

SCALE AI's Acceleration program spreads its wings: projects of around 60 start-ups validated and at least as many under evaluation

Montreal, November 10, 2020—Launched in December 2019, in partnership with certified start-up incubators and accelerators across the country, SCALE AI's Acceleration Program has already validated support for more than 60 start-up applying artificial intelligence (AI) to supply chain projects. With a well-functioning process, the program counts several dozen other proposals that will be evaluated by the end of 2020. With more than \$20 million in funding over three years, the program will support nearly 300 AI-related start-up companies by 2023.

"The SCALE AI supercluster is taking action to create a fertile ecosystem by supporting accelerators and linking key players," says the Honourable **Navdeep Bains**, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry. "By working with our top AI incubators and accelerators, SCALE AI's program is promoting the growth of startups and small businesses, while also supporting the development of emerging global AI leaders here in Canada."

"It's highly encouraging to see the energy and vitality of the AI ecosystem in action," adds **Julien Billet**, Scale AI's CEO. "The entire network of incubators and accelerators is committed to creating and developing links between AI start-ups and the business community. By activating this chain of innovation, at all stages of the company development, we fully realize our mission of economic leverage, the benefits of which will be measured over the years and decades to come."

Hélène Desmarais, Co-Chair of the SCALE AI Board of Directors, points out: "Canada was a pioneer in AI start-ups, but now other countries offer their own programs. To stay ahead and keep the pipeline strong, we must run faster. Our main competition is the Californian Bay Area, where the ecosystem is efficient at making startups move faster by providing growth and scale-up support services to smaller companies. The goal of SCALE AI's Acceleration program is to encourage our startups to get the right mentorship. It will support a wide number of high-potential startups in accelerating their growth and, by doing so, support the emergence of the future AI giants, rising from Canada's strong AI ecosystem."

This partnership between Scale AI and incubators and accelerators throughout Canada makes it possible to leverage each one's strengths for the benefit of start-ups.

In this regard, the head of several incubators and accelerators that are partners in the program mention:

- **Richard Chénier**, general manager of [Centech](#) (Montreal): “We are at the forefront of supporting the growth of innovation projects, and Scale AI's commitment allows us to go even further to support start-ups specifically in the AI sector.”
- **Yung Wu**, CEO, [MaRS](#) (Ontario): “Supporting start-ups is about much more than just funding. It is an approach to stage-based mentoring and connection with the business community that transforms ideas and technologies in high growth scale-stage companies and that, ultimately, enables the emergence of new leaders in the global innovation economy.”
- **Cam Linke**, CEO Amii (Edmonton): “ Across Canada, there is talent emerging that speaks to our ability to innovate and stand out in an increasingly competitive environment. Proactive partnerships such as the one developed with Scale AI contribute to giving us the means to achieve our ambitions. ”

The Scale AI Acceleration program is aimed at the emergence and growth of start-ups and SMEs specializing in artificial intelligence for supply chains in Canada, by expanding the reach and scope of the incubators and accelerators that are the key to their success.

Program details and lists of certified incubators and accelerators can be found at: scaleai.ca/acceleration.

About SCALE AI (scaleai.ca)

As Canada's AI supercluster, SCALE AI acts as an investment and innovation hub that accelerates the rapid adoption and integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and contributes to the development of a world-class Canadian AI ecosystem.

Based in Montreal, funded by the federal government and the Quebec government, SCALE AI has nearly 120 industry partners, research institutes and other players in the AI field. It develops programs aimed at supporting investment projects of companies that implement real-world applications in AI, the emergence of future Canadian flagships in the sector, as well as the development of a skilled workforce.

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