

RAINFOREST ALBERTA 

# Calgary Summit 2019 + Rainforest 2020 Summary

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# Rainforest Calgary Summit #6

October 26th, 2019

CMLC

49 attendees

Jarvis Gibb  
Karim Delgado  
Neeraj Gupta  
Sarah Lerner  
Jade Alberts  
Jennifer Lussier  
Gary Gunthorpe  
Andre Plante  
Patrick Wu  
Remington Hall  
Khurram Virani  
Ian Choveaux  
Tamra Schnyder  
Peter Atkins  
Alan Campbell  
James Thangaraj  
Sava Knezic

Graham Sucha  
David Cunningham  
Geoff Zakaib  
John Van Ham  
Terry Ross  
Kim Bechtel  
Elizabeth Cheme  
James Bradbury  
Meaghan Pelton  
Brian Thompson  
Debbie Butt  
Vanessa Gagnon  
Amanda Hall  
Enman Ma  
Sara Brooks  
Erwan Oger  
Ernesto Altahona

Karim Delgado  
Peter Lafontaine  
Srinivasa Jeyakumar  
Kyle Meyer  
Anita Arduini  
Tracy Martell  
Juan Anazco  
My-Linh Walker  
Kris E Chase  
Alyson Bennett  
Dafne Canales Lees  
Robin Daultani  
Lorraine Becker  
Greg Saunders  
Rob Henschel

## Organizers

Rainforest Alberta

## Lead Facilitators

Jim Gibson, Mackenzie Bedford, Kourtney Branagan

## Volunteer Facilitators

Myke Atkinson Sarah Morrill, Al Del Degan, Jasmine Palardy, Myke Atkinson, Sean Coates, Heko Peters, David Yiptong, Greg Hart, Steve Pilz, Craig Elias, Devon Hamilton

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rainforest Alberta had identified in its previous summit that it had outgrown the framework originally laid out by Rainforest LLP in its Scorecard model. To honour and continue the work established by the previous summit cohorts, the scorecard was revised, and not replaced.

Over the course of the summer Rainforest Alberta held community engagement sessions to make sure its constituency had a chance to give their input.

The process comprised of three stages:

- General feedback: what's good, what's missing, what could be better?
- Melded old statements with new/proposed statements by uncovering commonalities.
- Tweaked the language so statements read well.

Through this process, a new Rainforest Scorecard was born to analyse the Calgary ecosystem. New features included an "always-on" approach to data collection, and a deeper dive into demographics of respondents.

On September 26th, Rainforest Alberta discussed its scorecard with 105 respondents who gave the Calgary ecosystem a new score of 630/1000. Calgary has shown a plateau in its score, but it still reached its highest result yet.

The cohort then mapped out the Calgary ecosystem along the Startup Commons continuum, through the lens of each Rainforest pillar (Culture, Leadership, Activities and

Engagement, Resources, Role Models and Infrastructure, Policy and Frameworks).

By observing the innovation ecosystem through the startup commons, community goals were identified:

- Increase score from 630 to 730 by 2020.
- 5x growth in the overall ecosystem.
- Contribute to 1000 high growth startups by 2031.

Data and discussions from the day revealed three key action items for every community member to take ownership of:

1. Bring a friend to ecosystem events
2. Tell more Alberta stories
3. Engage with the youth of Alberta

On October 9th, 2019, Rainforest Alberta hosted Rainforest 2020 at Contemporary Calgary to present discoveries made at the summit. Over 100 Rainforesters and public members were in attendance.

Three organizational initiatives for 2020 were presented by the community managers to demonstrate where Rainforest Alberta is headed next:

1. LIBI Fund - to support new ventures
2. Rainforest Content Team - to tell more stories
3. Lunch Without Lunch refresh - to strengthen community

Rainforest Alberta's new scorecard is continually open, so make sure to offer your feedback at [www.rainforestab.ca](http://www.rainforestab.ca) to help guide the next summit's discussion!





# SCORECARD RETOOLING

Discussions coming out of the November 2018 Summit revealed that Rainforest Alberta had outgrown its original measurements for a successful ecosystem.

Its core metric, the Rainforest Scorecard, had begun to plateau. As the ecosystem began to mature, we asked ourselves if we needed to sharpen the tools we were using and recalibrate the survey.

The previous scorecard was licensed through creative commons and meant to be one-size-fits-all.

It was internally focused, looking at a structured organization, which contrasted to what Rainforest Alberta grew to be: community driven; naturally chaotic and unpredictable; and externally focused.

6 Community  
Engagement  
Sessions

3 Rounds  
of Revision

>75 Member's  
Input

The process comprised of three stages:

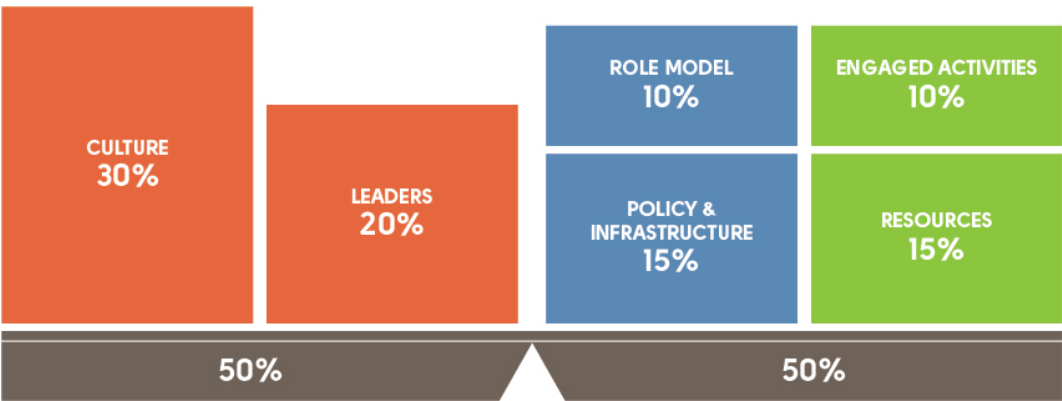
- General feedback: what's good, what's missing, what could be better?
- Melded old statements with new/proposed statements by uncovering commonalities.
- Tweaked the language so statements read well.

*Community Engagement Session  
Rainforest Power Hour  
Calgary Central Library*



# PILLARS

Staying faithful to over two years of pre-existing data, the scorecard kept its roots in the weighting of each pillar. The scorecard is now open all times in the year and respondents can edit their answers as their knowledge and experiences in the ecosystem shift. Go to [www.rainforestab.ca](http://www.rainforestab.ca) for more information.



CULTURE is the foundation of any innovation ecosystem. It is the shared values and actions of members in the community while ultimately determine the success of new initiatives.

There are ROLE MODELS from across the ecosystem. They are builders, influencers, and accelerators who can transform an ecosystem through inspiration; they embody characteristics that others wish to emulate. Role models can be uniquely personal and also general to the community.

RESOURCES can include tangible elements (physical) and intangible factors (including knowledge and human talent). A balance of resources available in quality, quantity, and origins can support innovative potential through both generation and implementation.

ACTIVITES that promote innovation and actively encourage ENGAGEMENT across a diverse array of participants are an essential part of a thriving innovation ecosystem. Activities and engagement are often used as an element in considering ecosystem vibrancy and connectedness.

POLICY AND INFRASTRUCTURE is the infinite, non-depleting structural landscape the ecosystem exists within. Actions and interactions between organizations, departments, physical spaces, and policies play a role in supporting innovation.

LEADERSHIP roles are both assigned and assumed. Decision makers are in positions to realize potential, convey perspectives, and rally groups to influence outcomes for innovation.

## SCORECARD RESULTS

# 630/1000

105 Responses

+31 pts November 2018

Much like the original scorecard, the measurements are meant to guide the conversation towards action and not to drive decisions, as the data is more qualitative in nature.

For the September 26th summit, Rainforest Alberta saw 105 respondents who gave the Calgary ecosystem a new score of 630/1000, up 31 points from November 2018.

With freshly sharpened tools in hand, a new scorecard was surveyed out to the community.

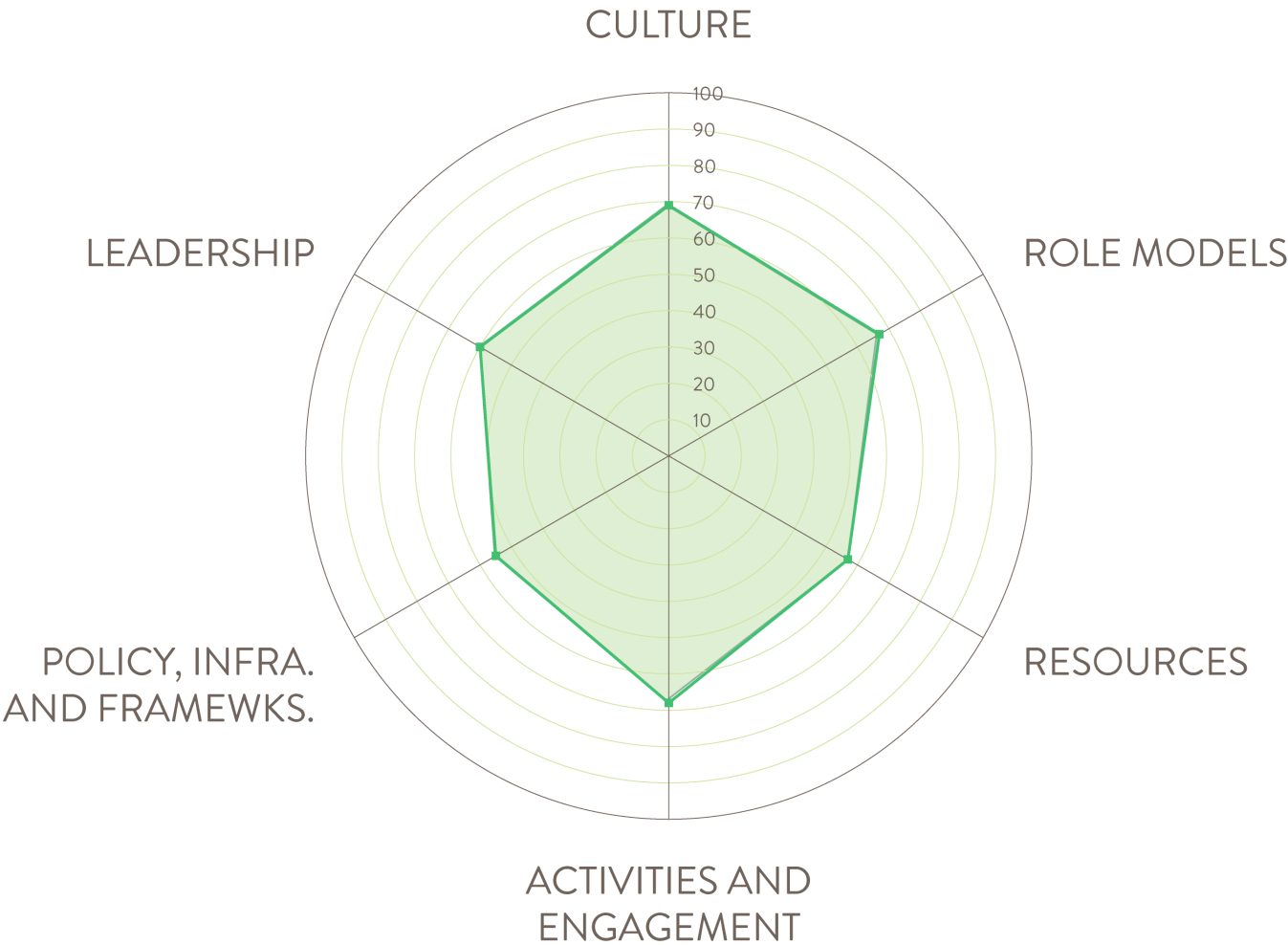
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Culture	43	62	57	68
Role Models	44	56	58	67
Activities & Engagement	45	55	57	68
Resources	47	55	59	56
Policy, Frameworks, & Infrastructures	50	59	59	55
Leaders	53	71	67	60
total	470	610	599	630

## Building Out Balance

Culture and Engaged Activities bounced from being the lowest scoring pillars in 2018, to performing the highest in September.

Calgary's ecosystem is beginning to find a balance of each focus area, potentially allowing for more connections and cohesiveness to form.

Calgary has shown a plateau in its scoring, but it still reached its highest result yet.





## SCORECARD OBSERVATIONS

7.5

Highest Scoring Question

*Successful innovators are viewed as role models; they are valued and validated for their contribution in building the ecosystem.*

5.1

Lowest Scoring Question

*There are mechanisms to inform industries about skilled, needed, and in-demand people to help organizations through tech transition.*

2.44  $\sigma$

Highest Variability

*Leaders come from diverse backgrounds.*

1.67  $\sigma$

Lowest Variability

*There are numerous community activities that support tech and promote innovation.*

The revised scorecard allowed us to take a closer look at the data and put a microscope on questions to reveal new layers of insight.

# METADATA

A new feature for the Rainforest Scorecard was the inclusion of demographic data.

Gender, age, and ecosystem involvement were also measured and compared to their scoring. The data is being gathered to better understand who is scoring the ecosystem, and whether we're getting a true representation of the demographic landscape.

Expansion of the depth of meta data will be discussed for future iterations.

## Age Comparison

	LEADERSHIP	INFRASTRUCTRE	ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES	CULTURE	ROLE MODELS
26-35	6.38	6.07	7.36	5.71	6.80	6.99
36-45	5.89	5.62	6.69	5.66	6.91	6.75
46-55	5.97	5.48	6.52	5.55	6.71	6.59
56-65	5.91	5.23	6.98	5.72	7.28	6.82
66+	6.36	5.20	7.24	6.43	6.57	6.76
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>6.02</b>	<b>5.57</b>	<b>6.83</b>	<b>5.68</b>	<b>6.88</b>	<b>6.76</b>

The younger you were, typically the higher you scored the ecosystem.

## Gender Comparison

	LEADERSHIP	INFRA	ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES	CULTURE	ROLEMODELS
Man	6.21	5.80	6.94	5.89	7.03	6.88
Woman	5.64	5.12	6.62	5.25	6.59	6.50
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>6.02</b>	<b>5.57</b>	<b>6.83</b>	<b>5.68</b>	<b>6.88</b>	<b>6.76</b>

Women, overall, scored the ecosystem lower.

## Experiential Comparison

	LEADERSHIP	INFRA	ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES	CULTURE	ROLEMODELS
<6 months	6.24	5.95	7.06	5.86	7.43	7.13
>10 years	5.94	5.41	7.11	5.65	6.86	6.76
>3 years	6.00	5.36	6.72	5.72	6.97	6.58
>5 years	5.85	5.19	6.47	5.39	6.45	6.17
18 months - 3 years	6.04	5.56	6.99	6.06	7.06	7.07
6-18 months	6.13	6.01	6.49	5.48	6.65	6.82
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.02</b>	<b>5.57</b>	<b>6.83</b>	<b>5.68</b>	<b>6.88</b>	<b>6.76</b>

People in the ecosystem >5 years weren't as optimistic as those <18 months.

## Bright Spots

Culture, Role Models, and Activities and Engagement saw their highest scores ever for Calgary.

- These are people-focused pillars instead of organizational or intangible constructs.
- This could suggest that individuals within the community are starting to find each other better.
- How can we harness these individuals for collective change?

Collective ecosystem score is the highest it's ever been for Calgary. That is something to be optimistic about.



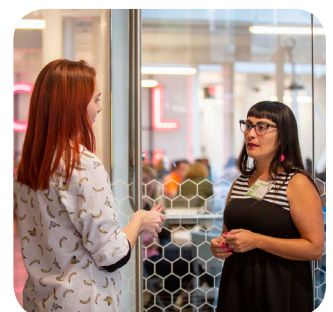
## Opportunities for Growth

Zero per cent of scorecard respondents were under age 25.

- Where is Calgary youth in the ecosystem? How can Rainforest engage them?
- There seems to be room for new generation leadership in the ecosystem.
- How are we finding fresh leadership?

Looking at the gap: men score the ecosystem better than women.

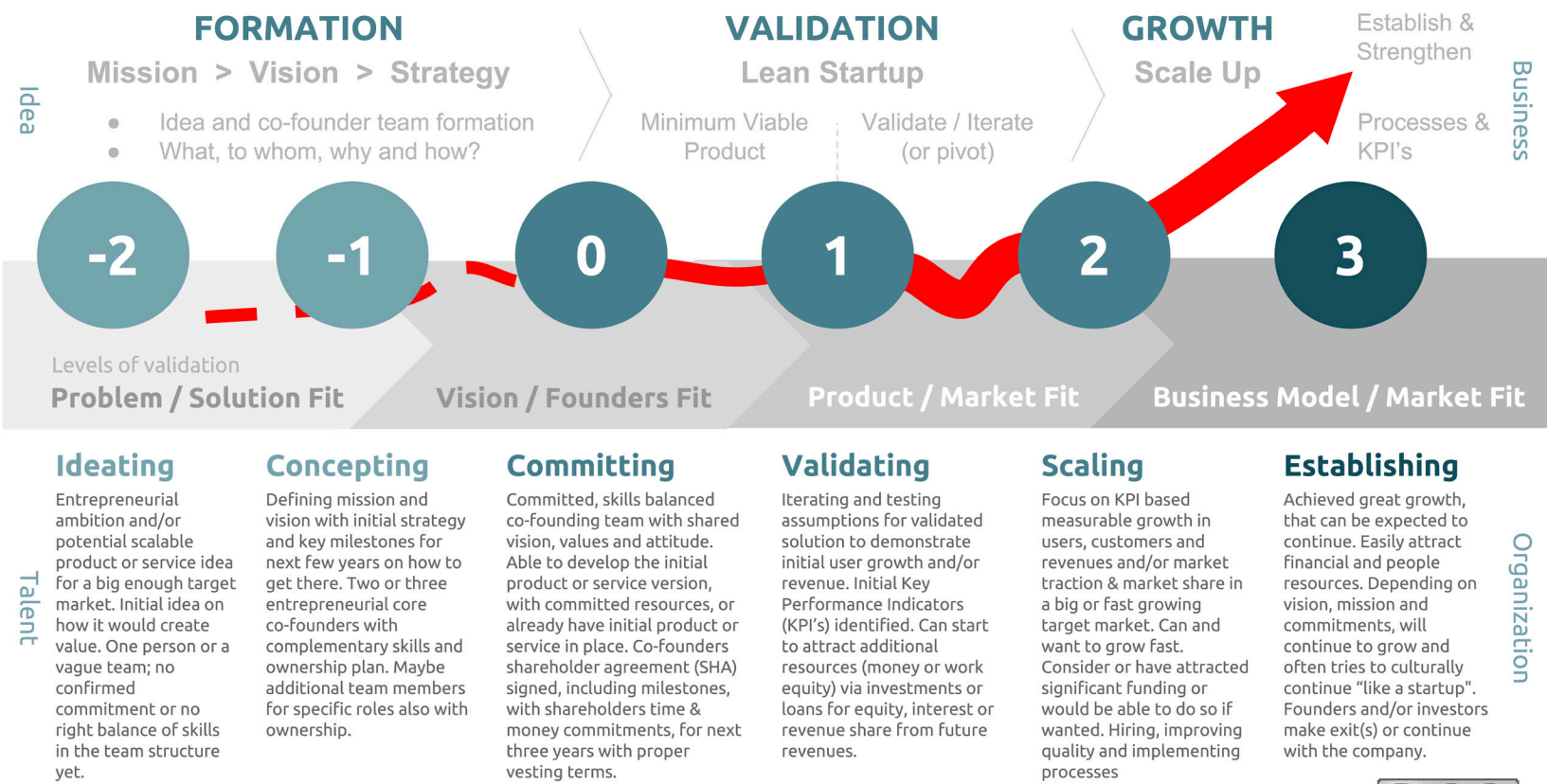
- Why are women scoring the ecosystem lower?
- How can we deepen our sample size of women and other identities?



# ECOSYSTEM MAPPING

To better understand the Calgary tech ecosystem, we put the collective minds of 52 community members together and mapped out its key contributors. To strengthen the map, it was cross-examined with a commonly agreed-upon startup trajectory: The Startup Commons.

## Startup Commons Development Phases



Startup Development Phases - from *idea to business* and *talent to organization*.

Version 3.6 - [www.startupcommons.org](http://www.startupcommons.org)

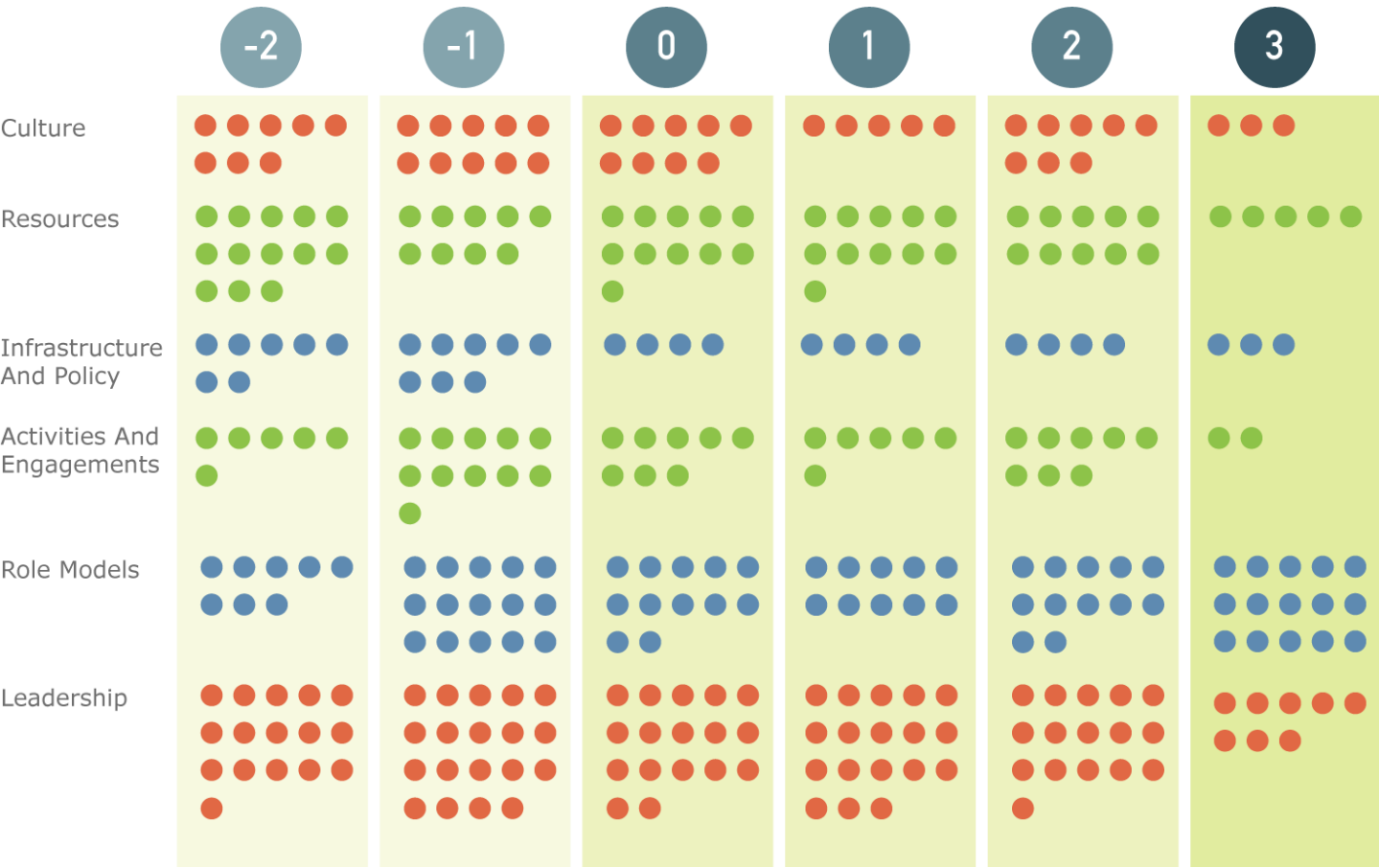


# Many Trees Makes Light Work

Each pillar was labeled with regional organizations and local individuals that are contributing to building their part of the ecosystem.

Some organizations overlapped both across pillars and across and across the Startup Commons development phrases.

## Abbreviated Ecosystem Map



Find a full list of named organizations and individuals in Appendix A.





## Observations

Several organizations and individuals were identified as contributing to more than one pillar across more than one Startup Commons stage. In the context of Rainforest's summit, these three organizations are perceived to be actively supporting the ecosystem.

Further questions that arise include: is what we see, the truth? If so, do these organizations have the resources and support from the ecosystem to continue their work?

*Most mentioned organizations from September 2019 Summit*

Platform Calgary x11

EvolveU x8

Creative Destruction Lab x7

## Bright Spots

Strong organizational leadership presence!

- Properly identify, highlight and actively involve individual leadership within organizations.
- Keep pushing the conversation using common language and goals to rally leadership networks.

Culture in (-1) - (0) suggests we have lots of support to foster strong IP and team development.

- Let's keep building support for talent to feed brilliant ideas in Alberta!



## Opportunities for Growth

How can policy, infrastructure and frameworks better serve Calgary and Alberta?

- Organizations cited in this pillar had the some of the most “spread” across the stages.

We have a plethora of role models in the ecosystem and are beginning to see a need for a new generation of leadership.

- Can role models begin to seek out and lift up new leadership?

How can we bolster culture in “the valley of death?” between stages (1) - (2)? Culture might arguably be the most important for startups (embracing calculated risk; the importance of a “give-first” mindset; trusting innovative thinking, etc) in the validating stage.

- Calgary lacks focused support in this stage.
- How can we work together to improve this gap for burgeoning startups? Who needs to take charge?

This report might have more questions than answers, but Rainforest Alberta is about conversation. Take these questions into the real world and discuss with your peers with a solution-focus in mind.



## MISSION, VISION, AND A COALITION

To better understand where Rainforest Alberta was going in Calgary, we asked the cohort to take a look at the mission and vision and offer feedback.

Considering the feedback from the summit and leadership within the ecosystem, a new mission and vision was crafted for the 2020 strategy.

### VISION

A world-class community of dreamers and doers, connected by a common goal of making Alberta fertile ground for building, developing, and growing innovative ideas into sustainable ventures.

### MISSION

Connect the innovation ecosystem, by strengthening the movement behind the Alberta tech industry around a framework of shared values of collaboration, community, and trust through storytelling

What are we trying to achieve with this mission and vision?

- Increase score from 630 to 730 by 2020.
- 5x growth in the overall ecosystem.
- Contribute to 1000 high growth startups by 2031.

### Proposed North Star

Can Rainforest Alberta initiatives drive the change to multiply entrepreneurial activity five times over?

**Not on our own, it is a group effort.**

The Calgary Innovation Coalition was formed out of the support organizations in the Calgary ecosystem for startups, and is committed to supporting the ecosystem in this cause and invites others to do the same.

# COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

One thousand committed startups a year sounds exciting, but how do we get there?

To solve the action piece of the puzzle, the cohort brainstormed individual and compoundable actions that anyone in the ecosystem could participate in.

By owning these actions collectively, we can begin to build a stronger ecosystem together.

A common theme revealed there were three top action items that individuals can take to help the ecosystem move forward.



## 1. Bring a friend to ecosystem events.

- Actively promote diversity
- Cross-pollinate industries
- Strengthen community network exponentially

## 2. Share Alberta tech success stories.

- Amplify Alberta pride and reshape national reputation
- Highlight role models to inspire new cohort of innovators
- Rally around new possibilities

## 3. Engage with youth.

- Shape the next generation of leadership
- Give those who will inherit the economy a voice
- Put a stopper in youth attrition from the province



## Recommendations for Rainforest activities and engagement:

These weren’t the only actions that were brought up at the summit, but they were the most popular, and cited to be the easiest to adopt and share throughout the community.

RECOMMENDATION	COUNT	RECOMMENDATION	COUNT
Bring-Someone-New	9	Show Up	2
More Rainforest Outreach	6	Know your “why”	2
Make an Introduction	4	Increase Social Media Sharing	2
Engage Students	4	Youth Programs	2
Highlight Role Models	4	Clarity on purpose	2
Social-Sharing	3	Vote	1
Conversations	3	Write a letter to government	1
Extend-Comfort-Zone	3	Involve Industry Associations	1
Promote-Rainforest	3	Dedicated Leadership	1
Encourage outcome based conversations	3		

Summit attendees also gave Rainforest Alberta community managers some food for thought on how to improve the actions the organization takes.

RECOMMENDATION	COUNT
Tell Stories	9
Edit LWOL Format	8
Facilitated Conversations	7
Engage Students	5
Attract Younger Audience	5
Encourage Under-Represented Groups	4
Make Leaders Visible	3
Encourage Entrepreneurial Steps	3
Embrace Randomness of Attendees	1



## SUMMIT FINAL THOUGHTS

To conclude a long day of brainstorming and discussion, facilitators asked the cohort for their final thoughts. Based off of conversations made that day, and observations made in the Alberta ecosystem, they were asked to think up qualitative KPIs - what a successful ecosystem looks and feels like.

### A successful ecosystem LOOKS like:

- Impactful across the group - different people, industries, has a chain reaction.
- Number of successful curated matches (marketplace of talent, expertise, mentorship) Quantifying connection.
- Excellent communication
- Looks like a spiderweb - each individual piece has its role. Far away, it looks cohesive. Pressure on one part of the net has a chain reaction to the whole web.
- Looks like an overnight success.
- Example: 1862 - Hub of people to make connections. Under one roof, working towards the same goal
- Connecting with people - giving before receiving.
- Gifts and talents freely shared.
- Not only talks the talk but walks the walk.

### A successful ecosystem FEELS like:

- The person I talk to has been impacted, and I can walk away learning a new success story from them.
- Synergy and group growth, positive sum.
- It's a lot of hard work! That's why we're all here.
- Opportunities are here for you to stay, work, and make an impact. Don't feel the desire to leave to build.
- Feels like doing it for the WHOLE, not for the PART.
- You're part of something bigger. Everyone is praising each other up and supporting their journey.
- Fulfilling, purpose-driven. Growth.
- Everyone in the room together is a family - connections with individuals compound to something larger.



# RAINFOREST 2020



Over 100 people attended our Report to the Community on October 9, 2019 at Contemporary Calgary.

Hosted in the recently re-opened planetarium, we reviewed the scorecard and summit results before looking forward to 2020.

Feedback gathered from the summit and other events had guided Rainforest as an organization to work on these initiatives for the rest of the year leading into 2020.

## Content Team

- To better tell ecosystem stories.
- Volunteer team assembled to interview leadership, role models and other interesting individuals within the community.

## LIBI Fund

- To support new ventures.
- Supported by the Calgary Innovation Coalition

## Rework Lunch Without Lunch

- To build community.
- We heard you loud and clear! Look forward to a new and improved Lunch Without Lunch coming to you soon.

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These initiatives are designed to support the work of both individual and organizational change being made in Calgary's ecosystem. If you want to help Rainforest Alberta move the needle further in the province by being part of one of these initiatives, contact us on our website [www.rainforestab.ca](http://www.rainforestab.ca)

# APPENDIX A

Pillar/Commons Stage	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Repeats
Culture	Innovate Calgary Startup Calgary Business Link EvolveU Hunter Hub Meetups.com MITACS ATB Entrepreneur Centre EDTT	Cybera Post secondary WE Lab Hunter Hub Chicgeek VCAD ACAD U of C SAIT Bow Valley MRU	Startup Calgary Cybera Chicgeek CDL Platform CED Energy Futures Lab Post-secondary	Alberta Innovates AMII CDL A100	CED ATBx Peer2Peer EO Accelerator Incubators Startup Calgary Auticon CDL	VA Angels Angel Groups Auticon	Cybera: 2 ChicGeek: 2 CDL: 3 CED: 2 Startup Calgary: 1 Auticon: 2 Hunter Hub: 2
Resources	Innovate Calgary Startup Calgary Business Link EvolveU Hunter Hub Meetups.com MITACS ATB Entrepreneur Centre EDTT	EvolveU MITACS Startup Calgary Business Link ATB Entrepreneur Centre Meetups.com Innovate Calgary	VMSA CDL EDTT Alberta Innovates Startup Calgary Business Link ATB Entrepreneur Centre Platform Junction Innovation Rodeo	Tundra Ace Alberta Innovates Innovate Calgary Platform OCIF CED IRAP AITC VMSA CDL	BDC EDC Tundra Ace OCIF EDTT VA Angels Interger District Ventures IBM Accelerator Alberta Innovates	Alberta Enterprise Corporation Tundra Ace EDTT Platform	evolveu: 2 innovate calgary: 1 business link: 3 evolveu: 2 meetups.com: 2 MITACS: 2 EDTT: 4 ATB Entrepreneur Centre: 1 Platform: 3 Tundra Ace: 3 OCIF: 2
Policy Frameworks Infra	School of Architecture, Planning Fuse33 Protopspace Universities	Coworking Spaces Alberta Innovates InceptionU Calgary Library City Design Lab	Coworking Spaces Alberta Innovates InceptionU Platform	Coworking Spaces Alberta Innovates InceptionU NRC IRAP	Coworking Spaces Alberta Innovates Investor Tax Credit SR/ED	Investor Tax Credit SR/ED NRC IRAP	Coworking Spaces Alberta Innovates InceptionU: 3 SR/ED: 2
Activities and Engagement	Energy Beers Night Lunch Without Lunch Innovation Rodeo Hunter Hub Lunches Startup Drinks ATB Tech on Tap CivicTechYYC	Pitches & Pints Hackernest Platform Demo Days Life Science Hub Meetings Data4Good Geeky Summit Meet Chic Falling Walls Uni & College pitches Startup Weekend BUF Bootcamp UofC Demo Tent	Startup Grind Startup Drinks Alberta Blockchain Consortium Valhalla Pitch Nights Deloitte 360 Startup Calgary Launch Party Queens Venture Network	150 Startups Pitch Contests - University AccelerateAB PMI Meetup Volition Women's Pitch Night	Strategic Capability Network Calgary Business Strategy Meeting District Ventures Demo Day EdTech Meetups ATB Lunch & Learns The 51 Kensington CTO Meetup	Innotech Tundra Ace Alberta I.O.T.	No repeats!!
Role Models	Craig Elias Irhan Rawsi Joanne Kwok Andrew Browne Wendy Muse Sonja Johnston Chicgeek	Mandy Balak Kylie Woods Joanne Kwok Andrew Browne Wendy Muse Sonja Johnstone ChicGeek Workhaus AMII NvrInd Lory Farley Gary Ellis	AMII Communo Workhaus Clio District Ventures Kylie Woods Work Nicer Lori Farley Gary Ellis Graeme & Michelle Edge	Gary Gunthorpe Pete Lafontaine Tundra Ace Randy Thompson Jim Gibson Brad Zumwalt David Lloyd Emily Hicks Patrick Lor	Jim Gibson Brad Zumwalt David Lloyd Emily Hicks Gary Gunthorpe Attabotics Arcruve Pete Lafontaine Randy Thompson Heather Campbell Tundra Ace Patrick Lor	Suncor Ventures Enbridge Ventures Patrick Lor Heather Campbell Telus ATB Kip Piffe Mary Moran Arlene Dickinson Michelle Romanov Skip the Dishes Solium Benevity Renty Schmatz Victoria Brillz	AMII: 2 ChicGeek/Kylie Woods: 1 Pete Lafontaine: 1 Brad Zumwalt: 2 Patrick Lor: 3 Emily Hicks: 2
Leadership	Startup Calgary AMII Benevity Alberta Women Entrepreneurs Gary Gunthorpe Momentum MNP Ray DePaul Joelle Foster	Craig Elias Startup Calgary Product Hunt YYC Accelerators Coworking spaces Fuse33 Protopspace Lighthouse Labs EvolveU VMSA A100 AMII Gary Gunthorpe Momentum MNP Hunter Hub	EvolveU Tech Careers ATB RBC SHE-E-O Platform A100 Chamber of Commerce The Accelerator League of Innovators Olds College Momentum MNP AMII Lighthouse Labs	Tecterra Lighthouse Labs EvolveU Tech Careers SHE-E-O VMSA Creative Destruction Labs Platform A100 League of Innovators The Accelerator Alberta Innovates Product Hunt YYC Tundra Ace Startup Calgary	Platform CEOs of successfully scaled startups Athenium A100 Alberta Innovates ICTC BDC Futurepreneur CED Startup Calgary Tecterra SHE-E-O Alberta Women Entrepreneurs Enterprises Zone Startups Creative Destruction Labs	Brad Zumwalt Jim Gibson Banks CEO's of successfully scaled startups Alberta Innovates VC Funds Olds College A100	Startup calgary: 4 AMII: 3 Alberta women Entrepreneurs: 3 Momentum: 3 MNP: 3 A100: 5 EvolveU: 2 Tech Careers: 2 Platform: 3 CDL: 2 Alberta Innovates: 1