



KEI in Partnership with S2S

Improving the Alberta Innovation Ecosystem

October 20, 2021 3:30-5:00 pm

Background

Innovation has always been path to economic growth and diversification. Some call it building a better mousetrap – others call it creative destruction.

In Alberta, the energy sector has a history of innovation – early advancements in conventional energy exploration and production technology, the commercialization and growth of the oil sands, the development of a value-added petrochemical sector, steam-assisted gravity drainage, multi-stage hydraulic fracturing and more.

While some might say that the energy sector has crowded out the level of innovation and growth enjoyed by other sectors, Alberta has also been the birthplace of a variety of advances in healthcare, medical technologies, genetics, philanthropy, agriculture and more.

This success and the potential for greater advances come as the world embraces an ever-more digital, carbon-constrained and increasingly challenged world. Capturing these opportunities will also carry with them significant challenges in spheres of governance, policy and regulation.

With its highly educated workforce Alberta could lead in the rapidly accelerating fields of big data, machine learning, artificial intelligence (AI), augmented and visual reality (AR/VR) and other emerging technologies as well as in the important work of energy transition. In addition to other benefits, Alberta would enjoy:

- (1)** Much-needed economic diversification.
- (2)** An improved ability to attract, retain and engage a younger, more-dynamic workforce.
- (3)** Employment growth, overall economic growth and growth in Alberta's fiscal tax base from which we fund our healthcare, education, social and other programs.

Together, we have much to garner as we talk about the current and future state of the innovation in Alberta. Innovation is a technology-focused, social endeavor. As we consider the current state and future prospects for innovation in Alberta, it may also be wise to also consider how collaborative action and a shared investment in time, talent and treasure may play a role in accelerating it.

1. Our Speakers (20 minutes)

Our speakers will engage in a collaborative conversation that will provide their perspectives on the current state of the Alberta Innovation Ecosystem.



Brian Felesky is an influential and highly regarded Calgary investor, advisor, director, community leader and philanthropist. Brian is currently Senior Advisor/Founding Funder of Funder Inc. (a US/UK lottery technology corp.), a Senior Advisor/Co-Founder of Paradise Spirits (a tequila distiller/distributor in Mexico, US and Canada), Senior Advisor to Midnight Capital (a Canadian venture capital corp.), Chair/Co-Founder of InterGen Fund (scaling-up technology enterprises) and an advisor to and investor in several start-up companies (e.g., Code in Canada, MobSquad). He is a director of several private companies and a Member of The Order of Canada.



Ling Huang is an exceptional visionary leader and a senior security and management consultant who has been recognized as an innovative, quality-focused professional throughout his 30-plus-year career. As the CEO of Technology North Corporation, Ling is setting the direction and leading the corporation to its new venture with innovative solutions and services offerings, that position TNC in the marketplace as a Game Changer and Enabler.



Dr. Terry Rock is President & CEO of **Platform Calgary**. He is a passionate promoter of Calgary's potential as one of the world's most dynamic cities and has been fortunate to be involved in numerous community building initiatives in his hometown. He holds a PhD in Management (Strategy, Entrepreneurship & Innovation) from Texas Tech University and a Bachelor of Commerce (Marketing) from the University of Saskatchewan.



Dr. Michael Robinson is a Professor of Entrepreneurial Finance in the Haskayne School of Business and is a CFA Charterholder and a Certified Corporate Director (ICD.D). He is an active researcher, has experience as an angel investor and as a venture capitalist, and was the first site lead for the Calgary Creative Destruction Lab (CDL-Rockies) program.



Your facilitator, **Greg MacGillivray**, Managing Director of S2S whose why is *Improving Organizations*. After 20 years in the energy sector, where he fell in love with strategy, Greg founded S2S. With 15 associates across Canada, and in collaboration with many partners, S2S has developed effective ways for individuals, groups, organizations, multi-stakeholder groups and even jurisdictions to improve through shared action.

2. An Idea for Your Consideration (Greg to review for 5 Minutes):

An Alberta Innovation Ecosystem Action Roadmap

Dr. Stephen Covey urged individuals, groups and organizations to *begin with the end in mind*. In responding to Perry's request to work with a few bright people to develop a 90-minute, innovation focused webinar, it quickly became obvious that innovation is a complex topic. Process. People. Players.

Some would say innovation is a technology-focused social endeavor. Rather than jumping into a conversation about one of many *trees* we could discuss, your facilitator sees value in talking about the innovation *forest* in Alberta – an idea we have framed as the **Alberta Innovation Ecosystem**.

An effective Alberta Innovation Ecosystem is essential for Albertans and Alberta's public, private and non-profit organizations to survive and thrive. We wonder *How do we measurably improve its effectiveness?* With these and other questions in mind, we have developed the concept of an **Action Roadmap** as a starting point in a conversation focused on understanding and collaboratively improving the Alberta Innovation Ecosystem.

Good questions are critical to great conversation and great conversation builds strong relationships, which are a key to shared action. Our Action Roadmap could be framed by answering the following questions:

(a) The Innovation Process

How do we define the process of innovation (e.g., from pure & applied science, to concept & scaling, to adoption & commercialization, etc.)?

What work has been done in describing the process of innovation?

(b) People & Players

Who's in charge of Alberta Innovation Ecosystem?

Who are the players in the Alberta Innovation Ecosystem?

Who are the stakeholders in the Alberta Innovation Ecosystem?

Who are the end-intended beneficiaries of Alberta innovation ecosystem?

What sectors are involved in the Alberta Innovation Ecosystem (e.g., transportation, health, energy, agriculture, information technology, etc.)?

How do dollars flow through the Alberta Innovation Ecosystem?

How do we promote a culture of innovation across Alberta?

What work has been done to identify the players in the Alberta Innovation Ecosystem?

What work has been done to understand and promote a culture of innovation within the Alberta Innovation Ecosystem.

(c) Learning from Others Outside of Alberta

What are the geopolitical influences on the Alberta Innovation Ecosystem (e.g., trade, labour, security, global supply chains, conflicts, etc.)?

What can we learn from elsewhere to inform our thinking on the Alberta Innovation Ecosystem (e.g., other national or subnational jurisdictions, models, best practices)?

What work has been done to learn from others outside of the Alberta Innovation Ecosystem (e.g., other national or subnational jurisdictions, models, best practices)?

(d) Effectiveness

How do we measure the effectiveness of the Alberta Innovation Ecosystem?

How is the Alberta Innovation Ecosystem doing in the eyes of its end-intended beneficiaries?

How effective is the Alberta Innovation Ecosystem today?

What work has been done to evaluate the effectiveness of the Alberta Innovation Ecosystem

(e) Improvement

What are our ideas to improve the effectiveness of the Alberta Innovation Ecosystem?

What action could we take to improve the effectiveness of the Alberta Innovation Ecosystem?

What conditions need to be in place so we can reinvent the Alberta Innovation Ecosystem?

What time, talent or treasure would you be willing to invest in improving the effectiveness of the Alberta innovation ecosystem?

Only with a shared view into the Alberta Innovation Ecosystem can we commit to the business of improving, which we can do so collaboratively.

3. Participant Engagement (45 minutes):

Either in breakout groups of three or as a plenary group, participants will share their ideas on the following questions:

Are these the right questions to ask? Are there other questions to ask?

How can these questions or other questions be improved?

4. Next Steps (15 minutes):

For 15 minutes, either in breakout groups of three or as a plenary group, participants will share their ideas on the following question:

Where do we go from here?