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Major investment anchors alliance for bioscience skills and training in Atlantic Canada

\$1.5M from Future Skills Centre to develop highly-skilled and qualified workers

Charlottetown, PE – Today the Future Skills Centre (FSC) announced the investment of \$1.5 million to support the establishment of the Canadian Alliance for Skills and Training in Life Sciences (CASTL), a unique partnership among Atlantic industry, academic, and government partners to address the significant future skills needs of the bioscience sector in Canada. CASTL is one of 30 projects, out of hundreds of submissions, to receive funding as part of a \$37-million investment to help employers find workers with the skills they need, and to support Canadians in acquiring those in-demand skills.

CASTL is a unique initiative that was collaboratively developed between academia, industry and provincial government. Its founding academic and industry partners are Acadia University, BioTalent Canada, BioVectra, Community College of New Brunswick, Elanco, Holland College, National Research Council, Prince Edward Island BioAlliance, Sekisui Diagnostics, Université de Moncton, and University of Prince Edward Island.

CASTL addresses the significant talent needs in bioscience, a sector of national interest as exemplified by the Government of Canada's Health and Bioscience Economic Strategy Table (HBEST), that identified skills and talent as a fundamental gap for the future prosperity of the sector. CASTL offers a highly innovative approach by launching multiple streams for learners to acquire the technical and professional skills, as well as the theoretical knowledge to be work-ready in the bioscience sector. Learners include students developing their careers, individual seeking to reskill for a career change, and workers upskilling to address the future needs of employers and in Canada post COVID19.

"The PEI BioAlliance is pleased to have facilitated the development of CASTL, an amazing and unique partnership of post-secondary and industry visionaries from across the region," said Russell Kerr, Board Chair, PEI BioAlliance and Research Fellow, Nautilus Biosciences CRODA.

FSC's support of projects such as CASTL is urgently needed to address the devastating economic fallout from COVID-19, that has dramatically affected the jobs and workplaces of millions of Canadians.

"CASTL will provide industry with access to talent to drive economic recovery," said Oliver Technow, Chief Executive Officer, BioVectra. "This will fuel the sustainable growth of bioscience research, development and manufacturing by infusing the necessary top-talent, as well as attract new businesses and investment capital to Canada."

Delivered by the academic partners and through strategic partnerships with globally renowned organizations, CASTL programs will include embedded professional skills and work integrated learning opportunities. Learning will be advanced across all educational levels including technical diplomas and certificates; bachelor's degrees; master's degrees and doctorates; as well as internships and residencies. The programs will cover a number of areas of specialization, including bioprocessing; natural products chemistry; analytics; diagnostics; food science; and animal, fish, aquatic, and environmental health.

For more information on CASTL, visit peibioalliance.com/CASTL.

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About the PEI BioAlliance

Since 2005, the **PEI BioAlliance** has coordinated the development and growth of the province's bioscience cluster and established the conditions for business success. The cluster creates high-quality, Island-based jobs in the areas of human, animal, and fish health and nutrition. The PEI BioAlliance is a partnership of 60 businesses, academic and research institutions, and federal and provincial government agencies, dedicated to establishing the bioscience sector as a key pillar in the economic foundation of the province and Atlantic Canada.

www.peibioalliance.com

About FSC

[Future Skills Centre](#) is a forward-thinking research and collaboration hub dedicated to preparing Canadians for employment success and meeting the emerging talent needs of employers. As a pan-Canadian community, FSC brings together experts and organizations across sectors to rigorously identify, assess, and share innovative approaches to develop the skills needed to drive prosperity and inclusion. FSC is directly involved in innovation through investments in pilot projects and academic research on the future of work and skills in Canada. The Future Skills Centre is funded by the [Government of Canada's Future Skills Program](#).