



# VISION 2025

A thriving AC at the forefront of the  
global innovation economy



# VISION 2025

Dear Stakeholders,

My first few months at the AC have been incredibly rewarding. The organization is where it is today on account of a tremendous legacy - one paved by stakeholders across the ecosystem, our board of directors, and the AC team members who have worked hard to get us here.

I'm continually impressed by our most important stakeholders, our clients— the world's most ambitious innovators and dreamers who trust us to support them in their relentless pursuit to impact global change through their business.

As I've met with many of you over the last few months, there is a common theme and vision for the future that connects us. The pandemic has changed the game, for all of us. Just as it has been in the past, entrepreneurship is essential for the recovery of our global economy and our communities.

Supporting entrepreneurs in this critical role requires us to be clued into their evolving needs. For them to be successful, we need innovation at our core and a global approach now more than ever.

With this backdrop, I am excited to present **VISION 2025**, our strategic roadmap for the future of the Accelerator Centre

This roadmap will see the organization grows and execute on a commitment to **becoming the #1 full stack startup hub in the world**, while staying true to our roots and working with the community to **make Waterloo Region one of the top startup destinations in the world**.

Being a full-stack startup hub means expanding our programs to meet the needs of a variety of stakeholders – startup, corporate leaders, academia, and community partners. It also means building stronger connections with the global community, providing pathways for new companies to break into international markets and find investment opportunities.

The plan is ambitious and will see the AC launch a number of new programs and services - all with the aim of better serving the innovation community and putting the organization and the region at the forefront of the global innovation economy.

I'm excited to execute our new roadmap with the support of the AC team. Together, we are well positioned to transform the ecosystem with these new, world-class offerings, cement Waterloo Region as a global innovation hub, and help entrepreneurs and innovators to actualize, accelerate, and thrive.

## A Letter From The CEO



Jay Krishnan  
CEO  
Accelerator Centre

## PURPOSE

Establish the greater Waterloo Region as one of the top 3 startups destinations in the world

## MISSION

Activate the innovation economy by catalyzing startups, industry, and academia

## VISION

Be the **#1 full-stack** startup hub in the world

## STRATEGIC ENABLERS

Systematic, sustainable growth of the AC team

A strong brand and marketing strategy

Community and international partnerships

Corporate innovation and engagement

Agile operations and digital transformation

## PROGRAMMING PILLARS

### Community programs

Long-term, community-based initiatives that support the greater Waterloo innovation ecosystem

### Acceleration

Short-term, focused programs that engage government and corporate partners to double down on winning companies

### Global gateway

Initiatives that help startups go global from day one—bringing the global community to the AC and the AC to the global stage

## STRATEGIC DRIVERS

Building broad differentiation

New investment and revenue streams

Continuous innovation that puts founders first



# COMMUNITY

## Waterloo Region Above All

Our thriving community is a pillar of innovation and inclusivity. We offer in-person and virtual platforms that enable programs, events, funding opportunities, and access to partners, so you're never going it alone. Our community connects you with other passionate founders, and our incubation programming allows you to actualize your aspirations while surrounded by other tenacious entrepreneurs.

## By 2025 we will:

- Fully digitize the virtual AC programming experience, allowing entrepreneurs to work on their companies when and how it works best for them
- Open our virtual programming to startups across Canada and provide additional support to startups growing and scaling outside of Ontario; increasing our impact nationally
- Launch a co-working model that allows community members not participating in programming to access and benefit from the AC facilities and entrepreneurial community
- Launch an alumni program to better support and engage our community of Canada's top startup success stories
- Run community-based hackathons to support the generation of new ideas from industry and academia
- Develop an EDI strategy to ensure the AC is an equitable, diverse and inclusive community

# COMMUNITY



# ACCELERATION

## Doubling Down on Winners

Whether you're an industry partner or a corporate leader looking to make an impact and connect with startups, or you're a founder looking to fast-track your ambitions through partnerships with industry—we've got you covered.

Our vigour for solving the world's biggest problems is what keeps us focused and inspires the innovators in our community, and our acceleration programs scout, curate, and pilot the world's most energizing and impactful startups.

## By 2025 we will:

- Launch an innovation acceleration program leveraging a venture studio model
- Create opportunities for follow-on funding for top performing startups
- Form corporate innovation partnerships that drive the creation of purpose-build solutions
- Develop sprint program offerings for corporate and community partners
- Launch short-term program offerings that provide focused subject matter expertise for high potential startups

# ACCELERATION



# GLOBAL FRONTIER

## Going Global From Day One

We believe that Waterloo Region is the best place to start, shape, and strengthen your company. For local startups, our Global Frontier programs bring Waterloo to the world, connecting you to new markets and funding sources. For international entrepreneurs or emerging innovation hub leaders, our programs connect you to the magic of our ecosystem giving you platforms that allow you to tap into our proven capabilities through our Global Hubs program and Startup Visa program.



## By 2025 we will:

- Continue operating the Startup Visa Program to high-potential international entrepreneurs
- Develop an exclusive investor showcase offering that provides access to international investment opportunities
- Run exclusive demo days with internationally based investors
- Partner with international economic development organizations to duplicate the AC's proven model around the world
- Foster a global mindset by embedding global scale milestones in all AC programs

**GLOBAL  
FRONTIER**





THE  
ACCELERATOR  
CENTRE