



NEWS RELEASE
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South Island Prosperity Partnership, City of Victoria and Marine Sector Take First Step Toward Ocean Futures Innovation Hub

This week, South Island Prosperity Partnership (SIPP), in partnership with the City of Victoria and the marine sector association and companies, released a request for proposals to develop a plan for an Ocean Futures Innovation Hub.

The Ocean Futures Innovation Hub is a key action in *Victoria 3.0*, the City's economic action plan, and is a response to input from the local marine sector to further develop Victoria's role as an ocean region and Canada as an ocean nation. The Hub will be located in downtown Victoria and will house companies large and small working in the ocean and marine sector.

"This initiative will lead to the growth of a strong regional ocean and marine ecosystem that supports business needs throughout the innovation continuum," said Alex Rueben, Executive Director of the Association of BC Marine Industries (ABCMI). "It will foster an entrepreneurial environment conducive to innovation, growth and global competitiveness."

In the fall of 2019, the City of Victoria hosted an Ocean and Marine Roundtable as part of the development of *Victoria 3.0*. There was overwhelming support from industry for coordinating and growing the ocean economy in the region.

"Along with providing shared resources, a space for collaboration and educational events, the Ocean Futures Innovation Hub is an accelerator and incubator, offering critical business resources and mentorship needed for early-stage companies to grow," said Julie Angus, CEO of Open Ocean Robotics.

Additionally, the Ocean and Marine Sector Committee of the Rising Economy Taskforce, convened by SIPP in spring 2020, is exploring the Hub's role in job creation as part of its initiative to create a future-focused, pandemic-resistant regional economy.

"The nuclei for high-value job creation, industry innovation and global competitiveness exist here because Victoria harbour and the marine highway are strategic assets that are unique to our region" said Sage Berryman, Co-CEO Ralmax Group of Companies, "The Oceans Futures Innovation Hub has the potential to be the cornerstone of the region's pathway to post COVID-19 economic recovery."

The Ocean Futures Innovation Hub aligns with both federal and provincial economic and sustainability priorities. It will deliver the four pillars of Canada's *Grow West Strategy*: Build a broader economy; Seize global opportunities; Talent for the new economy; Connected innovation and growth.

The Hub will also help deliver elements of the *CleanBC Plan* and the BC's Innovation Commissioner's recommendations: establish innovation precincts, focus on emerging technology clusters and enhance BC's clean, green reputation.

The Request for Proposals and more details about the project can be found here:

https://southislandprosperity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/RFP-2020-003-Ocean-and-Marine-Innovation-Hub_Closes-August-21-2020.pdf

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