



N³ SUMMIT 2026:

STRENGTHENING CANADA'S ADVANCED MANUFACTURING ECOSYSTEM THROUGH COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION

AI4Manufacturing and Canada Makes participated in the N³ Summit in the NGen Cluster Accelerator Network (NGenCAN) Innovation Zone, where 21 of the 45 NGenCAN members showcased their cluster organization and connected to the broader advanced manufacturing ecosystem.

The event brought together a strong cross-section of the advanced manufacturing ecosystem, with high engagement across both days and consistent interaction at the AI4Manufacturing and Canada Makes booth. Discussions throughout the summit reflected a clear shift in the sector - away from exploration and toward implementation, particularly in areas such as artificial intelligence, defence readiness, and supply chain resilience.

Above all, the summit was defined by a highly collaborative energy, with participants actively seeking partnerships and practical pathways to innovation.





Securing the Future: AI, Defence, and Industrial Capability at the N3 Summit

From AI Awareness to Implementation

Artificial intelligence was a central focus across the summit, with the conversation reflecting a clear shift from conceptual exploration toward practical deployment. Rather than emphasizing potential alone, organizations are now prioritizing real-world use cases, implementation pathways, and measurable outcomes that demonstrate tangible industrial impact. AI4Manufacturing's Use Case Explorer was frequently highlighted as a key enabler in this transition, helping bridge the gap between theory and application by showcasing validated AI solutions in manufacturing and supporting broader industry adoption.

This focus was reinforced by the keynote address from Evan Solomon, Canada's Minister of AI and Digital Innovation, who emphasized the federal government's commitment to ensuring Canada translates AI leadership into economic impact through adoption at scale. At the summit, Minister Solomon also announced new federal funding supporting 20 projects across Canada aimed at accelerating the adoption of made-in-Canada AI solutions in manufacturing. These initiatives bring together manufacturers, technology firms, and researchers to address production-level challenges and advance commercialization, underscoring a national strategy focused on embedding AI directly into industrial performance.



“Our Canadian manufacturers, powered by Canadian AI, built by Canadian workers is the version of Team Yes we are betting on.”

~Evan Solomon, Canada's Minister of AI and Digital Innovation

Defence and Dual-Use Opportunity

Defence and dual-use technologies emerged as a significant opportunity at the N3 Summit, reinforced by remarks from the Honourable Stephen Fuhr, Secretary of State (Defence Procurement), who highlighted a shift toward a more integrated defence industrial strategy focused on speed, coordination, and export growth. Central to this approach is the Defence Industrial Strategy and the creation of the Defence Investment Agency (DIA).

This theme is highly significant for the N3 Summit and the broader advanced manufacturing ecosystem as it reflects a structural shift toward secure, innovation-driven production and dual-use commercialization. Defence procurement is increasingly acting as a catalyst for scaling advanced manufacturing capabilities in areas such as AI, robotics, quantum, and secure digital systems, while strengthening domestic supply chains and industrial resilience. For Canada's ecosystem, this represents both a new high-growth market and a mechanism to deepen cross-cluster collaboration, accelerate commercialization, and position Canadian firms more competitively within global value chains amid rising geopolitical and supply chain uncertainty.





NGenCAN Engagement: Alignment, Challenges, and Opportunity

The annual NGenCAN in-person meeting brought together 21 of the 45 NGenCAN members, alongside international cluster representatives from across Europe and the United Kingdom, creating a highly engaged and globally connected discussion. The session provided an important opportunity for clusters to align on shared priorities and exchange best practices across both Canadian and international ecosystems.

The meeting was structured around three focused roundtables. The first, hosted by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), examined workforce development and how clusters can better support new federal funding initiatives aimed at strengthening talent pipelines and improving engagement with industry needs. The second roundtable, led by Global Affairs Canada, focused on market diversification, with discussion centred on how clusters can support international engagement and help Canadian firms expand beyond traditional trade relationships. The third roundtable, led by the NGen team, explored cluster sustainability, including long-term funding models, revenue diversification, and strategies to strengthen member engagement and organizational resilience. Together, these discussions highlighted both alignment and shared challenges across the cluster network in Canada and internationally. The meeting served as an energizing and highly impactful forum for collaboration, reinforcing the importance of cross-cluster learning and coordinated ecosystem development. Canada Makes and AI4Manufacturing were pleased to contribute to the conversation and are excited to continue growing their engagement within the NGenCAN cluster ecosystem.



Pitch. Partner. Produce.

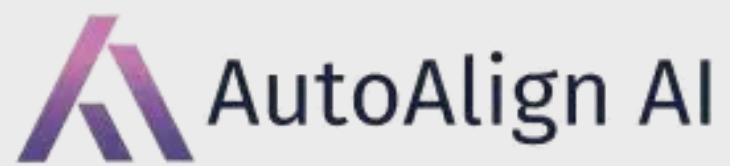
The Pitch. Partner. Produce. session built on the momentum of the NGenCAN discussions by bringing together N3 exhibitors, academic partners, international delegates, and clusters in a pitch format where Canada Makes and AI4Manufacturing to pitch both organizations and our capabilities.

Both Canada Makes and AI4Manufacturing attracted strong interest from a diverse audience, with Canada Makes highlighting its Capability Map and AI4Manufacturing showcasing its Use Case Explorer as tools supporting greater ecosystem connectivity and adoption. The session concluded with a networking reception, providing an opportunity to build on the pitches, deepen conversations, and strengthen emerging relationships across the advanced manufacturing ecosystem.





Our Members at N3!



Thank you NGen!

The 2026 N³ Summit demonstrated that Canada's advanced manufacturing ecosystem is increasingly aligned around collaboration, practical innovation, and the shared goal of building a resilient, globally competitive industrial base.

AI4Manufacturing and Canada Makes are looking forward to continuing to work towards strengthening Canada's advanced manufacturing supply chains through education, awareness, and facilitating connection.

We would like to extend our sincerest of gratitude to NGen for organizing a highly impactful event, as well as the members of AI4Manufacturing and Canada Makes whose participation as both exhibitors and attendees contributed significantly to its success.

We also want to recognize the broader NGen Cluster Accelerator Network for offering collaboration and enabling meaningful connections across Canada's advanced manufacturing ecosystem.

