

Ministry of Economic Development,
Job Creation and Trade

Office of the Minister

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September 27, 2023

Daniel Nowlan
Chair
Venture Ontario
2001–250 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ontario
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djnowlan@gmail.com

Dear Daniel Nowlan:

As you begin planning for 2024–25, we are pleased to write to you in your capacity as Chair of Venture Ontario (VO) to provide you with a letter setting out our expectations and direction for VO in the year ahead. Pursuant to the requirements of the Agencies and Appointments Directive, this letter sets out my expectations for VO for the 2024–25 fiscal year.

Ontario's board-governed agencies are vital partners in ensuring the delivery of high-quality services to Ontarians. The work that you and your fellow board members undertake to establish the goals, objectives, and strategic direction for VO ensures that Ontario's venture capital ecosystem is supported, and the province's venture capital policies are implemented. It is important that this direction is consistent with government priorities, your agency mandate, key policies and directives and my directions, where appropriate. We thank you for your willingness to serve.

As part of the government of Ontario, agencies are expected to act in the best interests of Ontarians by being efficient, effective, and providing value for money to taxpayers.

Priorities for 2024–25 include:

1. **Competitiveness, Sustainability and Expenditure Management**

- Operating within the agency's financial allocations and within the board-approved budget.
- Identifying and pursuing high potential investment opportunities, innovative practices, and/or improved program sustainability.
- Complying with applicable direction related to accounting practices and supply chain centralization, including leveraging Supply Ontario's bulk purchasing arrangement and working with Supply Ontario on strategic procurement initiatives.

- Complying with realty interim measures for agency office space.
- Leveraging and meeting benchmarked outcomes for compensation strategies and directives.

2. Transparency and Accountability

- Abiding by applicable government directives and policies and ensuring transparency and accountability in reporting.
- Adhering to accounting standards and practices, and responding to audit findings, where applicable.
- Identifying appropriate skills, knowledge and experience needed to effectively support the board's role in agency governance and accountability, and providing the Minister with annual skills matrices to ensure boards have qualified appointees.
- Reviewing and updating agency Key Performance Indicator (KPI)'s annually to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.

3. Risk Management

- Developing and implementing an effective process for the identification, assessment and mitigation of agency risks, including cyber security, and any future emergency risks.

4. Workforce/Labour Management

- Optimizing your organizational capacity to support the best possible public service delivery, including redeploying resources to priority areas, where needed.
- Supporting the implementation of the Community Jobs Initiative (CJI) by identifying opportunities to relocate new or existing agencies to lower cost communities across Ontario (as per MBC Realty Directive, s. 5.4), as applicable.
- Aligning Human Resource and Accommodations strategies with OPS directives and policy.
- Adhering to Treasury Board/Management Board of Cabinet (TB/MBC) labour and bargaining mandates.
- Prudently and efficiently managing operational funding and workforce size.

5. Diversity and Inclusion

- Developing and encouraging diversity and inclusion initiatives by promoting an equitable, inclusive, accessible, anti-racist and diverse workplace.
- Adopting an inclusion engagement process to ensure all voices are heard to inform policies and decision-making.

6. Data Collection, Sharing and Use

- Improving how the agency uses data in decision-making, information sharing and reporting, to inform outcome-based reporting and improve service delivery.

- Increasing data sharing with Supply Ontario when applicable regarding procurement spending and planning, contract arrangements and vendor relations to support data-driven decision-making.

7. Digital Delivery and Customer Service

- Exploring and implementing digitization for online service delivery to ensure customer service standards are met.
- Using a variety of approaches or tools to ensure service delivery in all situations.

In addition to these government-wide priorities, in fiscal 2024–2025, we expect VO to focus on:

1. Managing VO's investment portfolio and business operations in a prudent and cost-effective manner using self-generated revenue to cover operations.
2. Supporting the development of Ontario's venture capital ecosystem and strategically investing in venture capital funds while maintaining VO's high rate of net positive returns to the province.
3. Ensuring that the Venture Ontario Fund and the Venture Ontario Fund II investments are consistent with the Agency's Investment Framework. Also ensuring that investments are aligned with current government priorities, including but not limited to the commercialization and protection of intellectual property in Ontario and support for growth-oriented venture funds critical to Ontario firms reaching international prominence.
4. Working alongside Invest Ontario to align investment attraction efforts to support the growth of both local venture capital funds and companies.

Through these measures, we can continue to ensure that VO is contributing to a long-term, sustainable venture capital industry in Ontario, which in turn will help strengthen Ontario's economy and create job opportunities in key economic sectors of the province.

We thank you and your fellow board members for your continued support, and for your valuable contributions. We would be pleased to discuss these priorities during our next meeting, and we look forward to hearing how they will be reflected in the agency's upcoming business plan and in ongoing agency operations.

Should you have any questions/concerns, please feel free to contact Anne Bermonte, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Innovation and Economic Partnerships Division, 416-314-5525.

Sincerely,



Victor Fedeli
Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade