

Policy Brief

DEFENCE INNOVATION HUB NEXUS



Insights from Defence Innovation Hubs in Canada and Allied Countries and an Analysis of Southeast Alberta's Defence Innovation Ecosystem



Prepared by
Centre for Innovation (C4i), Medicine Hat College

Funded by
Department of National Defence
Mobilizing Insights in Defence and Security (MINDS) Targeted Engagement Grant

September 2026

C4I CENTRE FOR INNOVATION

MEDICINE HAT COLLEGE

Report Credits

Project Title
Defence Innovation Hub Nexus – Insights from Defence Innovation Hubs in Canada and Allied Countries and an Analysis of Southeast Alberta's Defence Innovation Ecosystem

Prepared by
Centre for Innovation (C4i), Medicine Hat College

Research Team
Dr. Saatvika Rai, Marty Gartry, Ben Mulhall, Taofiki Okunola, Nolan Mitternacht, and Chelsey Ehresman

Project Support
Andrew Parry, Kate Schuler, and Andrea Woods

Publication date
September 2026

ACCESS THE FULL REPORT

This summary presents key findings and policy recommendations from the full Defence Innovation Hub Nexus report. To request a copy of the full report, email innovation@mhc.ab.ca

CONNECT WITH C4I

The Centre for Innovation (C4i) at Medicine Hat College works with industry, faculty, students, and community organizations on applied research and innovation. Contact us to explore opportunities for collaboration or to request the full Defence Innovation Hub Nexus report on which this summary for policymakers is based.

Centre for Innovation | Medicine Hat College
299 College Drive S.E., Medicine Hat, AB T1A 3Y6

Email: innovation@mhc.ab.ca | **Phone:** 403-502-8481
Website: mhc.ab.ca/about-mhc/centre-for-innovation
LinkedIn: linkedin.com/showcase/centreforinnovation

Disclaimer

This project was funded through a grant from the Department of National Defence (DND) and conducted by the Centre for Innovation at Medicine Hat College. The findings, analysis, and recommendations contained in this report are based on the research undertaken as part of the project and do not necessarily reflect the views, policies, or official positions of DND, the Canadian Armed Forces, or the Government of Canada.

Acknowledgements

The Centre for Innovation (C4i) at Medicine Hat College gratefully acknowledges the Department of National Defence's Mobilizing Insights in Defence and Security (MINDS) Targeted Engagement Grant, which funded this project. This investment reflects DND's commitment to strengthening Canadian defence through research, dialogue, and collaboration across sectors.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the interview participants and stakeholders who generously shared their time, experiences, perspectives, and expertise. Their contributions enriched the study and shaped our understanding of the opportunities, challenges, and priorities explored in this report. We offer special thanks to Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC) and Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Suffield for their support throughout the project, and insights that informed the study.

We also thank all those who participated in the Regional Defence Stakeholder Workshop on August 18, 2026. Their thoughtful discussions, feedback, and shared commitment to the region helped refine the findings, identify regional priorities, and inform recommendations for strengthening Southeast Alberta's defence innovation ecosystem.

We thank the panelists and moderators who contributed to the National Defence Webinar on September 3, 2026. Their insights and thoughtful discussion helped share the study's findings with a national audience and deepen the conversation on strengthening defence innovation ecosystems across Canada.

We are grateful to the C4i team members and students for their dedication and contributions to the research, stakeholder engagement, and preparation of this report. We also appreciate the support of Medicine Hat College staff, including the administrative staff whose coordination and attention to detail helped the project run smoothly.

Our thanks go to the internal and external reviewers and proofreaders for the care and thought they brought to reviewing this report. Their constructive feedback strengthened its analysis, clarity, and overall quality.

Finally, we thank Medicine Hat College's leadership for its encouragement, institutional support, and commitment to collaborative applied research. This support helped bring the project to completion and created opportunities for meaningful engagement with partners and communities.

Table of Contents

Report Credits **1**

Access the Full Report 1

Connect with C4i 1

Disclaimer **2**

Acknowledgements **2**

Table of Contents **3**

Policy Brief **4**

Understanding Defence Innovation Hubs **6**

From an ecosystem to a hub 6

Guidelines for Building and Strengthening Defence Innovation Hubs 8

Lessons from Canada and Allied Countries **11**

Policy Recommendations for Strengthening Defence Innovation Hubs **17**

Policy Action Summary 19

Southeast Alberta Defence Innovation Ecosystem **28**

Proposed Roadmap for Southeast Alberta 30

Conclusion **34**

References **36**

Policy Brief

Canada's defence and security needs are changing as geopolitical uncertainty, technological advances and supply-chain vulnerabilities increase pressure to develop and deploy capabilities more quickly. Canada's Defence Industrial Strategy (DIS) places greater emphasis on domestic industrial capacity, innovation and participation by Canadian firms. The challenge is to turn investment and technical capacity into capabilities that meet defence needs. A promising technology must move through several demanding steps: understanding an operational problem, development, testing, validation, security and procurement requirements, integration, and eventual use. Gaps between those steps can prevent useful innovations from reaching defence end users. [1,2]

The **Defence Innovation Hub Nexus** is a Department of National Defence (DND) *Mobilizing Insights in Defence and Security* (MINDS) Targeted Engagement Grant project. It examines how defence innovation hubs near military installations in Canada and allied countries connect firms, researchers, testing infrastructure and defence users. The study identifies common hub characteristics, governance approaches and barriers to innovation and procurement, then considers which practices can be adapted to regional strengths and needs. Its guiding question is:

How do defence innovation hubs located near military installations in Canada and allied countries support innovation and procurement, and what lessons can be applied to Southeast Alberta and other semi-urban and rural regions across Canada?

Southeast Alberta provides the primary case study. Centred on Medicine Hat, Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Suffield, Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC) Suffield and the Foremost UAS Test Range, the region brings together defence, research, testing, industrial and educational capabilities. The study assesses these assets alongside gaps in access and coordination. It considers how the region could build a clearer pathway from technology development to defence adoption, with lessons that may also be useful to **comparable semi-urban and rural Canadian regions**.

---

[1] Cheung, T. M. 2021. "A Conceptual Framework of Defence Innovation," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 44, no. 6: 775–801.

[2] Government of Canada. 2026. Canada's Defence Industrial Strategy, Department of National Defence. Available at: https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/dnd-mdn/documents/reports/industrial-strategy/defence-industrial-strategy-update-en.pdf

The study used a qualitative approach comprising three complementary sources of evidence: a literature review, a jurisdictional review of selected models in Canada and allied countries, and 51 semi-structured stakeholder interviews[3] conducted between April and September 2026. The international review examined the Netherlands, United States, Australia, Norway, South Korea, the United Kingdom and Japan, along with NATO's Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) and Canadian initiatives.

Interview findings were analyzed by theme and compared with the literature and jurisdictional review. Recurring observations across stakeholder groups received greater weight than isolated suggestions, while differing perspectives were retained where no clear consensus emerged. This approach informed the study's assessment of what a hub needs to do, the barriers facing SMEs and other participants, and the actions that could strengthen Southeast Alberta's defence innovation ecosystem. The interviews gathered informed perspectives rather than a statistically representative sample, and the international cases were examined for transferable practices rather than ranked by performance.

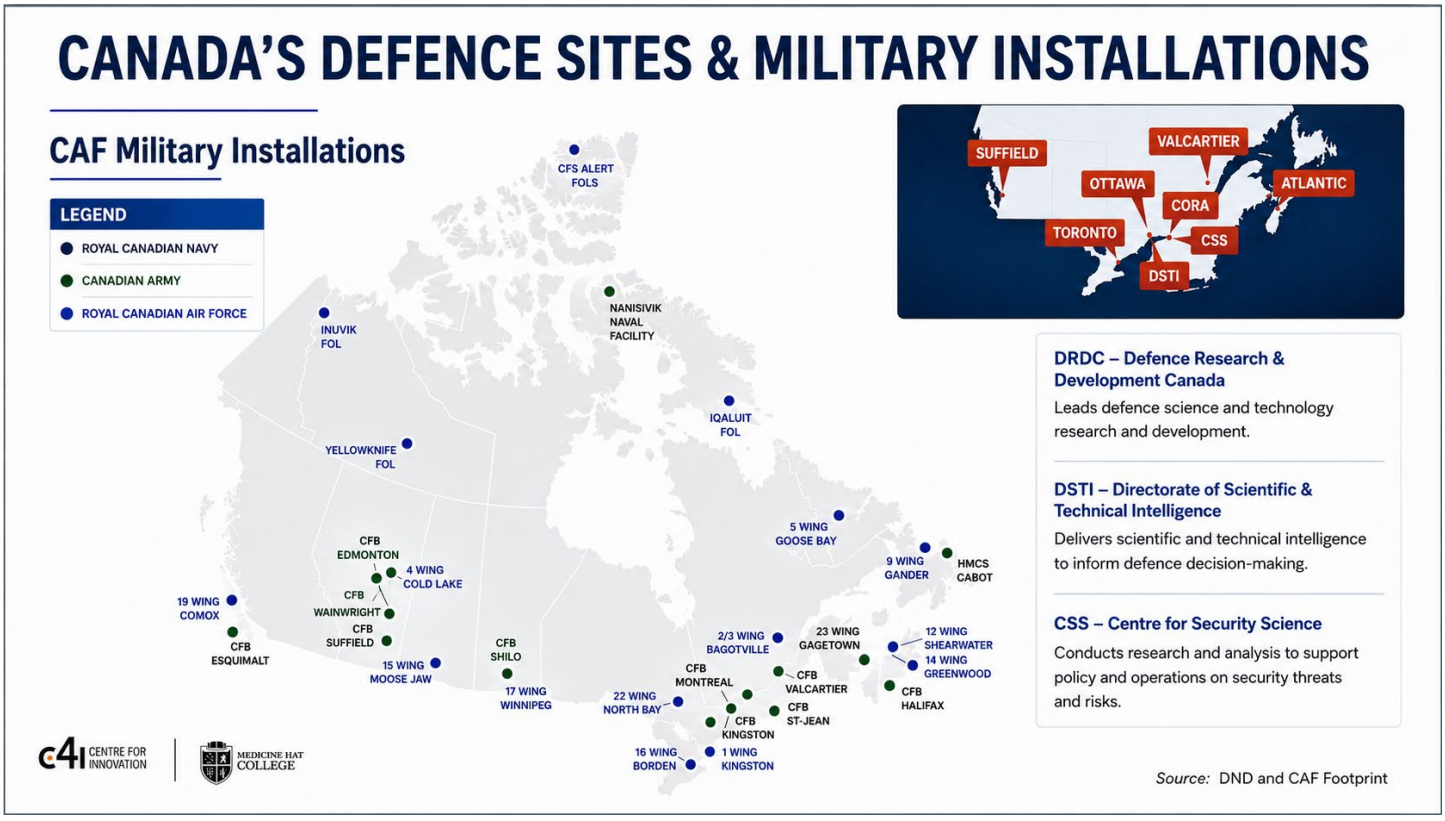


Figure 1: Overview of Defence Sites and Military Installations in Canada

[3] Participants included 11 from industry and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), 26 from defence, military and federal research organizations, and 14 from associations, post-secondary institutions and local entities.

Understanding Defence Innovation Hubs

FROM AN ECOSYSTEM TO A HUB

A **defence innovation ecosystem** is the wider environment in which defence innovation takes place. It includes the organizations, people, infrastructure, policies, funding and relationships that influence how technologies are developed, tested and adopted. A region may have firms, defence organizations, researchers and testing facilities even when they have limited contact or do not work toward shared goals.[4]

A **defence innovation hub** connects and coordinates parts of the wider ecosystem. In this study, a hub is an organized platform that brings together defence end users, industry, research institutions, governments, investors and support organizations to address defence and security needs. It helps participants access expertise, services and infrastructure, form partnerships and sustain collaboration beyond individual projects. [5,6] A hub may take different forms, but its coordinating role is central to the definition used throughout the report.

The Government of Canada's **Defence Innovation Secure Hubs (DISHs)** are a specific type of hub. The government describes DISHs as "*secure, mission-oriented environments where government, industry, and academia can collaborate over time to advance technologies beyond early development and toward defence and security application*".[7] Security is a defining feature of the DISH model because some activities involve sensitive information, technologies or facilities. Other defence innovation hubs may focus on open or unclassified activities and use secure arrangements when their work requires them. [8]

The purpose of a hub is to **shorten and strengthen the pathway from innovation to operational use**. It helps promising technologies to move from concepts and prototypes through development, testing and evaluation toward potential use by the Department of National Defence (DND), the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and allied defence partners.

Its functions may include helping firms understand defence requirements, bringing end users into technology development, supporting market readiness, arranging access to testing, identifying funding and research partners, and connecting SMEs to established suppliers and procurement

---

[4] Granstrand, O., Holgersson, M. (2020). Innovation ecosystems: A conceptual review and a new definition. Technovation, 90-91. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.technovation.2019.102098

[5] European Commission. (n.d.). *European Digital Innovation Hubs*. https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/edihs

[6] Kotila et al. 2023. *Strengthening the defense innovation ecosystem*. RAND Corporation.

[7] Department of National Defence. *From innovation to operational advantage: Defence Innovation Secure Hubs*. https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/programs/defence-ideas/element/innovation-networks/challenge/from-innovation-to-operational-advantage-defence-innovation-secure-hubs.html

[8] Department of National Defence. *Innovation for Defence Excellence and Security (IDEaS)*. https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/programs/defence-ideas.html

opportunities.[9] A hub may include physical space, but a new facility is not a defining requirement. Its services can be delivered through existing organizations and infrastructure, through a dedicated site, or through an integrated model. The choice should reflect the work to be done and the demand for shared or secure facilities.[10]

The study assessed the conditions for a functioning defence innovation hub through **proximity, scale and interdependence**. These are considerations for assessing a region's potential, not fixed requirements that every hub must meet in the same way.[11]

1. **Proximity.** Being near defence end users, research institutions, firms and testing facilities can make interaction easier and more frequent. It can help innovators understand operational needs, obtain feedback and test technologies in relevant settings. Geographic closeness alone does not guarantee collaboration: access also depends on institutional mandates, security requirements, available personnel and arrangements for working together.[12,13]

2. **Scale (critical mass).** A hub needs a sufficient combination of organizations, capabilities, infrastructure and expertise to carry out its intended work. These may include defence and technology firms, military end users, researchers, suppliers, manufacturers, investors and support organizations. There is **no single numerical threshold** for critical mass. A smaller region with specialized assets and strong connections may be better positioned for a focused hub than a larger region whose organizations rarely work together. Scale should therefore be assessed by the capabilities and relationships a region can bring to its proposed activities, rather than by counting firms alone.[14,15]

3. **Interdependence.** Participants become interdependent when they gain practical value from working together or sharing facilities, talent, suppliers, knowledge and opportunities. This includes supply-chain relationships connecting technology developers with manufacturers, integrators and defence end users, as well as shared regional capabilities that benefit multiple firms. Ideally, an effective hub strengthens both these relationships around defence requirements, turning nearby assets into a connected pathway for innovation.[16,17,18]

---

[9] Kotila et al. 2023. *Strengthening the defense innovation ecosystem*. RAND Corporation.
[10] Confidential stakeholder interviews, 2026
[11] Donahue, R., Parilla, J., & McDearman, B. (2018). *Rethinking cluster initiatives*. Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/rethinking-cluster-initiatives/
[12] Porter, M. E. (1998). Clusters and the new economics of competition. *Harvard Business Review, 76*(6), 77–90. https://hbr.org/1998/11/clusters-and-the-new-economics-of-competition
[13] Donahue, R., Parilla, J., & McDearman, B. (2018). *Rethinking cluster initiatives*. Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/rethinking-cluster-initiatives/
[14] OECD. (2020). *Broad-based innovation policy for all regions and cities*. OECD Publishing. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/broad-based-innovation-policy-for-all-regions-and-cities_299731d2-en.html
[15] Merindol, V. and Versailles, D.W., 2020. The (r) evolution of defence innovation models: Rationales and consequences. *Policy Paper*, *60*.
[16] Badinger, H. and Egger, P., 2010. Horizontal vs. vertical interdependence in multinational activity. *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, *72*(6), pp.744-768.
[17] Donahue, R., Parilla, J., & McDearman, B. (2018). *Rethinking cluster initiatives*. Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/rethinking-cluster-initiatives/
[18] Badinger, H. and Egger, P., 2010. Horizontal vs. vertical interdependence in multinational activity. *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, *72*(6), pp.744-768.

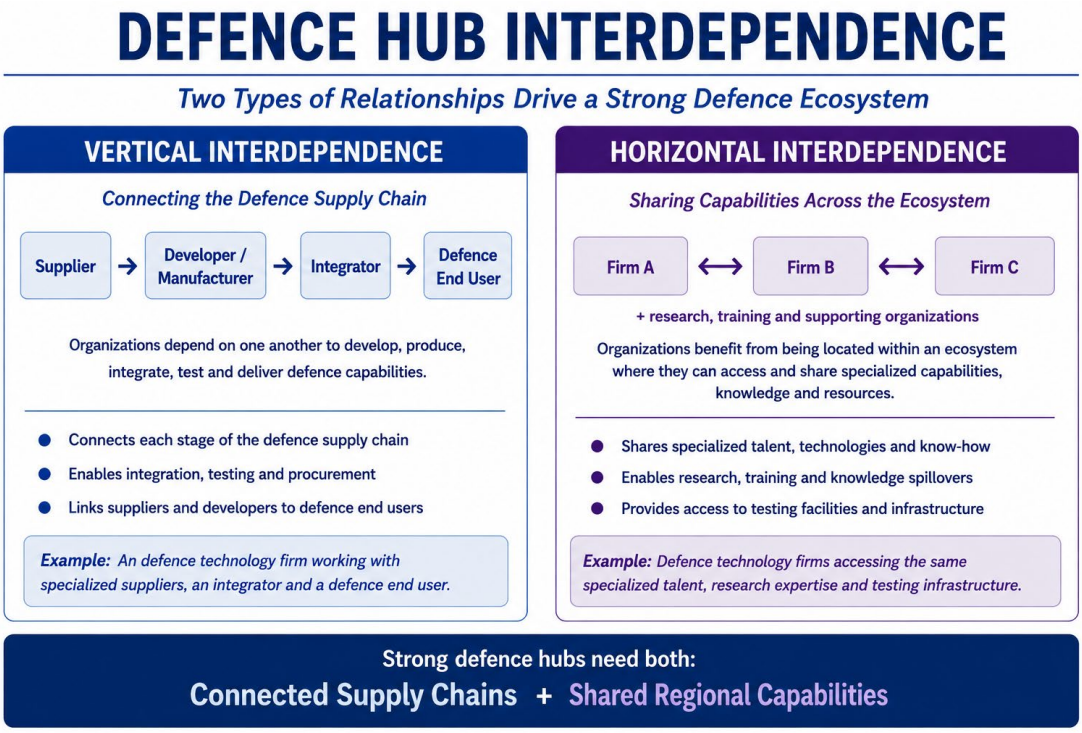


Figure 2: Description of Vertical and Horizontal Interdependence for Defence Innovation Hubs

GUIDELINES FOR BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING DEFENCE INNOVATION HUBS

Proximity, scale and interdependence can provide a foundation for a defence innovation hub, but they do not guarantee its success. Regional capabilities may remain disconnected, and promising technologies may struggle to reach defence customers. Effective hubs strengthen the relationships, services and conditions needed to connect regional strengths to defence requirements. The literature, comparative case studies and stakeholder interviews suggest seven practical guidelines:

1. **Build on existing regional strengths.** Successful innovation hubs are rarely created from scratch. Identify the region's demonstrated capabilities, including firms, military installations, research expertise, testing environments, infrastructure and skilled workers. Focus on technologies or defence needs where these assets offer a comparative advantage.[19]

[19] Provan, K. G., & Kenis, P. (2008). Modes of network governance: Structure, management, and effectiveness. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 18*(2), 229–252.

2. **Strengthen connections and address shared gaps.** The presence of regional assets does not mean they function as a connected innovation ecosystem. Connect industry, researchers, defence organizations and support agencies through working relationships, joint projects and demonstrations. Improve access to existing capabilities and identify unmet needs that affect several participants before creating new services or facilities. [20,21]

3. **Connect innovation to defence demand.** A recurring challenge in innovation systems is the development of technologies without a clear pathway to a customer, operational requirement or procurement opportunity. Engage military end users early and throughout development to clarify operational needs and refine solutions. Provide access to realistic testing and validation, with appropriate security arrangements for sensitive activities.[22]

4. **Support the full innovation-to-adoption pathway.** A persistent challenge is moving promising technologies from demonstration to procurement and operational use. Link research and development with funding, testing, commercialization, procurement preparation and operational use. Tailor support to the maturity of the technology and the firm. Navigation and concierge assistance can be particularly valuable for SMEs and new defence suppliers with limited capacity to navigate procurement, security requirements, certification and government programs.[23,24]

5. **Develop talent and specialized capabilities.** Defence innovation requires scientific, technical and business skills alongside an understanding of operational environments and defence requirements. Align education, training and workforce development with the hub's areas of specialization. Combine regional expertise with operational knowledge from serving and former military personnel, defence researchers, procurement specialists and other subject-matter experts.[25,26]

6. **Invest according to demonstrated need.** Establishing a hub does not always require a new facility. Assess demand and existing capacity before committing to infrastructure. Choose a service-based network, physical centre or integrated model according to the functions the hub needs to deliver. Physical infrastructure may be important where firms need specialized testing, prototyping, simulation, demonstration or secure collaboration space.[27,28]

7. **Plan for long-term sustainability.** Short-term funding can help establish activities or facilities, but dependence on one funding source can threaten continuity. Consider sustainability during initial hub design by establishing clear partner responsibilities, sustained staff capacity and a funding approach suited to the hub's functions.

---

[20] Donahue, R., Parilla, J., & McDearman, B. (2018). *Rethinking cluster initiatives*. Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/rethinking-cluster-initiatives/
[21] Donahue, R., Parilla, J., & McDearman, B. (2018). *Rethinking cluster initiatives*. Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/rethinking-cluster-initiatives/
[22] Confidential stakeholder interviews, 2026
[23] Confidential stakeholder interviews, 2026
[24] Grounds, K. (2025). *Industry insights on fostering Canadian defence innovation: Perspectives from Ottawa-based companies* [Briefing note]. Triple Helix, Canadian Global Affairs Institute. https://www.cgai.ca/th_bn_industry_defence_innovation
[25] Grounds, K. (2025). *Industry insights on fostering Canadian defence innovation: Perspectives from Ottawa-based companies* [Briefing note]. Triple Helix, Canadian Global Affairs Institute. https://www.cgai.ca/th_bn_industry_defence_innovation
[26] Confidential stakeholder interviews, 2026
[27] Confidential stakeholder interviews, 2026
[28] Donahue, R., Parilla, J., & McDearman, B. (2018). *Rethinking cluster initiatives*. Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/rethinking-cluster-initiatives/

Possible sources of support include public and private funding, institutional contributions, industry participation, collaborative research and appropriate fee-for-service activities.[29] Assess outcomes such as collaborations, technologies tested, market entry and workforce development, while recognizing that procurement and operational adoption depend on decisions beyond the hub's control.

Overall, the objective is not to manufacture a defence innovation cluster or duplicate existing capabilities. A hub's role is to connect participants, improve access to capabilities, address shared gaps and support sustained work on defence requirements.



[29] Confidential stakeholder interviews, 2026

Lessons from Canada and Allied Countries

The international examples show that defence innovation hubs need more than a place for firms to meet defence organizations. Across the countries reviewed, common priorities include closer collaboration with SMEs, greater attention to dual-use technologies and earlier engagement with defence end users. Their policy mechanisms differ, however, in how they organize partnerships, fund development and connect innovations to procurement. Together, they show the need to help promising technologies move through successive decisions: identifying an operational problem, developing and testing a response, preparing a supplier, and determining whether the capability can be acquired, produced and used.

In **the Netherlands**, Military Innovation by Doing (MINDbases) function as regional defence innovation hubs within established civilian innovation ecosystems. Defence personnel work alongside technology firms, start-ups and researchers to identify technologies with potential military uses. Their role extends beyond providing a place to meet. In Limburg, for example, a business desk helps entrepreneurs explore defence opportunities, find partners, assemble project teams and identify funding. This combines a recognizable physical presence with services that connect regional capabilities to defence needs.

Orchestrating Defence Innovation (ODIN) is developing a national network to link regional partnerships with defence priorities. At a later stage, the Defence Materiel Development Committee (CODEMO) can contribute to the costs of approved defence-related product development. Defport—the name of a public-private platform, rather than an acronym—brings government, industry, research and financial organizations together around innovation and production capacity. Together, these mechanisms show how a regional hub can connect firms to wider development and industrial pathways, although support for a prototype does not guarantee a later purchase.[30,31,32]

In the **United States**, regional defence innovation ecosystems bring military organizations, research institutions, contractors, suppliers and testing facilities in closer contact. Their value depends on mechanisms that connect those assets to a defined operational problem and an acquisition pathway. The Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) uses Commercial Solutions Openings (CSOs) to invite commercial firms to propose solutions to specific defence needs.

[30] Government of the Netherlands. 2025. 2025-2029 Defence Strategy for Industry and Innovation, Available from: https://www.defensie.nl/site/binaries/site-content/collections/documents/2025/04/04/defensie-strategie-voor-industrie-en-innovatie-2025-2029/Defence%2BStrategy%2Bfor%2BIndustry%2Band%2BInnovation%2B2025-2029%2BENG%2Bsummary.pdf

[31] Brainport Eindhoven. (n.d.). *NATO DIANA Accelerator Brainport Eindhoven, The Netherlands*. https://brainporteindhoven.com/en/innovation/defence-and-space/nato-diana-accelerator

[32] LIOF. (2025, November 28). *Limburg business desk for innovation activities for the Ministry of Defense*. https://liof.nl/en/news-and-events/Limburg-business-desk-for-innovation-activities-for-the-Ministry-of-Defense

It can then use prototyping agreements to evaluate a technology with potential defence users. Where applicable conditions are met, a successful prototype may proceed to a follow-on production agreement, although that outcome is not guaranteed.[33]

The Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs provide phased support for eligible small firms, beginning with technical feasibility and continuing through further research and development. STTR also requires a formal research-institution partnership in its early phases. These national tools complement regional hubs: a hub can help a firm identify a relevant challenge, find a research or testing partner, prepare for a trial and understand the evidence a defence customer will need. The U.S. example illustrates problem-led entry, staged development support and a potential route from prototype to acquisition. It also shows that a firm must plan for financing, production capacity and a prospective customer beyond its initial award.[34,35,36]

Australia illustrates how defence innovation hub functions can be distributed among industry intermediaries, research partnerships and workforce programs. South Australia provides a regional example. Its Defence Teaming Centre (DTC) helps SMEs enter defence supply chains through capability guides, referrals to prime contractors, training and industry advocacy. The Defence Innovation Partnership (DIP) connects the state government, the federal Defence Science and Technology Group (DSTG), universities and industry around collaborative research. Its Activator Fund supports the translation of innovative technologies toward Australian Defence Force capability.[37,38]

Workforce support complements these functions. South Australia's Defence Industry Connection Program (DICP) combines scholarships with industry placements, helping students gain relevant experience and firms connect with future workers. This example shows how a hub can draw on several institutions, each responsible for a different part of the pathway. The policy lesson for Southeast Alberta is to connect industry navigation, research, technology transition and workforce development through shared priorities and clear referral arrangements.[39]

Norway connects military users, researchers and industry through sustained cooperation involving the Armed Forces and the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI). FFI's ICE worx innovation centre brings researchers, technology firms and military users together to develop and test technologies for defence applications. Its testing environments allow firms to receive early feedback on performance, integration and the changes needed for military use. This illustrates a hub mechanism

---

[33] Michael E and Alejandra, R. 2024. Strengthening America's defence industrial base, Brookings, June 20, Available at: https://www.brookings.edu/articles/strengthening-americas-defence-industrial-base/

[34] Defense Innovation Unit. (n.d.). *Work with us: Commercial companies*. https://www.diu.mil/work-with-us/commercial

[35] U.S. Small Business Administration. (n.d.). *Apply*. SBIR.gov. https://www.sbir.gov/apply

[36] Kleymeyer, J. R. 2026. The Symbiotic Relationship Between Aerospace Manufacturers and Military Bases, *Trade & Industry Development,* Available at: https://www.tradeandindustrydev.com/industry/aerospace-defence/symbiotic-relationship-between-aerospace-35981

[37] Defence SA. (n.d.). *Defence Teaming Centre*. https://defencesa.com/industry/industry-directory/defence-teaming-centre/

[38] Defence Innovation Partnership. (n.d.). *Building connections for defence and space research, development and innovation.* https://www.defenceinnovationpartnership.com/

[39] Australian Industry Group. (n.d.). *Defence Industry Connection Program.* https://dicp.australianindustrygroup.com.au/

built around continuing experimentation and operational needs.[40]

Norway also links innovation to market entry and production capacity. Its *Roadmap for Expanding Production Capacity in the Defence Industry* sets out work on a common gateway for civilian businesses and uses industrial cooperation agreements to strengthen domestic capacity. [41] For Southeast Alberta, the policy lesson is to combine regular end-user engagement, practical entry guidance and preparation for production. A regional hub could help firms test and refine solutions while connecting them to the authorities and partners responsible for acquisition and delivery. FFI explicitly distinguishes its experimentation role from purchasing capabilities for the Armed Forces.[42]

South Korea links national defence priorities with regional innovation hubs through the Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA). Its defence innovation cluster program brings local governments, major contractors, SMEs, universities and military participants together around regional industrial strengths. The first pilot region was selected competitively, taking account of local commitment, capacity and its proposed innovation ecosystem. The program includes shared testing facilities, component development and cooperation between large and small firms.[43]

The Daejeon Defense Innovation Cluster provides a concrete example of specialization supported by practical services. It combines drone-development support, testing equipment, commercialization assistance and a defence-entry support centre to help firms move toward market participation. At the national level, a 2026 roadmap jointly announced by the Ministry of SMEs and Startups (MSS) and DAPA establishes coordination across start-up support, technology-development and defence-research institutions to expand defence participation and dual-use innovation. For Southeast Alberta, the policy lesson is to connect a validated regional specialization with entry guidance, development support and shared testing, while assessing whether firms subsequently reach defence users, production partners and customers.[44,45]

The **United Kingdom** connects regional innovation networks to a clearer national entry point through UK Defence Innovation (UKDI). UKDI brings together previously separate innovation functions, including the Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA), the Defence Innovation Unit (DIU), Command Innovation Hubs and the innovation function within Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S). Its Innovation Partners help firms understand relevant routes, while Regional Defence and Security Clusters connect businesses with collaborators, supply chains and

---

[40] Norwegian Defence Research Establishment. (n.d.). *ICE worx—FFI's innovation centre for the defence sector*. https://www.ffi.no/vare-tjenester/iceworx

[41] Government of Norway. (n.d.). *Roadmap for expanding production capacity in the defence industry*. https://www.regjeringen.no/en/documents/roadmap-for-expanding-production-capacity-in-the-defence-industry/id3058492/

[42] Defence Investment Agency. 2025. *Secretary of State Fuhr visits Norway and Germany to strengthen defence partnerships and advance industry engagement.* Available at: https://www.canada.ca/en/defence-investment-agency/news/2025/12/secretary-of-state-fuhr-visits-norway-and-germany-to-strengthen-defence-partnerships-and-advance-industry-engagement.html

[43] Wooyeal, Paik, 2024. South Korea's Emergence as a Defense Industrial Powerhouse. *French Institute of International Relations (IFRI)*, (138). Available at: https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/migrated_files/documents/atoms/files/ifri_paik_south_korea_defense_2024.pdf

[44] Daejeon Defense Innovation Cluster. (n.d.). *Core business*. https://www.djdi.or.kr/english

[45] Ministry of SMEs and Startups. (2026, February 23). *Roadmap sets 2030 targets for defense startup growth and dual-use innovation*. https://www.mss.go.kr/site/eng/ex/bbs/View.do?bcIdx=1065749&cbIdx=244&parentSeq=1065749

defence opportunities. This illustrates how regional hub services can make national programs more accessible to firms outside established defence centres.[46,47]

Funding mechanisms address different needs: open calls can receive promising ideas, themed competitions focus on defined government challenges, and Defence Innovation Loans support eligible SMEs pursuing development and commercialization. The policy lesson for Southeast Alberta is to combine regional navigation with support matched to a firm's stage and a specific defence need. A hub could help firms find the appropriate research, testing or supplier-development route, while ensuring that funded work has a defined next step toward end-user evaluation and potential procurement.[48,49]

Japan is strengthening connections between civilian innovation and defence through the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA). Its Defense Innovation Science and Technology Institute (DISTI), established in 2024, provides a dedicated mechanism for pursuing emerging technologies and engaging external expertise. A joint innovation challenge with the U.S. Defense Innovation Unit, for example, sought technologies addressing biological threats and disinformation. In 2026, Japan announced a fast-track procurement initiative and Ministry of Defense participation in the Small/Startup Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program to support faster development and potential acquisition of start-up technologies.[50,51]

Japan also treats production and supply-chain capacity as part of defence capability. Its industrial-base measures address supply-chain resilience and manufacturing efficiency alongside technology development. For Southeast Alberta, these mechanisms suggest that a hub should connect research and testing partners with manufacturers and integrators early in development. Assessing whether a technology can be produced, delivered and supported would help identify barriers before a successful prototype reaches an acquisition decision.[52,53,54]

---

[46] Ministry of Defence. (2025). *A new era for defence innovation: DASA, DIU and DE&S FCI unite under UK Defence Innovation (UKDI).* https://www.gov.uk/guidance/a-new-era-for-defence-innovation-dasa-diu-and-des-fci-unite-under-uk-defence-innovation-ukdi

[47] Ministry of Defence. (2026). *How to work with UK Defence Innovation (UKDI).* https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-work-with-uk-defence-innovation-ukdi

[48] Ministry of Defence. (n.d.). *Live funding opportunities.* https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/live-funding-opportunities

[49] Ministry of Defence. (2026). *Competition document: Defence Innovation Loan FY26/27 Cycle 1.* *https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/competition-defence-innovation-loans-fy2627-cycle-1/competition-document-defence-innovation-loan-fy2627-cycle-1*

[50] *Defense Innovation Unit. (2024). Inaugural U.S.–Japan Global Innovation Challenge launches. https://www.diu.mil/latest/inaugural-u-s-japan-global-innovation-challenge-to-enhance-resilience*

[51] Japan Ministry of Defense. (2026, February 27). *Press conference by Defense Minister Koizumi.* https://www.mod.go.jp/en/article/2026/02/62f5a4a335985e156ec16321c63cae8be012b0e8.html

[52] Japan Ministry of Defense. (2025). *FY2026 budget request: Major projects.* https://www.mod.go.jp/en/d_act/d_budget/pdf/fy2026_20250924a.pdf

[53] Sasaki. R. 2025. "Building Faster: Institutional Pathways for Agile Defence Acquisition in Japan," in Defence Procurement Reform: International Perspectives and Best Practices, *Conference of Defence Associations Institute, Volume 36.* Available at: https://cdainstitute.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/On-Track-Volume-26-Sept-2025.pdf

[54] Saitou, K. 2024. Japan's push for a dual-use defence startup ecosystem, *East Asia Forum,* Available at: https://eastasiaforum.org/2024/12/26/japans-push-for-a-dual-use-defence-startup-ecosystem/

NATO's Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) connects dual-use innovators to Allied defence needs through challenge calls, development funding, accelerator support and shared testing infrastructure. Selected firms receive mentoring and access to defence users, investors and more than 200 test centres. Its Mission Track provides additional support for selected solutions with strong defence relevance, helping firms demonstrate performance and develop pathways to adoption. This illustrates how a hub network can combine local expertise with specialized capabilities distributed across countries.[55,56]

Canada hosts DIANA's North American office in Halifax, while COVE in Dartmouth delivers accelerator programming. Canadian test centres include the University of Alberta in Edmonton and the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology's Centre for Innovation and Research in Advanced Manufacturing and Materials in Calgary. DIANA also has a Rapid Adoption Service through which Allied nations can pursue research, prototype or production contracts with participating innovators. For Southeast Alberta, the policy opportunity is to help eligible firms identify relevant challenges, prepare for testing and connect to Canadian and Allied partners. These connections can strengthen evidence and support acquisition pathways, but program participation does not guarantee a purchase.[57,58]

Canada combines scientific expertise, challenge-based innovation support and secure collaboration hubs to help technologies progress toward defence use. Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC) provides scientific expertise, while Innovation for Defence Excellence and Security (IDEaS) supports development through challenges and innovation networks. Its Sandboxes allow innovators to demonstrate prototypes and obtain feedback from defence experts and potential users; Test Drives evaluate more advanced solutions. These mechanisms give regional firms opportunities to connect their capabilities with defence needs and build evidence of performance.[59] Expanding initiatives and opportunities of this kind would help more regional firms access defence expertise, test and validate their technologies, and progress toward procurement and operational use.

The Bureau of Research, Engineering and Advanced Leadership in Innovation and Science (BOREALIS) aims to connect innovation programs and partners more closely. Its Defence Innovation Secure Hubs (DISHs) are designed to convene government, industry and academia in secure, mission-oriented settings around priority capability challenges. The Industrial and Technological Benefits (ITB) Policy provides a complementary supply-chain mechanism: contractors on eligible procurements must undertake

---

[55] NATO DIANA. (n.d.). *Accelerator programme*. https://www.diana.nato.int/accelerator-programme.html
[56] NATO. 2026. Innovation and technology adoption, Available at: https://www.nato.int/en/what-we-do/deterrence-and-defence/emerging-and-disruptive-technologies
[57] Department of National Defence. (2026, March 12). *Canada advances defence innovation through NATO DIANA*. https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/maple-leaf/defence/2026/03/canada-advances-defence-innovation-through-nato-diana.html
[58] Department of National Defence. (2024, March 15). *Canadian test centres and accelerators join NATO DIANA network*. https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2024/03/canadian-test-centres-and-accelerators-join-nato-diana-network.html
[59] Department of National Defence. (n.d.). *IDEaS—How it works.* https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/programs/defence-ideas/how-ideas-works/ideas-how-it-works.html

business activity in Canada equal to the awarded contract's value.[60,61]

For Southeast Alberta, the policy opportunity is to connect regional navigation, technical development, testing and supplier preparation to these national mechanisms. A hub could help firms identify the appropriate program or partner and clarify the next decision after a trial, while procurement and security decisions remain with the responsible authorities.

Together, these examples point to a coordinated pathway built around defined defence needs, with clear responsibilities for development, testing, supplier preparation and progression toward procurement. For Southeast Alberta, the priority is to connect existing regional strengths to national and allied mechanisms, drawing on external expertise and facilities where needed. Investment in governance, services and infrastructure should follow demonstrated demand, with success measured by firms and technologies advancing toward contracts, production and operational use.



[60] Department of National Defence. (2026). *Defence Innovation Secure Hub (DISH) Industry Day: What We Heard Report.* https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/programs/borealis/what-we-heard-report.html

[61] Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. (2026). *Industrial and Technological Benefits Policy.* https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/ised/en/procurement-services/defence-and-marine-procurement/industrial-and-technological-benefits-itb/industrial-and-technological-benefits-policy

Policy Recommendations for Strengthening Defence Innovation Hubs

The literature review, jurisdictional analysis and stakeholder interviews identified four interconnected areas where policy action can strengthen defence innovation hubs: **SME access to defence markets, technology transition and adoption, regional coordination, and long-term sustainability**. The recommendations combine regional actions with changes to broader defence innovation and procurement systems. Together, they address the conditions firms need to participate in defence markets, the pathways technologies need to reach operational use, and the coordination and capacity required to sustain an effective hub.

1. Improve SME access to defence markets.

A resilient defence industrial base depends on firms of all sizes, including SMEs developing specialized, emerging and dual-use technologies. Smaller firms often face difficulties identifying opportunities, understanding security and compliance requirements, managing long procurement timelines and entering established supply chains. Recommendations in this category focus on a recognizable regional entry point, staged readiness support, clearer procurement information and targeted connections to prime contractors. They also address contracting and access barriers within the defence system that can restrict participation even when a firm is ready. [62,63,64,65]

2. Accelerate technology transition and adoption.

Research funding and successful prototypes do not, by themselves, create a pathway to operational use. Technologies must address defined defence requirements and progress through testing, validation, integration and procurement decisions.

Recommendations in this category focus on early and sustained end-user engagement, coordinated testing, follow-on support and clearer responsibilities for progression beyond demonstration. The objective is to help promising technologies advance with the evidence, partners and potential customer needed for adoption.[66]

---

[62] Confidential stakeholder interviews, 2026

[63] Grounds, K. (2025). *Industry insights on fostering Canadian defence innovation: Perspectives from Ottawa-based companies* [Briefing note]. Triple Helix, Canadian Global Affairs Institute. https://www.cgai.ca/th_bn_industry_defence_innovation

[64] Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, *Canada's National Quantum Strategy* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 2023), https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/national-quantum-strategy/en/canadas-national-quantum-strategy

[65] Tai Ming Cheung, "A Conceptual Framework of Defence Innovation," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 44, no. 6 (2021): 775–801

[66] Government of Canada, *From Innovation to Operational Advantage: Defence Innovation Secure Hubs* (2026)

3. Strengthen regional ecosystem coordination.
A concentration of military, research, industrial and educational assets create greater value when organizations work together around shared priorities. Separate mandates, fragmented information and unclear access arrangements can prevent firms from finding relevant expertise or assembling effective partnerships. Recommendations in this category focus on an accountable regional coordination function, clear partner roles and referrals, capability mapping and collaboration around demonstrated regional strengths. Connections to provincial, national and Allied networks would extend access to expertise, facilities and opportunities beyond the region.[67,68,69]

4. Build long-term ecosystem sustainability.
A regional hub needs durable governance, reliable funding, workforce capacity and sustained institutional and political commitment. Recommendations in this category focus on a phased approach, beginning with an accountable lead and a two-year pilot, with evidence guiding subsequent investment in staffing, services and infrastructure. Diversified funding, formal partnerships, employer-informed training and coordinated investment readiness would support continuity and growth. Performance should be assessed through business expansion, contracts, technology adoption and other lasting outcomes.[70,71]



[67] World Economic Forum. 2026. Intelligent Industrial Ecosystems: Turning Proximity into Intelligence, August 2026.
[68] Confidential stakeholder interviews, 2026
[69] For more info see: https://www.canada.ca/en/public-services-procurement/services/acquisitions/defence-marine/procurement-strategy.html
[70] Confidential stakeholder interviews, 2026
[71] Tai Ming Cheung, "A Conceptual Framework of Defence Innovation," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 44, no. 6 (2021): 775–801

POLICY ACTION SUMMARY

Strengthening Defence Innovation Hubs in Canada and Southeast Alberta

Recommended actions across four priorities: SME access to defence markets, technology transition and adoption, regional coordination, and long-term sustainability.

CHALLENGE ONE: SME Access to Defence Markets

RECOMMENDATION	ACTIONS
1. Improve SME access and readiness	Establish a recognizable regional entry point for defence-curious companies, initially delivered through an existing organization or regional partnership, that complements rather than replaces federal procurement, security, or regulatory authorities. Support it with a staged defence-readiness framework and readiness assessment that considers technology and commercial maturity, security requirements, cybersecurity, quality assurance, certification, intellectual property, and procurement readiness.
2. Phase readiness requirements	Align the timing of security and compliance requirements with the firm's stage of engagement where operational and national-security conditions permit. Early engagement could occur through open challenges, capability briefings, commercial validation, and non-sensitive testing, with more stringent requirements applying as firms progress toward sensitive information, controlled technologies, or secure environments, without reducing security or compliance standards.
3. Improve procurement transparency	Provide clearer information about what defence customers require and how technologies may progress toward procurement. Where possible, greater visibility into anticipated timelines would help companies plan investment and manage the financial uncertainty associated with long defence procurement cycles.

4. Strengthen supplier participation	Create structured pathways between SMEs, established defence suppliers, and prime contractors that are connected to identifiable procurement opportunities or capability requirements. Prioritize opportunity-specific matchmaking, capability briefings, supplier-development programs, and mentorship on quality systems, production capacity, delivery performance, and documentation, with the objective of improving the quality of introductions rather than maximizing their number.
5. Increase the value of industrial participation	Use the ITB Policy to connect SMEs more deliberately with opportunities created through major defence programs and prime-contractor obligations, particularly firms outside Canada's largest defence-industrial centres. Place greater emphasis on research and development, intellectual-property development, technology transfer, advanced manufacturing, and sustained production roles so that SMEs become technology partners and specialized subcontractors rather than transactional suppliers.
6. Support commercial resilience	Make intellectual-property considerations part of defence relationships from the outset so that SMEs retain the ability to further develop and commercialize their technologies. Strengthen connections between civilian innovation programs and defence initiatives so that dual-use commercial revenue can help firms retain skilled personnel and sustain product development while defence opportunities develop.
7. Streamline base access	Publish a clear, step-by-step access pathway for industry and research partners, with a single point of contact and indicative processing timelines and consider pre-arranged access for approved projects that require repeated entry. The regional coordination function could help firms prepare complete access requests, while existing security requirements remain in place.
8. Build SME cybersecurity readiness	Incorporate cybersecurity into the staged defence-readiness pathway through awareness sessions, readiness checklists, and referrals to CPCSC guidance, with an emphasis on Level 1 self-assessment for firms entering the market. Federal partners should consider targeted advisory or cost-sharing support for SMEs facing higher certification levels.

9. Update low-dollar purchasing tools	Review acquisition card limits and non-competitive contracting thresholds for DRDC, CAF and DND to determine whether they reflect current costs, including the effects of inflation and tariffs. Consider indexing them with periodic review, consistent with Canada's trade-agreement obligations and appropriate oversight of non-competitive contracting.
10. Strengthen procurement workforce capacity	Assess procurement specialist workloads, classification, and compensation across base and research-centre roles to reduce turnover and pay disparities. Introduce workload benchmarks, structured training pathways, and case-management practices that keep a single accountable contact for each contract or require documented handovers when staff change.
11. Extend agreement terms	Make MOUs and SOAs available for longer terms, such as a two-year base period with options to extend by up to three additional years where the defence client requires it, while preserving the Crown's ability to end agreements that are not performing.
12. Ease fiscal year-end pressure	Allow reasonable delivery windows beyond March 31, for example 60 to 90 days, for contracts where funds are committed before year-end and the work requires it. Examine supporting mechanisms such as multi-year funding and carry-forward flexibility and encourage earlier planning and contract award.
13. Measure SME progression	Measure market progression and the depth of SME participation rather than attendance at programs or events. Early indicators include firms assessed for supply-chain readiness and connected with relevant prime contractors; intermediate indicators include supplier qualification, bids submitted, and technology partnerships; longer-term indicators include contracts secured, participation in major defence programs, and repeat business.

CHALLENGE TWO: Technology Transition and Adoption

RECOMMENDATION	ACTIONS
14. Clarify defence requirements	Complement broad strategic priorities with more specific and clearly communicated challenge statements where security and operational conditions permit. Where possible, challenge statements should identify the problem to be addressed, the capability improvement being sought, and sufficient operational context to guide technology development.
15. Signal near-term priorities	Provide a clearer indication of capabilities that may be important over the next one to two years. This would support more informed decisions about research, product development, testing, and investment, and help funding organizations and regional intermediaries direct resources toward established defence demand.
16. Strengthen end-user engagement	Use challenge briefings, technical exchanges, demonstration days, and mission-focused working sessions to connect innovators with defence end users before the final stages of development. Engagement should be iterative, focus on defined operational problems, and protect national security, intellectual property, and procurement fairness through clear expectations regarding confidentiality.
17. Establish a technology triage	Create a regional triage function to determine whether a technology is sufficiently relevant and mature to justify further engagement with the defence innovation system, without providing technical approval or implying a procurement decision. Assessment should consider problem alignment, technology maturity, evidence of performance, testing requirements, security considerations, commercial maturity, and integration challenges, and should result in a defined next step rather than a general referral.
18. Connect transition pathways	Require innovation programs to identify a defined next step before projects conclude, based on technology maturity, operational relevance, and remaining development needs. Depending on stage, technologies could progress into follow-on research, applied research partnerships, specialized testing, IDEaS Sandboxes and Test Drives, field trials, operational evaluations, or pilot procurement.

19. Coordinate testing and validation	Map regional and national testing assets by capability, eligibility, cost, availability, security requirements, and access conditions, and provide testing referrals and navigation support. Leverage existing infrastructure through shared-use agreements, interregional referrals, and formal access arrangements, and consider new facilities only where sustained demand demonstrates a clear capability gap.
20. Provide follow-on support	Use follow-on, milestone-based, and continuation funding to support engineering, integration, certification, security work, and operational validation when defined technical and operational criteria are met. Linking funding to demonstrated progress reduces the need for firms to repeatedly restart the funding process and helps technologies maintain momentum.
21. Support iterative testing	Allow firms to test technologies, receive technical and end-user feedback, make refinements, and return for further evaluation. IDEaS Sandboxes, Test Drives, demonstration programs, and field trials can provide progressively more realistic validation and identify technical and integration challenges earlier.
22. Bridge testing and procurement	Use Buy and Try, small-scale pilot procurements, field evaluations, and larger operational trials as intermediate steps before large-scale acquisition. Successful pilots should lead to a defined progression decision, such as further development, follow-on funding, expanded evaluation, or an appropriate procurement pathway.
23. Connect transition partners	Maintain stronger connections among regional intermediaries, provincial and national innovation programs, research organizations, testing facilities, and defence organizations. This allows technologies to be referred beyond the region when the appropriate expertise or program is located elsewhere, rather than attempting to provide every service within a single regional hub.
24. Measure technology progression	Track movement toward validation, procurement, and operational adoption rather than program activity alone, using indicators such as time from innovation to trial, technologies tested, follow-on funding secured, pilot procurements, and operational adoption.

CHALLENGE THREE: Regional Ecosystem Coordination

RECOMMENDATION	ACTIONS
25. Establish regional coordination	Establish a recognizable regional coordination function, delivered through a dedicated ecosystem connector or defence liaison, that serves as a front door for companies and external partners. It would receive inquiries, identify the type of support required, coordinate referrals, and convene industry, research, testing, workforce, and economic development partners around defined opportunities, without creating another layer of administration.
26. Clarify roles and referrals	Make one organization accountable for the regional coordination function, including receiving inquiries, maintaining regional information, and coordinating referrals. Participating organizations should identify internal points of contact and establish simple referral protocols, while technical, defence-requirement, funding, and procurement decisions remain with the responsible authorities.
27. Map regional capabilities	Maintain a regional capability map of research expertise, testing and demonstration assets, manufacturing capabilities, specialized services, workforce and training programs, facilities, and industry capabilities. It should function as an operational resource rather than a static directory and include access requirements and appropriate points of contact.
28. Strengthen external connections	Connect the region with provincial and national defence innovation networks so that expertise, infrastructure, programs, or partners located elsewhere can be accessed when needed. This positions the region as an entry point into the wider ecosystem while allowing it to concentrate resources on demonstrated strengths.
29. Organize mission-focused collaboration	Begin collaboration with a clearly identified defence challenge, technology opportunity, supply-chain requirement, research need, or workforce priority, each with defined objectives, participating organizations, responsibilities, and expected outcomes. Use mission-focused working groups that form around execution and conclude when the objective is achieved, rather than permanent committee structures.

30. Validate regional specializations	Use capability mapping and stakeholder engagement to identify where defence infrastructure, industry, research expertise, testing environments, manufacturing capacity, and workforce strengths intersect. Focus research, business development, infrastructure, workforce, and investment activities on these areas, and prioritize the growth and diversification of existing firms with defence-relevant capabilities.
31. Align attraction and investment	Focus business attraction on companies that strengthen established specializations, fill identified capability gaps or add complementary technologies and services. Organize municipal, provincial, and federal engagement around specific opportunities, linking infrastructure requests to identified capability gaps, workforce investment to demonstrated industry requirements, and external messaging to validated capabilities.
32. Measure regional outcomes	Track early measures such as qualified referrals, joint projects, partnerships, and use of regional assets, and longer-term measures such as collaborative technology development, defence supply-chain participation, growth and diversification of existing firms, new investment, and repeated use of regional capabilities.

CHALLENGE FOUR: Long-Term Ecosystem Sustainability

RECOMMENDATION	ACTIONS
33. Establish staged governance	Begin with an existing organization as the accountable lead within a defined partnership structure, with roles for ecosystem coordination, industry engagement, defence relationships, financial oversight, and reporting. Move to a consortium or shared-governance structure as partners contribute significant resources, and consider a separate legal entity only when staffing, financial management, liability, contracting, security, or facility management justifies it.
34. Pilot the regional model	Implement the regional model through a two-year pilot with defined responsibilities, milestones, and outcomes, including time from innovation to trial, technologies tested, follow-on procurement and investment, and supplier readiness. Evidence from the pilot should guide subsequent decisions concerning governance, staffing, secure space, and infrastructure.
35. Build institutional continuity	Use memoranda of understanding, partnership agreements, terms of reference, referral protocols, and documented decision-making processes to create continuity beyond individual relationships and assign key functions to institutions rather than individual staff members. Retain knowledge through documented processes, relationship records, and succession planning, and review governance regularly against project volume, staffing, partner participation, revenue, and demand for services.
36. Diversify funding	Match funding sources to the function being supported: public investment for core ecosystem functions that generate broad benefits; project funding and research agreements for defined technology and research activities; and industry contributions, fee-for-service, membership, or sponsorship where a clear commercial benefit exists. Core navigation and initial referral services should remain broadly accessible so that firms do not face a new financial barrier.
37. Scale capacity with demand	Use phased investment thresholds for new staffing, programs, equipment, and infrastructure, linked to evidence such as sustained utilization, recurring industry demand, committed partners, external funding, or identifiable defence requirements. Use existing infrastructure through shared-use and access agreements before developing new facilities.

38. Strengthen workforce capacity	Conduct a regional defence workforce needs assessment, informed by employers and updated periodically, to identify the occupations and skills constraining defence-related growth. Respond through work-integrated learning, applied research placements, targeted credentials, micro-credentials, and industry-informed training, with employers directly involved in defining competencies.
39. Build national connections	Where demand is too specialized to sustain local programming, use shared training and interinstitutional partnerships with institutions elsewhere in Alberta and Canada. Formal referral relationships, joint research projects, shared testing arrangements, collaborative funding proposals, and cross-regional industry partnerships can give regional firms access to expertise and infrastructure unavailable locally.
40. Coordinate advocacy and investment readiness	Establish a coordinated regional defence advocacy agenda with a limited number of evidence-based priorities, each identifying the government or organization responsible for the decision and the regional partner responsible for advancing it. Maintain a ready-to-activate defence investment package showing available sites, infrastructure, workforce support, research and testing capabilities, potential partners, incentives, and a clear point of contact, and plan enabling infrastructure early enough to respond to credible opportunities.
41. Strengthen regional visibility	Develop a common regional value proposition and evidence base covering regional companies, defence and research capabilities, testing infrastructure, workforce, economic impact, investment opportunities, and identified gaps. Use senior political leadership to reinforce regional priorities with other levels of government, defence organizations, major contractors, and potential investors.
42. Measure long-term sustainability	Track long-term outcomes rather than activity alone, including business expansion, defence contracts, supply-chain participation, technology commercialization and operational adoption, investment attraction, employment and revenue growth, use of regional infrastructure, external funding leveraged, and diversification of the ecosystem's own funding base.



Southeast Alberta Defence Innovation Ecosystem

Southeast Alberta, centred on Medicine Hat, CFB Suffield and the Foremost UAS Test Range, brings together a distinctive concentration of defence, research, testing, industrial, educational and economic development assets. Four comparative advantages stand out. The co-location of CFB Suffield and DRDC Suffield connects a military operating environment with federal defence research, including CBRNE expertise and large-scale field experimentation. The region offers land, airspace and controlled testing environments that can be harder and costlier to secure in metropolitan areas. Established uncrewed-systems and aerospace firms combine product development, manufacturing, testing and evaluation. The region's energy and agricultural sectors further contribute dual-use potential in remote sensing, communications, autonomy and equipment for demanding environments. [72,73]

Together, these strengths provide a strong foundation for a more connected defence innovation hub. Strengthening coordination, access to specialized support and relationships with defence users could help regional firms translate existing capabilities into sustained innovation and growth.

[72] Medicine Hat Economic Development. (2025). *State of the industry: Aviation, aerospace & defence in Southeast Alberta—2024 business retention & expansion–industry specific.*

[73] Medicine Hat Economic Development. (2026). *Southern Alberta's aerospace & defence development hub.*



Figure 3: Southeast Alberta's Defence Innovation Assets and Regional Strengths

Regional Readiness. Assessed against the three hub success factors, Southeast Alberta has a promising foundation, with opportunities to strengthen the connections needed for a focused defence innovation hub:

- **Proximity:** Strong geographic proximity provides a foundation for closer organizational relationships and more coordinated access to regional capabilities.
- **Scale:** The region's emerging capacity can support a focused initiative, with opportunities to expand its scope as participation and demand grow.
- **Interdependence:** Complementary regional assets offer considerable potential for joint projects and sustained collaboration among firms, researchers and defence organizations.

The region's value proposition is strongest when its specialized capabilities complement those of larger centres such as Calgary and Edmonton. These connections can extend the expertise, services and opportunities available to regional firms.

Regional Priorities. The report identifies four priorities:

1. Establish a regional coordinating function to connect partners and provide a recognizable entry point for firms and external organizations.
2. Validate and prioritize three areas of specialization: uncrewed and autonomous systems; field validation of military and dual-use technologies at DRDC Suffield, including CBRNE; and dual-use remote sensing, geospatial and autonomy technologies drawn from energy and agriculture.
3. Formalize pathways among firms, researchers, testing sites, defence users and supply chains.
4. Strengthen partnerships outside the region to broaden access to expertise, infrastructure and defence opportunities.

PROPOSED ROADMAP FOR SOUTHEAST ALBERTA

The following operating model, governance approach and phased implementation roadmap offer a practical way to advance these priorities for consideration by regional partners. The approach would build on existing capabilities, begin with a manageable set of services and expand as demand, partner commitments and results become clearer.

Operating Model. A services hub delivered through existing organizations and facilities could provide a practical starting point. Initial services could include liaison with DRDC and the CAF, technology triage, testing referrals and expert support for SMEs.

Liaison activities could help partners understand defence requirements and identify opportunities for technical exchanges, demonstrations and collaboration, subject to the participation and mandates of defence organizations. Technology triage could assess a proposed solution against an identified defence need, its development stage and available evidence of performance, then suggest an appropriate next step without implying technical approval or a procurement commitment. Testing referrals could help firms identify suitable facilities and understand eligibility, costs, security requirements and access conditions. SME support could include guidance and referrals related to procurement readiness, certification, cybersecurity, intellectual property, funding and supply-chain participation.

A shared intake process, designated points of contact and simple referral arrangements could support service delivery. A current capability map could identify regional expertise, facilities and services, alongside external resources where specialized support is unavailable locally.

Governance. Southeast Alberta's expertise and resources are distributed across several organizations, providing a foundation for a coordinated regional approach. A lead organization or umbrella model could offer an effective initial

structure. An established regional organization with the necessary administrative capacity could host the hub and provide a clear point of accountability, while partners contribute expertise in research, testing, industry engagement and workforce development.

An initial partnership agreement or terms of reference could define the hub's purpose, scope, decision-making arrangements and partner responsibilities. It could identify who would manage inquiries, coordinate services, administer funding, maintain information and report on results. Technical, security, funding and procurement decisions would remain with the responsible authorities. Arrangements for confidentiality, intellectual property and information sharing could establish clear expectations for collaborative activities.

A small steering group representing relevant regional partners could guide priorities and review progress. Industry participation would help ensure services respond to practical business needs, while engagement with defence organizations would help maintain alignment with operational requirements. Dedicated coordination capacity and documented processes could support continuity beyond individual relationships.

As activity grows and partners contribute significant resources, shared leadership could be considered, followed by stand-alone hub governance if staffing, contracting, financial management, liability, security or facility responsibilities warrant it. These transitions would be guided by the hub's functions and workload, rather than timing alone. This staged approach would allow the hub to build on existing mandates and complement services provided by regional partners.

Infrastructure Investment. Infrastructure development could begin by improving access to existing regional testing and demonstration assets, including DRDC/CAF Suffield, the Foremost UAS Test Range and Medicine Hat Regional Airport. An assessment could identify available capabilities, access conditions, security requirements, operating costs and opportunities for shared use. Formal access arrangements, where feasible, could help innovators plan activities with the responsible organizations.

As demand grows, an integrated model combining services and physical infrastructure could support secure collaborative work, technology development and smaller innovators. Shared facilities could provide meeting and project space, prototyping equipment, technical expertise and infrastructure that individual SMEs may find difficult to establish independently. These spaces could support collaboration among firms, researchers and defence partners, including activities involving sensitive information or technologies where the necessary security requirements can be met.

Potential locations could include Medicine Hat College, Medicine Hat Regional Airport or other suitable regional sites. An assessment of existing assets could compare available space, proximity to expertise and testing facilities, security suitability, equipment needs, accessibility, and capital and operating costs. This would help determine whether adapting an existing facility, establishing shared-use arrangements or developing new infrastructure offers the strongest value. Investment could proceed in stages, supported by demonstrated demand, committed partners and a sustainable plan for staffing, maintenance and facility management.

Implementation Roadmap. A phased approach could help regional partners develop the hub at a pace aligned with demand and available resources. The proposed timelines would provide a planning framework, with progression informed by partner commitments, service use and evidence of results.

- **Phase 1 — Establish the Foundation (first six months).** This phase could build on the Defence Stakeholder Workshop held on August 18, 2026, as part of this project. Partners could confirm an accountable host, establish a formal name and shared identity, agree on an initial governance structure, engage key stakeholders and validate priority areas. A defined work plan, initial resource commitments and agreed pilot outcomes would provide a basis for launching services.

- **Phase 2 — Plan and Resource (within the first year).** Partners could identify staffing, funding and in-kind contributions and develop a clear plan and service offering for innovators, including support for business investment and attraction. Capability mapping and an infrastructure assessment could inform service delivery, testing access and potential locations for shared space. Initial projects and firm engagements could help test the model and refine delivery arrangements.

- **Phase 3 — Build and Expand (years two to three).** Services and infrastructure could expand where sustained demand has been demonstrated. This could include formal shared-use arrangements with testing facilities and investment in secure collaboration space, shared prototyping capabilities and technical support. Evidence of recurring demand, committed projects and expected utilization could guide investment. Governance could move toward shared leadership as responsibilities and partner contributions broaden.

- **Phase 4 — Sustain and Formalize (years three to five).** This phase could focus on long-term sustainability through diversified funding, durable partnerships and, where appropriate, stand-alone governance. Funding could combine public support for core coordination functions with research agreements, project funding, industry contributions and suitable fee-for-service activities. Reviews of service performance, infrastructure use and financial capacity could guide further development.

A two-year pilot covering Phases 1 and 2 and the initial portion of Phase 3 would provide evidence to guide subsequent infrastructure and governance decisions. The pilot could track qualified referrals, firms supported, collaborations established, technologies tested, use of regional facilities, follow-on funding and progress toward supplier qualification or procurement. Regular reviews with participating firms and partners could assess service quality and identify improvements. Longer-term outcomes, including contracts and operational adoption, would also be relevant, while recognizing that these depend on decisions beyond the hub's control.

Next Steps. A detailed options analysis could help regional partners compare alternative operating and governance models and agree on an implementation approach. It could assess potential lead organizations, delivery responsibilities, staffing needs, costs, funding sources and partner commitments, drawing on the infrastructure assessment described above. The resulting analysis could support an agreed pilot plan with clear responsibilities, milestones and review points.

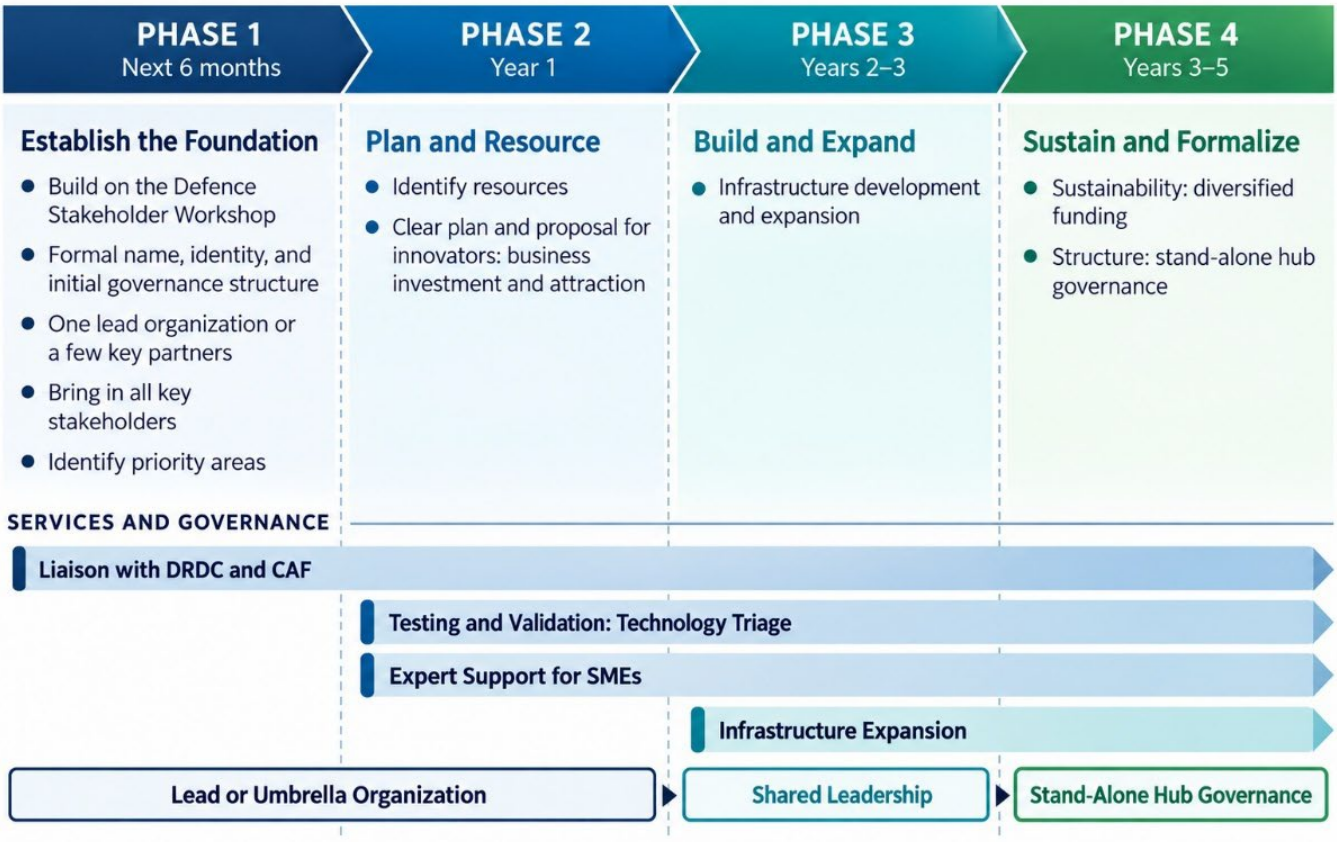


Figure 4:Phased Roadmap for Developing a Defence Innovation Hub in Southeast Alberta

Conclusion

Canada's growing defence investment creates an opportunity for Canadian firms, research institutions and regions to contribute more directly to national defence capability. Increased funding alone, however, will not ensure faster adoption of new technologies or a stronger domestic industrial base. The central challenge identified throughout this study is connecting innovation with defence requirements and supporting promising technologies through testing, procurement and operational adoption. Defence innovation hubs can strengthen these connections by bringing organizations, capabilities and services together around defined defence needs.

This study examined how defence innovation hubs located near military installations support innovation and procurement, and what lessons could apply to Southeast Alberta and comparable regions. The literature, jurisdictional review and stakeholder interviews point to a consistent finding: successful hubs do more than bring participants into geographic proximity. They provide a recognizable entry point for firms, translate defence priorities into defined challenges, connect innovators with end users and testing environments, and support staged pathways toward procurement. They build on demonstrated regional strengths and sustain their activities through clear governance, reliable funding and durable partnerships. No jurisdiction offers a model that can be reproduced directly, but the examples collectively show how deliberate coordination can turn regional capabilities into practical defence innovation opportunities.

Proximity emerged as a central strength in Southeast Alberta. CFB Suffield, DRDC Suffield, the Foremost UAS Test Range, Medicine Hat Regional Airport, established aerospace and industrial firms, post-secondary capacity and regional development organizations provide a distinctive foundation. The next opportunity is to strengthen the organizational relationships that make these assets more accessible and effective together. Clear institutional arrangements, defined referral pathways and a regional coordination function could help translate geographic proximity into sustained collaboration and a durable competitive advantage.

Southeast Alberta's emerging scale can support a focused initiative that builds on what is already in place and complements larger centres such as Calgary and Edmonton. Potential specializations include uncrewed and autonomous systems; field validation of military and dual-use technologies at DRDC Suffield, including CBRNE; and remote sensing, geospatial and autonomy applications drawn from energy and agriculture. These areas could be validated against defence demand, industrial capacity and commercial opportunity, with external partnerships extending access to capabilities unavailable locally.

The recommendations address four interconnected priorities: SME access to defence markets, technology transition and adoption, regional coordination, and long-term sustainability. A practical starting point would be a services hub hosted by an established regional organization, offering DRDC/CAF liaison, technology triage, testing referrals and SME support. A two-year pilot with defined responsibilities, milestones and outcomes could test this approach and inform subsequent decisions about staffing, governance and infrastructure. Investment could first improve access to existing testing assets, then support secure collaboration space and shared capabilities for smaller innovators where demand warrants it.

Regional action would need to be supported by broader institutional changes. Stakeholders identified barriers involving base access, cybersecurity readiness, purchasing tools, procurement workforce capacity, fiscal year-end pressures and agreement terms. Engagement from DND, PSPC and the Treasury Board would be important to address these issues and strengthen the connection between supplier readiness, technology validation and contracting opportunities.

The lessons extend beyond Southeast Alberta. Semi-urban and rural regions across Canada can contribute specialized capabilities to national defence by mapping existing assets, establishing clear coordination, focusing on demonstrated strengths and connecting with national and Allied networks. Governance and infrastructure can then grow in response to evidence of demand and results.

For Southeast Alberta, the opportunity is to turn a strong regional foundation into a coordinated pathway for defence innovation. Sustained partnerships, practical services and targeted investment could help regional firms contribute to deployable capability while building stronger domestic supply chains and lasting economic benefits. The measure of success will be how effectively the hub helps firms, researchers and defence partners work together to meet real operational needs.



References

Asian Pacific Defense Reporter. (2025). South Korea's defence technology export boom explained, Available at: https://asiapacificdefencereporter.com/south-koreas-defence-technology-export-boom-explained/

Australian Industry Group. (n.d.). *Defence Industry Connection Program*. https://dicp.australianindustrygroup.com.au/

Badinger, H. and Egger, P., (2010). Horizontal vs. vertical interdependence in multinational activity. *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, *72*(6), pp.744-768.

Brainport Eindhoven. (n.d.). *NATO DIANA Accelerator Brainport Eindhoven, The Netherlands*. https://brainporteindhoven.com/en/innovation/defence-and-space/nato-diana-accelerator

Budget 2025, Chapter 4 - Protecting Canada's sovereignty and security, https://budget.canada.ca/2025/report-rapport/chap4-en.html

Bureau of Research, Engineering and Advanced Leadership in Innovation and Science (BOREALIS) https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/programs/borealis.html

Cheung, T. M. 2021. "A Conceptual Framework of Defence Innovation," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 44, no. 6: 775–801.

Daejeon Defense Innovation Cluster. (n.d.). *Core business*. https://www.djdi.or.kr/english

Defence and Security Accelerator. (2025, October 28). *Defence Innovation Loans Cycle 5: Enhanced support for commercialising defence technology*. GOV.UK. https://www.gov.uk/government/news/defence-innovation-loans-cycle-5-enhanced-support-for-commercialising-defence-technology

Defence Innovation Partnership. (n.d.). *Building connections for defence and space research, development and innovation*. https://www.defenceinnovationpartnership.com/

Defence Investment Agency. (2025). *Secretary of State Fuhr visits Norway and Germany to strengthen defence partnerships and advance industry engagement.* Available at: https://www.canada.ca/en/defence-investment-agency/news/2025/12/secretary-of-state-fuhr-visits-norway-and-germany-to-strengthen-defence-partnerships-and-advance-industry-engagement.html

Defence SA. (n.d.). *Defence Teaming Centre*. https://defencesa.com/industry/industry-directory/defence-teaming-centre/

Defense Innovation Unit. (2024). *Inaugural U.S.–Japan Global Innovation Challenge launches.* https://www.diu.mil/latest/inaugural-u-s-japan-global-innovation-challenge-to-enhance-resilience

Defense Innovation Unit. (n.d.). *Work with us: Commercial companies*. https://www.diu.mil/work-with-us/commercial

Department of Finance Canada. (2024). “Remarks by the Deputy Prime Minister on Securing Canada’s AI Advantage,” Government of Canada, April 7, https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2024/04/remarks-by-the-deputy-prime-minister-on-securing-canadas-ai-advantage.html

Department of National Defence. (2023). *Indigenous relations*. Government of Canada. https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/proactive-disclosure/secd-april-24-2023/indigenous-relations.html

Department of National Defence. (2024, March 15). *Canadian test centres and accelerators join NATO DIANA network*. https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2024/03/canadian-test-centres-and-accelerators-join-nato-diana-network.html

Department of National Defence. (2026). *From innovation to operational advantage: Defence Innovation Secure Hubs*. https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/programs/defence-ideas/element/innovation-networks/challenge/from-innovation-to-operational-advantage-defence-innovation-secure-hubs.html

Department of National Defence. (2026, March 12). *Canada advances defence innovation through NATO DIANA*. https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/maple-leaf/defence/2026/03/canada-advances-defence-innovation-through-nato-diana.html

Department of National Defence. (2026). Canada’s Defence Industrial Strategy, Government of Canada Available at: https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/dnd-mdn/documents/reports/industrial-strategy/defence-industrial-strategy-update-en.pdf

Department of National Defence. (2026). *Defence Drone Initiative*. Government of Canada. https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2026/07/defence-drone-initiative.html

European Commission. (n.d.). *European Digital Innovation Hubs*. https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/edihs

From innovation to operational advantage: Defence Innovation Secure Hubs

https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/programs/defence-ideas/element/innovation-networks/challenge/from-innovation-to-operational-advantage-defence-innovation-secure-hubs.html

Government of Canada. (2026). *House Standing Committee on National Defence (NDDN): Defence Industrial Strategy* (Appearance by the Minister of National Defence) - May 6, Available at: https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/proactive-disclosure/2026/nddn-defence-industrial-strategy.html

Government of Norway. (n.d.). *Roadmap for expanding production capacity in the defence industry*. https://www.regjeringen.no/en/documents/roadmap-for-expanding-production-capacity-in-the-defence-industry/id3058492/

Government of the Netherlands. (2025). 2025-2029 Defence Strategy for Industry and Innovation, Available from: https://www.defensie.nl/site/binaries/site-content/collections/documents/2025/04/04/defensie-strategie-voor-industrie-en-innovatie-2025-2029/Defence%2BStrategy%2Bfor%2BIndustry%2Band%2BInnovation%2B2025-2029%2BENG%2Bsummary.pdf

Granstrand, O., Holgersson, M. (2020). Innovation ecosystems: A conceptual review and a new definition. Technovation, 90-91. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.technovation.2019.102098

Grounds, K. (2025). *Industry insights on fostering Canadian defence innovation: Perspectives from Ottawa-based companies* [Briefing note]. Triple Helix, Canadian Global Affairs Institute. https://www.cgai.ca/th_bn_industry_defence_innovation

Guzman, D. (2025). Prime Minister Carney launches new Defence Investment Agency to rebuild, rearm, and reinvest in the Canadian Armed Forces faster, Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, Available at: https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2025/10/02/prime-minister-carney-launches-new-defence-investment-agency-rebuild

HM Revenue & Customs. (2024). *Guidance: Check if you can claim Research & Development (R&D) tax relief,* Government of the United Kingdom, Available at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/corporation-tax-research-and-development-rd-relief

Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. (2022) Industrial and Technological Benefits Policy: Value Proposition Guide, Available at: https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/industrial-technological-benefits/sites/default/files/attachments/2022/ISED_VPGuide_eng.pdf

Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. (2023). *Canada's National Quantum Strategy* (Ottawa: Government of Canada), https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/national-quantum-strategy/en/canadas-national-quantum-strategy

Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. (2026). *Industrial and Technological Benefits Policy*, Government of Canada. Available at: https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/ised/en/procurement-services/defence-and-marine-procurement/industrial-and-technological-benefits-itb/industrial-and-technological-benefits-policy

Japan Ministry of Defense. (2025). *FY2026 budget request: Major projects.* https://www.mod.go.jp/en/d_act/d_budget/pdf/fy2026_20250924a.pdf

Japan Ministry of Defense. (2026, February 27). *Press conference by Defense Minister Koizumi.* https://www.mod.go.jp/en/article/2026/02/62f5a4a335985e156ec16321c63cae8be012b0e8.html

Kleymeyer, J. R. (2026). The Symbiotic Relationship Between Aerospace Manufacturers and Military Bases, *Trade & Industry Development,* Available at: https://www.tradeandindustrydev.com/industry/aerospace-defence/symbiotic-relationship-between-aerospace-35981

Kotila et al. (2023). *Strengthening the defense innovation ecosystem*. RAND Corporation.

LIOF. (2025, November 28). *Limburg business desk for innovation activities for the Ministry of Defense*. https://liof.nl/en/news-and-events/Limburg-business-desk-for-innovation-activities-for-the-Ministry-of-Defense

Magnuson, Stew. (2025). Norway Defence Industry Part of Trend to Boost European Capacity, National Defence Magazine, Available at: https://www.nationaldefencemagazine.org/articles/2025/6/27/norway-defence-industry-part-of-trend-to-boost-european-capacity

Merindol, V. and Versailles, D.W., (2020). The (r) evolution of defence innovation models: Rationales and consequences. *Policy Paper*, *60.*

Mesquita, L.F. and Lazzarini, S.G., (2008). Horizontal and vertical relationships in developing economies: Implications for SMEs' access to global markets. *Academy of Management journal*, *51*(2), pp.359-380.

Michael, Raska. (2012). Transforming South Korea's Defence Capabilities, *East Asia Forum*, May 29, Available at: https://eastasiaforum.org/2012/05/28/transforming-south-korea-s-defence-capabilities/

Michael, E and Alejandra, R. (2024). Strengthening America's defence industrial base, Brookings, June 20, Available at: https://www.brookings.edu/articles/strengthening-americas-defence-industrial-base/

Ministerie Van Defensie. (2025). Defence Strategy for Industry and Innovation, Available at: https://www.defensie.nl/site/binaries/site-content/collections/documents/2025/04/04/defensie-strategie-voor-industrie-en-innovatie-2025-2029/Defence+Strategy+for+Industry+and+Innovation+2025-2029+ENG+summary.pdf

Ministry of Defence. (2025). *A new era for defence innovation: DASA, DIU and DE&S FCI unite under UK Defence Innovation (UKDI).* https://www.gov.uk/guidance/a-new-era-for-defence-innovation-dasa-diu-and-des-fci-unite-under-uk-defence-innovation-ukdi

Ministry of Defence. (2026). *Competition document: Defence Innovation Loan FY26/27 Cycle 1.* https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/competition-defence-innovation-loans-fy2627-cycle-1/competition-document-defence-innovation-loan-fy2627-cycle-1

Ministry of Defence. (2026). *How to work with UK Defence Innovation (UKDI).* https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-work-with-uk-defence-innovation-ukdi

Ministry of Defence. (n.d.). *Live funding opportunities.* https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/live-funding-opportunities

Ministry of Defence. (2025). Competition Document: Defence Innovation Loan, Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/competition-defence-innovation-loans/competition-document-defence-innovation-loan

Ministry of Defence. (2025). *Launch of new body to harness innovative tech for the UK's Armed Forces,* Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/launch-of-new-body-to-harness-innovative-tech-for-the-uks-armed-forces

Ministry of Defence. (2026). *UKDI seeks innovations to detect and defeat fibre optically controlled UAS,* Government of the United Kingdom, 27 March. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ukdi-seeks-innovations-to-detect-and-defeat-fibre-optically-controlled-uas

Ministry of SMEs and Startups. (2026, February 23). *Roadmap sets 2030 targets for defense startup growth and dual-use innovation*. https://www.mss.go.kr/site/eng/ex/bbs/View.do?bcIdx=1065749&cbIdx=244&parentSeq=1065749

Mogen Squire and Simon Brawley. (2026). Research and development (R&D) for UK defence, UK Parliament, Available at: https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/POST-PN-0766/POST-PN-0766.pdf

NATO DIANA. (n.d.). *Accelerator programme*. https://www.diana.nato.int/accelerator-programme.html

NATO. (2026). Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA), Available at: https://www.nato.int/en/about-us/organization/nato-structure/defence-innovation-accelerator-for-the-north-atlantic-diana

NATO. (2026). Innovation and technology adoption, Available at: https://www.nato.int/en/what-we-do/deterrence-and-defence/emerging-and-disruptive-technologies

Netherlands Ministry of Defence. (2025, March 21). *Tuinman op innovatieve toer in Limburg* [Tuinman on an innovation tour in Limburg]. https://www.defensie.nl/actueel/nieuws/2025/03/21/tuinman-op-innovatieve-toer-in-limburg

Netherlands Ministry of Defence. (2025, September 2). *Opening academisch jaar TU Eindhoven: "Wat jullie doen kan levens redden"* [Opening of Eindhoven University of Technology's academic year: "What you do can save lives"]. https://www.defensie.nl/actueel/nieuws/2025/09/02/opening-academisch-jaar-tu-eindhoven-wat-jullie-doen-kan-levens-redden

Norwegian Defence Research Establishment. (n.d.). *ICE worx—FFI's innovation centre for the defence sector*. https://www.ffi.no/vare-tjenester/iceworx

OECD. (2022). *Regional governance in OECD countries: Trends, typology and tools*. OECD Publishing. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/regional-governance-in-oecd-countries_4d7c6483-en.html

Our North, Strong and Free: A Renewed Vision for Canada's Defence, https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/north-strong-free-2024.html

Prime Minister Carney announces Canada has achieved the NATO 2% defence spending target https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2026/03/26/prime-minister-carney-announces-canada-has-achieved-nato-2-defence

Provan, K. G., & Kenis, P. (2008). Modes of network governance: Structure, management, and effectiveness. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 18*(2), 229–252. https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mum015

Public Services and Procurement Canada, (2026). “Controlled Goods: Examining, Possessing or Transferring,” Government of Canada, last modified June 16, https://www.canada.ca/en/public-services-procurement/services/industrial-security/controlled-goods.html.

Saitou, K. (2024). Japan’s push for a dual-use defence startup ecosystem, *East Asia Forum,* Available at: https://eastasiaforum.org/2024/12/26/japans-push-for-a-dual-use-defence-startup-ecosystem/

Sasaki. R. (2025). “Building Faster: Institutional Pathways for Agile Defence Acquisition in Japan,” in Defence Procurement Reform: International Perspectives and Best Practices, *Conference of Defence Associations Institute, Volume 36*. Available at: https://cdainstitute.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/On-Track-Volume-26-Sept-2025.pdf

Sweney, Mark. (2025). *Norway signs £10bn deal for anti-submarine warships built in UK*, The Guardian. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/aug/31/norway-signs-10bn-deal-for-anti-submarine-warships-built-in-uk

Wooyeal, Paik, (2024). South Korea’s Emergence as a Defense Industrial Powerhouse. *French Institute of International Relations (IFRI)*, (138). Available at: https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/migrated_files/documents/atoms/files/ifri_paik_south_korea_defense_2024.pdf

World Economic Forum. (2026). *Intelligent Industrial Ecosystems*: Turning Proximity into Intelligence, 17 August. Available at: https://reports.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Intelligent_Industrial_Ecosystems_Turning_Proximity_into_Intelligence_2026.pdf

NOTES







Centre for Innovation
MEDICINE HAT COLLEGE

This project was funded by the
Department of National Defence through the
Mobilizing Insights in Defence and Security (MINDS)
Targeted Engagement Grant.