

INVEST TALENT

Life Sciences Case Study: MedTech Workforce Development

MedTech Invest Talent Pilot

Invest Vancouver focuses on growing, export-oriented industries that provide high-quality jobs. Unlike population serving firms, exporters can expand without displacing other local businesses, thereby increasing the overall size of the regional economy. Because these firms compete globally and can choose where to locate, Invest Vancouver prioritizes industries in which the region has a compelling competitive advantage – particularly those aligned with long-term demand growth.

In this context, and with the support of the Future Skills Centre, Invest Vancouver launched the MedTech Invest Talent pilot in 2025 to address urgent workforce gaps in the region's expanding medical technology and devices sector. The pilot was informed by labour market intelligence from BC's Labour Market Outlook, Life Sciences BC, and direct employer engagement, ensuring alignment with real-time industry demand.

The Invest Talent pilot tested an industry-led, short-cycle training model designed to strengthen awareness, readiness, and skills within MedTech talent pipelines, with a specific focus on production-critical roles. The initiative served as a proof of concept for Invest Vancouver's regional talent accelerator model, demonstrating how inclusive workforce development can be tightly aligned with economic development and investment priorities.

Addressing workforce readiness is increasingly central to investment attraction in globally competitive sectors.

The Economic Development Challenge

Since 2019, the life sciences sector has achieved 27% growth in GDP, making it the fastest growing life sciences sector in Canada and outpacing the growth of the overall British Columbia (BC) economy¹. Today, the sector is a source of high-paying jobs for more than 28,500 workers across BC, which includes Metro Vancouver². Over the next five years, the sector is expected to face a widening talent supply gap. The gap is projected to increase to 5,500 by the end of 2027 - a more than tenfold increase from the current gap of 500³.

“Investing in talent is critical to transform the life sciences sector into a world-class hub.”

- Life Science British Columbia, Labour Market Intelligence Study (2024)

1 Statistics Canada. Table 36-10-0402-01: Analysis of Gross domestic product (GDP) at basic prices, by industry, provinces and territories (x 1,000,000). <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3610040201>

2 KPMG analysis. Note that this figure differs from the figure presented in the 2023 B.C. Sector Profile Report. Details on the differences are provided in Section 1: Overview of B.C.'s Life Sciences Sector. Additionally, Appendix 5: Sector Definition provides a reconciliation of the total business and employee counts in this report to the figures reported in the 2023 B.C. Sector Profile Report.

3 Life Sciences British Columbia's (LSBC) British Columbia Life Sciences Labour Market Intelligence Study (2024)

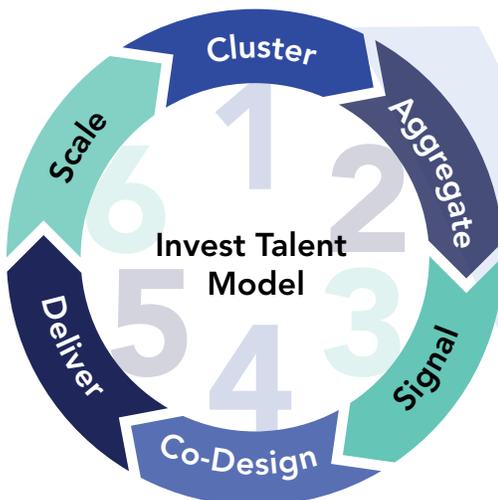
The Regional Talent Accelerator Approach

Rather than launching a traditional training program, Invest Vancouver piloted an employer-driven regional talent accelerator model, focused on speed, relevance, and outcomes.

Key design features included:

- Employer-validated demand, informed by global, federal, and provincial labour market data, Life Sciences BC intelligence, regional economic analysis, and direct interviews with MedTech and life sciences employers
- Role-specific focus, centred on the MedTech Production Technician occupation, selected due to the scale and immediacy of regional hiring demand
- Skills Needs Forum, translating employer demand into a shared signal for education, workforce, and community partners
- Cross-sector co-design, engaging employers, training providers, workforce intermediaries, and community organizations in program design and delivery
- Short-cycle, applied training, emphasizing production readiness and transferable skills rather than formal credentials alone
- Clear career pathway visibility, linking training directly to hiring needs and progression opportunities within the MedTech sector

This approach positioned employers not as advisors, but as active contributors to defining skills priorities and validating training relevance.



Employer Partners

The MedTech Invest Talent pilot was shaped through active engagement with leading Metro Vancouver Life Sciences employers, including Aspect Biosystems, StarFish Medical, AbCellera, and anchor partner Kardium. These employers contributed insight into real-time skills needs, production environments, and hiring challenges, helping ensure the pilot remained grounded in practical workforce demand.

Kardium, a Metro Vancouver-based medical device company, was selected as the anchor employer due to the scale and immediacy of its manufacturing growth. As the company prepares to significantly expand production, Kardium anticipates hiring 400 to 600 manufacturing technicians over the next 2–3 years, representing one of the largest near-term MedTech talent demands in the region. This level of growth provided a clear, validated demand signal for piloting an employer-led approach to production-focused training that could inform broader manufacturing workforce strategies.

Delivery and Community Partners

The MedTech Invest Talent pilot was delivered in collaboration with a network of education, workforce, and community partners. The University of British Columbia (UBC), Simon Fraser University (SFU), Vancouver Community College (VCC), BC Institute of Technology (BCIT), and the Canadian Alliance for Skills and Training in Life Sciences (CASTL) attended a Skills Needs Forum with employers. From there, VCC, BCIT and CASTL joined a co-design committee and contributed applied training expertise to ensure alignment with industry standards and production-ready skills. WorkBC, alongside community partners MOSAIC and the YWCA, supported outreach and participant engagement, helping connect diverse talent to emerging opportunities in the life sciences sector. Together, these partners enhanced the pilot's reach, relevance, and inclusivity while strengthening coordination across the regional workforce ecosystem.

Pilot Delivery and Participation

The pilot delivered a short, applied online three-hour training workshop. To recruit the best candidates into the training, a train-the-trainer session was hosted with WorkBC and affiliated organizations.

Participation outcomes included:

- 295 total registrations received
- 124 participants admitted to MedTech training
- 114 participants completed the 3-hour MedTech Production Technician training
- 22 participants completed train-the-trainer sessions
- 136 total trainees, representing 113% of the project target

Participant feedback (103 evaluation responses):

- 95% overall satisfaction (66% “very satisfied”)
- 95% rated the training as relevant
- 94% rated the content as useful

Thank you again for today’s excellent workshop – it was truly valuable, informative, and motivating. I genuinely appreciated the clarity and the supportive atmosphere you and your team created.

- M. Nikbin

I really appreciated the session and found it very informative. It gave me a clearer understanding of the opportunities in Metro Vancouver’s life sciences sector and the skills required for a Production Technician role.

- R. Tavakolizadeh

I enjoyed the workshop very much. Thank you for the opportunity to learn more about an industry I was curious about but didn’t know how to approach.

- C. Jamieson

These results demonstrate strong alignment between employer-defined demand and participant experience.

Inclusive Talent Outcomes

Equity and inclusion were embedded into the pilot’s design and recruitment approach. The pilot had 87% of admitted MedTech participants identified as coming from equity-deserving groups, which mostly identified as immigrants. This exceeded the project’s 50% equity participation target.

The pilot demonstrated that short-cycle, employer-led training can expand access to quality jobs while meeting rigorous industry standards. It is estimated that at least 80 jobs over the next three years will be positively impacted by this initiative, which translates into \$14.4M in economic development.

Building a Collaborative Workforce System

Beyond training delivery, the pilot intentionally tested repeatable mechanisms for collaboration, including:

- Employer interviews → skills needs forum → co-design committee
- Cross-sector participation from employers, training providers, workforce intermediaries, and community organizations
- Train-the-trainer session to build system readiness
- Role-specific framing to improve alignment and clarity around pathways to employment

These mechanisms improved shared understanding of workforce needs and shifted partner engagement from siloed activity to coordinated action. They are now being reused in planning additional sector pilots.



Why the Metro Vancouver Region?

The MedTech Talent Accelerator Pilot reinforces the region's broader life sciences advantage:

- A dense cluster of MedTech and biomanufacturing firms
- Strong labour market intelligence and ecosystem coordination
- Access to diverse, local talent pools
- A collaborative environment linking industry, training, and economic development

For MedTech companies considering expansion, the pilot demonstrates that Metro Vancouver can respond not only with innovation but with talent systems capable of scaling alongside industry growth. This capability strengthens the region's value proposition for MedTech firms considering expansion or location decisions.

Looking Ahead

The MedTech Talent Accelerator Pilot established a clear proof of concept: local talent can be rapidly made aware and equipped with in-demand skills when employers lead, data guides decisions, and partners collaborate intentionally.

Insights from the pilot are now informing the expansion of Invest Vancouver's regional talent accelerator model across additional MedTech initiatives and other strategic sectors, including cybersecurity.

“Having an intermediary like Invest Talent helps coordinate the system and prevents this from becoming an internal resource drain. We're seeing that we weren't reaching the full candidate pool before. This project showed the value of targeted outreach and working differently with training partners.”

- VP Manufacturing



Connecting employers, learners, and partners

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