



Overview

Founded in 2014 as a cross-ministry hub for systemic design and strategic foresight, Alberta CoLab is a **space**, a **team**, and an **approach** based in the Government of Alberta's Department of Energy.

Alberta CoLab is a Space.

CoLab's custom-built studio is designed to help shift the way the Government of Alberta navigates its most complex challenges: through collaboration, co-design, and co-creation. It is a pretty cool space, because the walls are all whiteboards and the furniture is all on wheels!

Designed for maximum flexibility and extreme visualization, the CoLab provides a space for up to 30 people to work together to visualize and prototype innovative solutions.

Alberta CoLab is a Team.

Alberta CoLab is staffed by a small – but mighty! – team skilled in foresight, systemic design, and design facilitation. We are backed by communities of practice that span the Government of Alberta. Our team has diverse backgrounds and skillsets, but we share common values and a mindset that is open, inquiring, and forward-looking.

Alberta CoLab is an Approach.

At CoLab, we do strategy and policy differently. Our approach involves:

- Starting with the **needs** of Albertans.
- Collaborating across **boundaries** with unusual suspects.
- Scanning for weak **signals** and digging for deep **drivers**.
- Embracing **complexity** and **ambiguity**.
- Making our thinking tangible by **creating** and visualizing together.
- Building **robustness** and **adaptability** for an unknown future.
- Learning by doing, and **iterating** between action and **reflection**.

Our Values
<p>Curiosity</p> <p>We explore and experiment, focusing on learning as we journey to unknown destinations.</p>
<p>Creativity</p> <p>We push boundaries, inspiring possibilities and bringing new ideas to life.</p>
<p>Empathy</p> <p>We practice compassion and appreciation among people (including each other) and systems (including those we aspire to change).</p>
<p>Excellence</p> <p>We strive for excellence in our work and in the services we offer.</p>
<p>Joy</p> <p>We delight in playfulness as a vital quality for collaborative problem-solving and innovation.</p>
<p>Partnership</p> <p>We build mutually beneficial relationships to further shared aspirations.</p>



Alberta CoLab: Playing to Win Strategy Cascade			
Winning Aspiration	Alberta CoLab exists to create new paths forward through complex and shifting landscapes.		
Where to Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Priority Energy System Initiatives ■ Priority Cross-Government Initiatives ■ Innovation Spaces 		
How to Win	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Work Streams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lab Projects ■ Capacity Building ■ Field Building ■ Advisory Services </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Tactics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Convene unusual suspects ■ Use a portfolio-based approach based on emerging and global thinking ■ Bridge divides ■ Challenge assumptions ■ Catalyze intelligence into action ■ Empower a growth mindset ■ Be a catalyst, not a bottleneck </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Work Streams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lab Projects ■ Capacity Building ■ Field Building ■ Advisory Services 	<p>Tactics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Convene unusual suspects ■ Use a portfolio-based approach based on emerging and global thinking ■ Bridge divides ■ Challenge assumptions ■ Catalyze intelligence into action ■ Empower a growth mindset ■ Be a catalyst, not a bottleneck
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Our Work

Since its inception, CoLab - known within the Department of Energy as the Energy Transition and Policy Innovation Unit (ETPI) - has assisted with many of the Government of Alberta's most complex strategy and policy challenges. This is where we believe we can be most useful: on challenges that lie at the intersection of departmental and organizational boundaries. These challenges are complex - we refer to them as messes, and it is our job to work with others to tackle them.

Our work starts when:

- Best practices are no longer working or there aren't any.
- You aren't sure where to start, or exactly what the problem is.
- You want to experiment with a new idea or approach, but aren't sure how.
- You want to go beyond what is to explore alternative possible futures.
- You want to understand whether you are doing the right things, not whether you are doing things right.

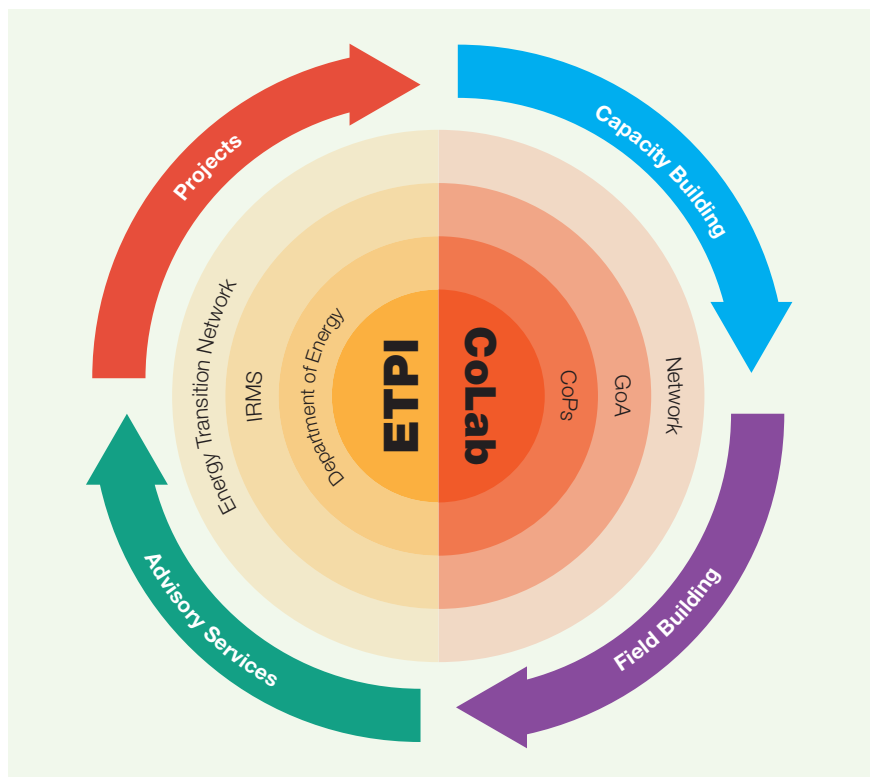
What we Do:

- Foresight
- Design Facilitation
- System Mapping
- Prototyping & Testing
- Qualitative Research
- Graphic Facilitation
- Strategy Development
- Strategic Conversations

Services

CoLab's efforts are focused in four key service areas:

- **Projects:** working with project partners in the following areas (in order of priority): Energy System, Integrated Resource Management System (IRMS), Government/Cross-ministry Initiatives, and Innovation Spaces.
- **Capacity Building:** education, training, and collaborative practitioner forums (e.g., Communities of Practice) to make accessible and imbed mindset, methodologies, and tools.
- **Field Building:** outward-facing engagements to build the field of expertise and leverage additional resources. This includes building a network of labs, chairing and presenting at conferences, and partnerships with experts in related fields.
- **Advisory Services:** providing technical and strategic advice in our areas of expertise - energy related technological innovation, emissions, and public sector innovation.



While, in many ways, CoLab operates like an in-house consultancy for the Government of Alberta, we are not consultants. We are public servants. We're not in the market for clients; we're open to project partnerships with folks who share our values – partnerships that enable us to use our skillsets to support other **public servants pushing boundaries to benefit Albertans.**

Learn More

At Alberta CoLab, we have organized our systemic design and foresight methods using Look – Frame – Generate – Adapt. These activity streams combine in a fluid and dynamic mix, providing the scaffolding for a methodology. They also combine to form a really fun word: **loofragenada!** For more information on our methods, check out our website. There, you'll find more information on CoLab, copies of different resource sheets like this one, links to some of our favourite resources, and downloadable versions of our methods and field guides. You'll also find information on how to participate in our training courses and communities of practice. Check it out!

