



## ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

APRIL 2022-MARCH 2023

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# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

The theme for the past year of operations is clearly “growth.” Our region has experienced double-digit growth in tech jobs (the highest in Canada), and as the pillar operations of an electrified mobility world are being built out locally, including the battery plant under construction and the first wave of employee recruitment recently announced, we remain bullish on the tech future of our region.

The entrepreneurial ecosystem is buzzing with activity as WEtech logged record levels of client engagement hours as well as launched five (5) new programs to support the ecosystem at various stages of their business development. WEtech’s focus remains regional, however, the reach is both national and international. Collaborations in programming with other Regional Innovation Centres like i.d.e.a Fund and SWOBEN further strengthens the service offerings to the client base, and our unique proximity to Michigan has opened further opportunities in client services and market collaboration and expansion. Our President and CEO continues her term as Vice Chair of the Technology Council of North American (TECNA) affording access to the best and brightest minds that support the larger tech ecosystem.

The past year of operations represented a return to “normal” following the pandemic. Like many other organizations, WEtech has retained many of the complimentary business tools and practices necessary during the pandemic and conscientiously dropped most, if not all, restrictions. Video meetings with clients, hybrid work from home policies, and new collaboration platforms which were a pandemic way of life continue to be utilized to improve the efficiency as well as the client and employee experience in the services delivery model. This isn’t to say face to face meetings,

workshops and “collision events” have taken a back seat. The team has been busier than ever in supporting region-wide engagements with Innovation Outpost events, TeCK Week YQG, and Founders Night to name just a few.

Looking forward, the Board will see six (6) new highly energized and engaged members join and fill planned vacancies. To all outgoing Board of Directors and Advisors, thank you for your time and guidance in helping bring our organization through this phase of our evolution. You all have been a driving force to strengthening Windsor-Essex and Chatham-Kent’s position on the world’s technology stage. I look forward to seeing this organization continue to grow and thrive under its new board membership and growing operations team, and to a new year of exponential growth in our region.



**Barry Leavitt**  
Board Chair



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Board Chair**  
**Barry Leavitt**  
ENWIN Utilities



**Vice-Chair**  
**Amy Martin**  
OpenPhone (formerly)



**Treasurer**  
**Paul Mancini**  
Ottit



**Past Chair**  
**Larry Koscielski**  
CenterLine (Windsor) Ltd.



**Kit Moore**  
BluePrint CPAs



**Deborah Landers**  
Georgian Partners



**Claudius Thomas**  
Turaco Web International Group



**Joe Markham**  
Rocket Mortgage Canada (formerly)



**Jim Marsh**  
Senior Director,  
St. Clair College



**Stephen MacKenzie**  
Invest WindsorEssex



**Dave Fortin**  
DataRealm



**Wen Teoh**  
EPICentre,  
University of Windsor



**Client Advisor**  
**Carina Garcia Biacchi**  
Ortaliza Farms



**Student Advisor**  
**Ashley McCallum**  
St. Clair College



**Cross-Border Advisor**  
**Dr. Marlo Rencher**  
TechTown Detroit (formerly)

# INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Here at WEtech Alliance, we give entrepreneurs and companies the mentorship, connections, talent and community they need to build technology and innovation-based ventures. We achieve this through three main pillars:



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CREATE • INNOVATE • ACCELERATE  
**WE CAN HELP**

## HELPING ENTREPRENEURS AND COMPANIES START AND GROW



We provide business advisory services, valuable connections, and tailored programs to support entrepreneurs and companies at every stage of their journey.

### WHY IT MATTERS

We know that Entrepreneurs and innovators are the key drivers of job creation, and technology and innovation are crucial in addressing society's pressing challenges.

## CONNECTING TALENT



We work with industry, academia, and community partners to connect talent with high-growth companies, skills development, and community.

### WHY IT MATTERS

We know that Talent is the driving force behind any startup's and/or region's economic success.

## BUILDING COMMUNITY



We host events, organize activities, and tell stories that inspire, onramp, and accelerate new and existing entrepreneurs, talent, and community.

### WHY IT MATTERS

We know that storytelling and planned and chance encounters can lead to meaningful collaborations, and ultimately, a stronger community.

# HELPING ENTREPRENEURS AND COMPANIES START AND GROW

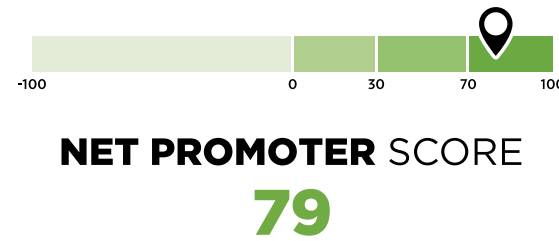
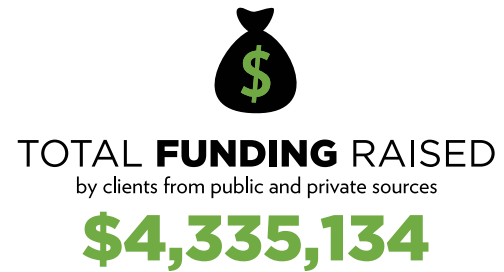
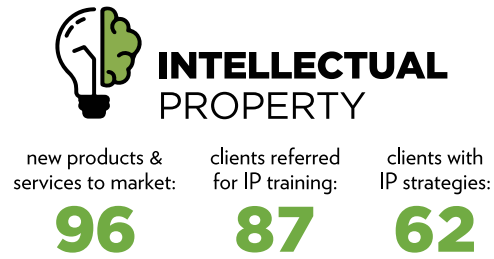
WEtech Alliance is an organization with a roster of business acceleration programs and services designed to help bring new ideas to market and scale to the next level.

Every year, WEtech Alliance's Venture Services team works with hundreds of entrepreneurs and companies.



# VENTURE SERVICES IMPACT

How we've helped our portfolio clients (Fiscal Year April 2022-March 2023)



# CLIENT BREAKDOWN: STAGE

*WE* help entrepreneurs with ideas, create their business reality.



*WE* help innovative new businesses launch into market.



*WE* help established businesses accelerate and scale.



# CLIENT BREAKDOWN: SECTOR

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION + TECHNOLOGY =  
**DIGITAL MEDIA/ICT**



MANUFACTURING + TECHNOLOGY =  
**ADVANCED MANUFACTURING**



MEDICAL + TECHNOLOGY =  
**MEDTECH**



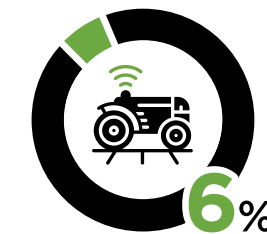
CULTURE + TOURISM + TECHNOLOGY =  
**CULTURE & TOURISM INNOVATION**



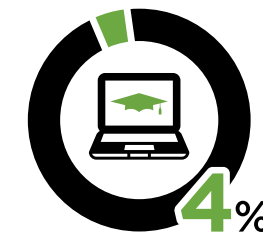
ENVIRONMENT + TECHNOLOGY =  
**CLEANTECH**



AGRICULTURE + TECHNOLOGY =  
**AGRITECH**



EDUCATION + TECHNOLOGY =  
**EDTECH**



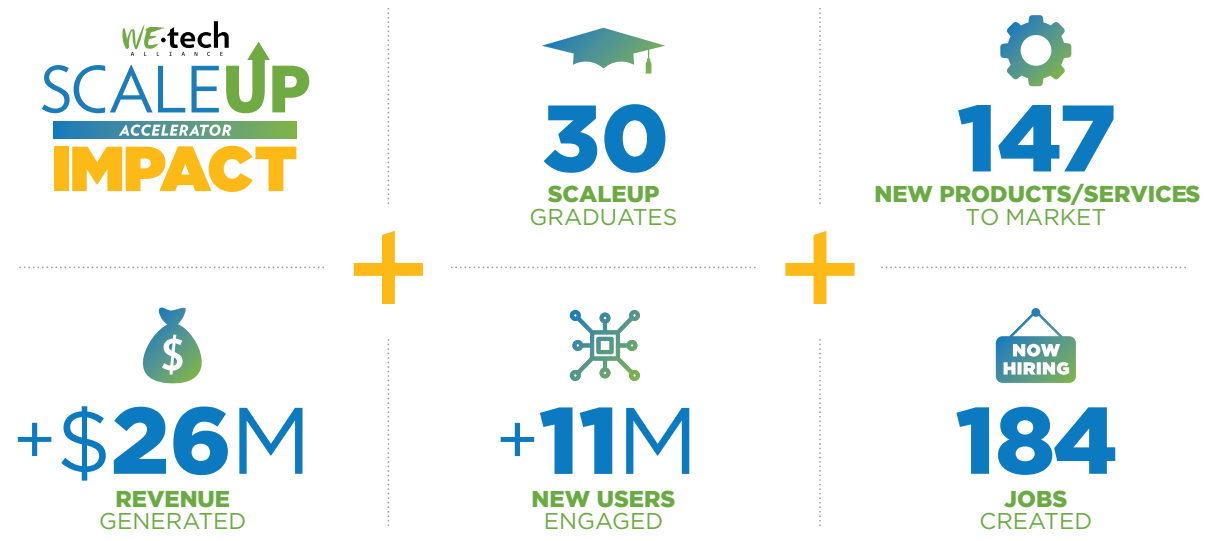
FINANCE + TECHNOLOGY =  
**FINTECH**





## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: SCALEUP ACCELERATOR

Our **ScaleUP Accelerator** program, in partnership with Libro Credit Union and Invest WindsorEssex, is designed to support tech and innovation-based entrepreneurs and companies in Windsor-Essex and Chatham-Kent regions who aim to expand their businesses. The program offers intensive growth coaching, expert guidance, strategic planning, and financial assistance to help these entrepreneurs scale their ventures successfully.



SCALEUP IMPACT NUMBERS FROM THE 30 GRADUATES OF THE PROGRAM AS OF JUNE 2023



## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: I.D.E.A. FUND

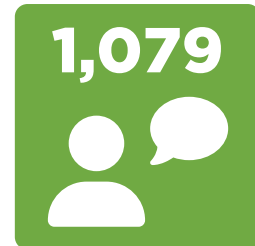
The **i.d.e.a. Fund** program offered by WEtech Alliance in partnership with Ontario Regional Innovation Centres (RICs); Innovation Guelph, Haltech, Innovate Niagara, WEtech Alliance, Innovation Factory and TechAlliance of Southwestern Ontario, is designed to support a more sustainable economy while fostering an inclusive and equitable recovery in Southern Ontario. This program provides specialized industry expertise to develop growth plans and related strategies along with non-repayable seed funding of up to \$30,000 with matching funds.



**WEtech Supported Companies**



**Funding Provided**



**Expert Advisor Hours**



## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: SWOBEN

The **Southwestern Ontario Black Entrepreneurship Network (SWOBEN)** program, led by Empowerment Squared, aims to support Black business owners and entrepreneurs in the Hamilton and Windsor areas. In collaboration with various partners, including WEtech Alliance, the program provides advisory services, mentorship, entrepreneurial training, and networking opportunities to empower Black entrepreneurs.

“There is a strong demand for Black entrepreneurs in the Windsor-Essex region. I am very proud to be part of an initiative that provides services to Black-led initiatives. This project empowers and supports Black entrepreneurs to succeed and thrive by building strong business foundations and optimizing opportunities.”

Dr. Philip Olla  
CEO and Co-Founder, Audacia Bioscience

## ROADMAP TO MVP

### PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: ROADMAP TO MVP

The **Roadmap to MVP** program offered by WEtech Alliance in partnership with Haltech, Sitaran Group, Windsor Essex Small Business and Entrepreneurs Centre, and EPICentre, is designed to empower women entrepreneurs by providing them with the tools and support they need to define and develop their Minimum Viable Product (MVP).



Women Entrepreneurs Engaged



Partners Engaged



Workshops Held



Office Hours Held



### PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: AC:STUDIO

The **AC:Studio** program offered by The Accelerator Centre is designed to support high-potential startup founders, whether they have an existing business idea or are seeking a new entrepreneurial endeavor. The program combines elements of an accelerator and a venture studio, providing funding for promising startups and connecting talented founders with innovative ideas. The program offers founders up to \$100,000 in seed funding grants and brings together innovation partners at Uvaro, SnapPea Design, Conestoga College, Innovate Niagara, and WEtech Alliance to locate, curate, train, and build high-potential business across southern Ontario.

**3 Windsor-Essex Companies Among 100 High-impact Canadian Startups Selected to Participate in Phase 1**



# CONNECTING TALENT

WEtech Alliance works with industry, academia, and community partners to connect talent with high-growth companies, skills development, and community.

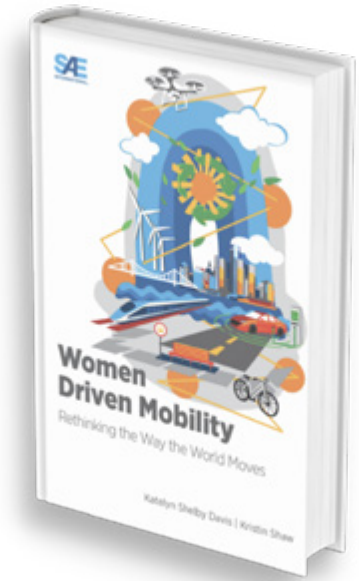






**PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT:  
WOMEN IN MOBILITY BREAKFAST**

The **Women Driven Mobility YQG Breakfast** is an annual gathering of women in the fields of mobility, entrepreneurship, and automotive innovation in the Windsor-Essex region and beyond. This year's inaugural event featured a networking breakfast with nearly 100 attendees, and a panel discussion with authors Katelyn Shelby Davis and Kristin Shaw. The authors explored the themes of their book **"Women Driven Mobility: Rethinking the Way the World Moves"** and shared valuable insights on fostering female leadership in the industry. Additionally, the event hosted a panel discussion involving four regional women leaders actively engaged in the mobility field through their work, studies, or entrepreneurial pursuits.



**PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT:  
WOMEN IN MOBILITY PEER GROUP**

Through regular gatherings and tailored experiences, the **Women in Mobility Peer Group** facilitates educational sessions, discussions, experiences, and knowledge-sharing initiatives, aimed at empowering and connecting women in and around the mobility sector in Windsor-Essex and beyond.

We define mobility as technologies and services that enable people and goods to move around more freely.



### PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: TECH CONNECT THURSDAY

Our **Tech Connect Thursday** is a monthly event delivered in partnership with Invest WindsorEssex, St. Clair College, University of Windsor, and Workforce WindsorEssex. The event aims to connect individuals interested in working in the tech industry or already working in tech with companies, professionals, and organizations in the field. It provides an opportunity to learn about career opportunities, industry insights, trends, and initiatives in the region and beyond.



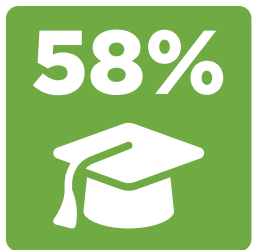
Tech Connect Sessions Hosted



Partners and Employers Featured



Registered Attendees



Students from St. Clair College and University of Windsor



### SPONSORSHIP SPOTLIGHT:

WEtech is committed to supporting and fostering the growth of our regional tech and innovation community through a range of initiatives and programs. From talent connections and development to exciting celebrations, we strive to make a positive impact. Throughout the year, we proudly sponsored various events, including the annual **Windsor-Essex DevFest**, **MasseyHacks**, and **Windsor-Essex FIRST Robotics'** Great Lakes District event.



# BUILDING COMMUNITY

WEtech Alliance knows that storytelling and planned and chance encounters can lead to meaningful collaborations, and ultimately, a stronger community. That is why we work hard to host events and activities that inspire, onramp, and accelerate new and existing entrepreneurs, talent and community.





## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: INNOVATION OUTPOSTS

Our **Innovation Outposts** program, delivered in partnership with Libro Credit Union, is designed to support rural entrepreneurs and communities through connections, business support, and programming. Over FY22-23, Innovation Outposts were set up across Essex County and Chatham-Kent to serve as spaces for regional and rural startups and businesses to connect and collaborate.



Events



Communities



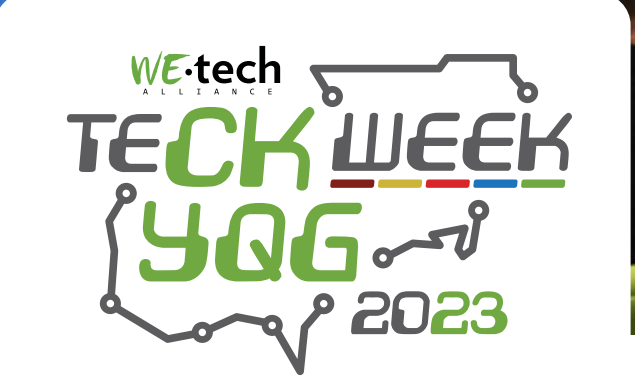
Attendees



Regional Businesses Supported



Entrepreneurs/Speakers Activated



### PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: TECK WEEK YQG

**TeCK Week YQG** is a week-long collaborative event organized by WEtech Alliance that celebrates technology and innovation. The event aims to reunite the regional tech ecosystem by bringing together various stakeholders such as tech leaders, founders, talent, researchers, investors, expats, and the broader community.

Themes for 2023 included Tech Women, Tech Talks, Tech Founder, Tech Mobility and Green Tech.



**Registered Attendees**



**Events**



**Partners**



**Tech Talks**



### PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: FOUNDERS NIGHT YQG

**Founders Night YQG** is a collaborative event organized by WEtech Alliance, delivered in partnership with WindsorEssex Small Business and Entrepreneurship Centre, EPICentre and Genesis Entrepreneurship Centre. The event aims to bring together founders and startups for networking, learning, and fun. This free event serves as a platform for entrepreneurs and growing companies to expand their network in the area. Founders Night YQG celebrates entrepreneurship and innovation, while also providing educational and networking opportunities to build momentum and create opportunities for startups in the region.



**Attendees**



**Partners**



**EPIC speaker**



Last year's sold-out event featured keynote speaker **Vivian Kay**, Founder of KinkyCurlyYaki, who shared the story of how she bootstrapped her way to 7-figure success.

# WHAT'S NEXT:

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

As our Chair alluded to in the preface of this report, the past year has been a wild ride filled with learning and growth for WEtech Alliance. Our organization, regional entrepreneurs, and community are growing, and we're proud to say the region is making its mark on the global map.

In today's world, technology is no longer the sole domain of Big Tech; it's the backbone of every industry. The imperative to support this evolving landscape has never been clearer.

Despite our 12 years of supporting regional entrepreneurs and businesses, we know that building an entrepreneurial community is an ongoing endeavor. We've come a long way, but our journey is far from over. We have more talent to connect, more scaleups to grow, more founders to empower, more stories to share, and more innovation infrastructure to build.

Looking ahead, we cannot afford to take our foot off the accelerator. WEtech will remain committed to our mission's three key pillars, which guide the activities and initiatives we undertake and promote.

What can you expect from us in 2023-2024? Expect us to focus on several key initiatives:

**SCALING UP:** We will lay the foundations necessary to boost the growth potential of founders and startups.

**INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP:** Our commitment to leveling the playing field for all entrepreneurs will continue, ensuring opportunities are accessible to everyone.

**REGIONAL REACH:** We will expand our reach across the Windsor-Essex and Chatham-Kent regions, making entrepreneurship resources more widely available.

**COLLIDE INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM:** We aim to bring together entrepreneurs, industry players, and talent in meaningful collisions to create a vibrant community.

**SECTOR FOCUS:** We will maximize economic opportunities and contribute to the future economy by strategically aligning our efforts.

Throughout our journey, we remain anchored by our core values: "Founders First," "Innovative By Design," "We Are Who We Are," and "Collaboration Is Multiplication." WEtech Alliance's impact can be seen in this report, but it's essential to recognize that not everything can be measured. The true value lies in the connections forged, the introductions made, the serendipitous interactions at events and in co-working spaces, the community stories shared, and the lasting impact they create.

In conclusion, every city leader dreams of having companies like Google, Shopify, and Apple in their backyard, driving economic impact for the region. However, the success of these giants didn't happen in isolation; they are products of vibrant startup communities. We're not trying to replicate Silicon Valley. Our goal is to leverage our strengths, collaborate with our partners (far and wide), seize opportunities, and create something truly special right here in Windsor-Essex and Chatham-Kent. Together, we can shape a future where innovation knows no bounds, and the spirit of entrepreneurship thrives.

And lastly, a heartfelt thank you to our incredible team, board and partners, past and present; some of the most passionate individuals I've ever had the privilege of working with.



*Yvonne Pilon*  
**Yvonne Pilon**  
President & CEO



# THANK YOU, PARTNERS

WEtech Alliance's public-private funding model means we have a lot of people for whom we are ever grateful.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of our portfolio companies, our sponsors, partners and investors who helped make the past year a success. As well, thanks to the Government of Canada, the Province of Ontario, and our regional economic development agencies for your ongoing support. It's your commitment and enthusiasm that allows us to do what we do. And for that, we say THANK YOU!



We acknowledge the support of the Government of Canada through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario.

Nous reconnaissons l'appui du gouvernement du Canada à travers l'Agence fédérale de développement économique pour le Sud de l'Ontario



## REMEMBERING SUSAN

It's hard to overstate the scale of our community's loss when our dear friend, Susan Anzolin, passed away on December 19, 2022.

Susan was a mentor, a friend, a colleague, and one of this region's biggest champions. From her leadership role as the Executive Director at Invest WindsorEssex's Institute for Border Logistics and Security, to her guidance and support as a past member of the WEtech Alliance board of directors, Susan was a passionate supporter of technology, innovation, and inclusion, helping put Windsor-Essex on the map as the Automobility Capital of Canada.

This is not goodbye, dear friend. We plan to honour your memory, and continue your legacy of community impact moving forward.





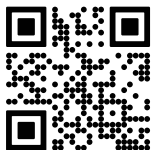
# WE·tech

A L L I A N C E

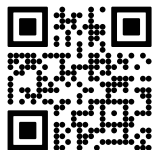
## LET'S CONNECT



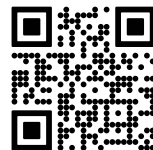
**OUR  
TEAM**



**OUR  
WEBSITE**



**UPCOMING  
EVENTS**



**MAILING  
LIST**

