 150 hours of employment. Note that the same course given to two different groups during the same semester is considered equivalent to two teaching assignments.

9.3 Deferral and supplement during parental leave (FRQ award)

Please refer to Section 6.13 of the FRQ's Common General Rules.

10. PARTNERS

FRQ:

Reporting to the Ministre de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et de l'Énergie, the FRQ's mission is to ensure the strategic and coherent development of Québec research, providing financial support for the training of a diverse, creative and agile new generation of researchers. The FRQ's Directorate of Major Societal Challenges (DGDS) stimulates intersectoral, solution-oriented research based on the co-construction of knowledge and practices and the integration of science and society.

Axelys:

Axelys is the development and innovation transfer company for public research in Québec. It contributes to the province's economic and social prosperity by accelerating the maturation and deployment of high-potential inventions, know-how and processes to turn them into innovations that can improve the world we live in. In addition, Axelys contributes to the creation of scientific companies stemming from public research.

Mitacs:

For over 20 years, Mitacs has been helping organisations achieve their business goals, funding cutting-edge innovation, and creating employment opportunities for students and postdoctoral researchers. Mitacs generates economic growth, productivity, and tangible changes to improve the quality of life for all Canadians. Its mission is to create a world-class, diverse community of innovators through its collaborative model in order to inspire and design creative solutions.

V1 Studio:

V1 Studio is a non-profit organization that provides a safe space for researchers to explore entrepreneurship. V1 Studio leads tailored programs to support researchers and graduate students in the early stages of their entrepreneurial journey. We help them develop their potential and, if they are ready, establish a scientific or innovative startup.

11. CONTACTS

For the FRQ:

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[SIVP program website](#)