

IP Capacity Framework and Interprovincial IP Education Roadmap

Defining an IP Capacity Building
Framework and IP Education Certification
Principles for Use Across Provinces

Purpose

Over the past three years, Provincial and Federal IP initiatives have helped develop IP assessment tools and educational materials that increased IP awareness across the ecosystem. Current IP education offerings cover the basics well, but assessment data shows a gap in intermediate and advanced where people apply IP principles in real business, technical, and commercialization situations. As Laurent Carbonneau observes,

“IP education programming is currently a little scattershot.”

– Laurent Carbonneau, *Carneyomics Part 2: Canada’s Intangible Opportunity*, CCI Mooseworks, December 22, 2025

Underscoring the need for more coordinated capability development beyond foundational awareness.

Here we describe the next phase of Provincial alignment on building individual skills – how to use existing educational materials, address key gaps, work with partners, and use assessment data to guide future IP initiatives.

This IP Capacity Framework and Provincial IP Education Roadmap (“Framework”) is endorsed by Innovate BC and Intellectual Property Ontario (“the Provinces”) as a shared baseline. It is intended to be used or adapted by other provinces, territories, and IP programs, regardless of how education is delivered locally. This endorsement by British Columbia and Ontario signals alignment on capability baselines and certification outcomes, rather than any centralized control over education delivery.

For companies, the Framework defines the IP skills needed to build, scale, and stay competitive in Canada, and how those skills to support IP talent will be recognized across programs and jurisdictions.

Current stage	System Impact	Next Steps
Concentration in Foundational Topics Most public IP education funding continues to be spent on foundational programs, which are often similar to those already available and lack clear differentiation.	Fragmentation of Resources Limited public resources are spread across similar programs, which slows the development of advanced IP skills development and reduces overall efficiency.	Coordinate to Enable Applied Talent Development Advanced IP skills, wherein Canadians learn to apply IP considerations in business transactions and growth decisions creating critical talent required for IP-rich companies that wish to scale and stay rooted in Canada.

Canada’s IP education system has established IP awareness and early skills in the business community. The next logical step is targeted investment in advanced IP education that builds applied IP capability in Canadian workers, enabling companies to scale globally and remain anchored in Canada.

■ Overview of IP Capacity Framework

This IP Capacity Framework (“Framework”) establishes a shared, outcome-based baseline for building IP skills. It can be used to train founders, entrepreneurs, business mentors, researchers, executives and policy makers to develop and apply sound IP judgement in practice.

The Framework sets clear expectations for IP skills and how they develop over certified Levels, regardless of who delivers the training or how it is delivered. It provides a shared reference to align efforts to build talent that can, create and grow IP-rich companies.

■ IP Capacity

Sustainable IP value creation requires leaders who can identify, protect, manage, and strategically deploy IP. Building this capability requires moving beyond IP basics like IP awareness to applied decision-making, governance monetization and sound public policy.

Figure 1 illustrates the core skill areas needed to build individual IP capability. These skill areas include IP and data awareness and literacy, identifying and managing IP risk, developing an IP strategy along with a robust IP portfolio aligned with business objectives, and formulating and implementing commercialization plans.

The Framework is informed by the Innovation Asset Collective (IAC) IP Maturity Index as shown in Appendix A, which measures IP sophistication at the company level. It adapts these concepts to define individual capability as roles and influence grow.

The Framework provides a shared reference to align programs, identify capability gaps, guide consistent provincial investment, and enable scalable, long-term IP development across all regions of Canada.

IP Maturity Framework Topics	Subtopics	Level 1*	Level 2*	Level 3*	Level 4*
IP Strategy	IP Strategy	Dark Grey	Red	Light Grey	White
	Patents	Red	Dark Red	Light Grey	White
	Trademarks	Light Grey	Dark Grey	Light Grey	White
	Copyrights	Dark Red	Dark Red	Light Grey	White
	Industrial Designs	Light Grey	Dark Grey	Light Grey	White
	Trade Secrets & Confidential information	Light Grey	Dark Red	Dark Grey	White
	IP Enforcement	Light Grey	Dark Grey	Light Grey	White
IP Risk	Risk Recognition and Management	Dark Red	Dark Red	Light Grey	White
Data Strategy	Data, AI & Digital assets as IP	Dark Grey	Dark Red	Light Grey	White
IP Culture and Operations	IP Management	Light Grey	Dark Red	Light Grey	White
	Organizational IP Culture & Governance	Dark Red	Dark Red	Light Grey	White
	Basic IP Agreements (NDAs, Licenses, Employee Agreements, Assignment)	Dark Red	Dark Red	Light Grey	White
	IP in Transactions & Investments (Due diligence, M&A, valuation, purchasing, etc.)	White	Light Grey	Dark Grey	White

NUMBER OF COURSES NONE MORE

FIGURE 1 maps the IP Capability Framework to existing IP education in Canada. It shows where courses are concentrated and where gaps exist, helping to identify priorities for future development. Darker shading means more courses are available, while lighter shading and white indicate limited or no coverage.

*Available vetted courses by topic and capability level. Availability reflects the presence of resources, not their instructional depth or intensity. Offerings include a mix of guides, videos, podcasts, self-paced modules, facilitated, or practice-based programs. Higher availability does not necessarily indicate sufficient content based on Provincial workforce development needs.

Assessment Summary & Provincial Focus

Current supports are well represented at Levels 1 and 2 delivered in low intensity formats (videos, guides) and focus on core areas such as patents, trademarks, copyright, and IP strategy. However, several topics have comparatively limited foundational coverage and should be strengthened. The topics identified directly mapped to, or intentionally extend from, the sub-topics in Figure 1, which are used as a structured guide to highlight both core capability areas and priority application domains being emphasized by the Provinces based on the assessment results. The prioritized topics at Levels 1 and 2 include:

- Industrial designs
- Trade secrets and confidential information
- Risk recognition and management
- Data, AI, and digital assets as IP
- Basic IP agreements (e.g., NDAs, licenses, employee/contractor terms, assignments)
- Organizational IP culture and governance
- Indigenous Traditional Collective Expression, Traditional Knowledge and approaches to protection
- Agricultural IP protection (e.g. plant breeders rights)

Our Next Steps

Outside of these foundational gaps, we are focused on developing and delivering Level 3 and Level 4 materials, with emphasis on practice-based learnings and particularly in areas most closely tied to the functional skills required to build and manage IP programs in IP-rich organizations. For example:

- IP enforcement
- IP management (e.g., operations, cost control, harvest, policies)
- IP in transactions and investments (e.g., due diligence, M&A, valuation, purchasing)
- IP and taxation
- Cross border IP considerations

This framing is intended to support provincial prioritization, rather than to evaluate individual programs or providers, and reflects the advanced capabilities needed to retain and scale IP-rich firms in globally competitive markets.

In prioritizing future development, the Provinces and partners will consider not only topic coverage but also whether offerings include practice, feedback, and assessment, which are necessary to validate Level 3–4 capability.

IP Certification Pathways

An IP Certification Pathway (“Pathway”) is a curated set of courses and learning activities that lead to a defined IP based capability standard. It lets learners choose courses based on their intended use and supports progression across levels.

Certification of a Pathway signals that it meets Provincially endorsed capability expectations, based on a mix of available or upcoming courses. In practice, this means learners can take different course combinations that fit their role, sector, or location, while still being assessed against the same capability baseline. It supports a flexible, Pan-Canadian approach to building IP competence and helps ensure skills are consistent and credible across regions, regardless of the program or provider.

Alignment of IP Certification Pathways will be made by participating provincially mandated IP agencies. The purpose of approval is to confirm that a proposed pathway aligns with shared capability expectations. It is not meant to signal that the agencies endorse specific content, providers, or delivery methods. To support consistency across regions, the provincial agencies may use a joint or coordinated review process.

The collaborative process may also help agencies coordinate resources for developing new IP content. As part of the review, agencies would assess whether the Pathway aligns with the IP Capability Framework, including the capability outcomes it targets, the strength and consistency of its assessments, and whether the Pathway's level claims are comparable to the framework's level definitions.

The following examples show how certification pathways can be used to support different roles, stages, and capability needs.

FOUNDER IP CERTIFICATION — BASICS

Who it's for

Founders building early IP knowledge and seeking IP grant funding.

What they get

- A basic understanding of core IP types and risks.
- Practical steps to protect early innovations.
- Preparation to apply for IP grant funding.

Why it matters

Helps founders make smarter early IP decisions and apply for public funding with confidence.

Exemplary Certification approach

1. Complete an online individual pre-test.
2. Take the IP Pathways course - four hours of education covering IP Strategy, Data Strategy, IP Risk Management, and IP Culture coverage (live, virtual/ in-person).
3. Complete a post-course exam to measure progress ($\geq 80\%$ to pass)
4. Receive level 1 Certification.

Graduates could also be matched with specialized mentors to support IP strategy and grant administration.

In British Columbia, Level 1 Certification is currently recognized as a prerequisite for AccelerateIP (also known as ElevateIP). IP Ontario also mandates completion of IP education to access funding. This requirement could also be applied more consistently across provincial IP programs.

APPENDIX A

The published version of IAC’s Organizational IP Maturity Matrix from [2025 Whitepaper](#)

IP Maturity Scale	0 Building Awareness	1 Understanding and identification	2 Articulation and documentation	3 Analysis and alignment	4 Evaluation and Integration
IP Strategy	Does not meet Level 1 criteria	I can identify what intellectual property is, the common types of IP rights, and how an IP strategy can support my business. I know I need to consider my company’s value, revenue drivers, and budget, and be able to explain these to an expert to help build a strong IP portfolio.	I can articulate the IP assets that drive my business’s value, connect them to revenue opportunities, engage the right experts to support my strategy, and assess how my IP fits within the broader market and stakeholder landscape.	I have implemented an IP strategy that aligns with the overall business strategy, and staff are trained to identify and report IP opportunities. I can evaluate expert work, and our team has clear processes to assess, document, and act on new IP. We use analytics tools to track the IP landscape, identify trends, and make informed, strategic decisions across the company.	I have integrated IP strategy into leadership and board discussions and align it with new business opportunities from the start. I regularly revisit the company’s IP Strategy to evaluate its ability to deliver commercial value and support long-term business goals.
IP Risk	Does not meet Level 1 criteria	I can identify what IP risk is and that other people’s IP rights might hinder my business. I understand the potential consequences of inadequate protection against competitors. I understand that IP risk can also arise internally within my company. I need to understand the IP landscape around my company to help me build a strategy and mitigate against risk.	I can articulate that there are many ways to mitigate risk. I can summarize the IP landscape around my company, how risks manifest in my business and what risks are the most relevant in our operation. I need to analyze what tools can best help mitigate risk and which tools are most effective for my company.	I have implemented monitoring of key competitors, identify IP risks and opportunities, and use available tools to manage and mitigate those risks. I have a strategy in place and am working to build a proactive risk-aware culture, while also recognizing the need to assess risks across the full value chain and broader market beyond the obvious suspects.	I have integrated risk strategy into our culture, enabling the ability to consistently identify emerging risks and design effective mitigation.
Data Strategy	Does not meet Level 1 criteria	I can identify the data I have has value beyond the initial purpose. I understand that there needs to be a system in place to safely capture, transfer and store data and the company needs to have a policy around managing and using that data in line with the law and the rules set by my company.	I can articulate the value of data to my company and have begun developing a data strategy. I protect proprietary data as IP, have policies for its management and security, and track compliance across jurisdictions. I also recognize the need to train staff and assess data-related risks and opportunities.	I have implemented staff training, a cybersecurity plan, and third-party audit rights and have framed the importance of a culture of data security. I actively manage our data and have a clear strategy for its use. I recognize the need to integrate data policies into ongoing corporate training and to develop a full incident response workflow to ensure compliance and readiness.	I have data protection integrated into our workflows through a comprehensive data strategy that includes cybersecurity, breach response, and risk mitigation. I have company-wide policies, regular compliance checks, and ensure staff understand their obligations through onboarding and exit processes.
IP Culture	Does not meet Level 1 criteria	I can identify the need for an IP culture across the company around our approach to IP and we need to build policies and processes to support our desired culture.	I can articulate my company’s IP policy and IP capture process. The company has an IP budget in place, and now needs staff training so employees can recognize innovation and IP a. I recognize the need to work with HR and legal to align our agreements with the IP policy.	I have implemented staff training on recognizing innovation, integrated IP into onboarding and exit processes, and engaged external experts who understand our business. Our IP policy is built into employee and research agreements, and we report IP activity to leadership. I need to develop metrics to show how our IP culture creates value and implement a process to regularly check compliance with our policy.	I have integrated a regular review of our IP policies and processes for compliance and alignment with business needs, the landscape and legal requirements. I have formulated ongoing staff training, regular engagement with leadership and staff on IP value, and continuously refine workflows to strengthen our IP culture.

For more information

To learn more about the IP Capacity
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Roadmap please contact:

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