

# SheBoot

## Investing in the Next Generation of Canadian Women Tech Entrepreneurs: SheBoot Announces Fourth Cohort

**Ottawa, Ontario - August 22, 2023:** SheBoot, the national non-profit corporation that prepares women founders to pitch their business and secure investment, today announced the 15 Canadian entrepreneurs selected to join its fourth annual cohort. Launching in September, these visionary founders will participate in an intensive six-week bootcamp dedicated to accelerating the growth and success of their technology startup. Building on investment-readiness training, coaching and advisory services, the bootcamp will culminate in a pitch competition where participating entrepreneurs will vie for a total of \$300,000 in equity-based investment from 30 women angels.

SheBoot is delighted to welcome the following 15 Canadian technology founders to its 2023 cohort:

- [Clara Karton](#), PhD, Co-Founder of [Brainware AI](#) (Ottawa, ON)
- [Karen Elliott](#), Co-Founder of [Cinareo](#) (Toronto, ON)
- [Yishel Khan](#), Founder & CEO of [DOT Inc.](#) (Ottawa, ON)
- [Christine Goudie](#), Co-Founder & CEO of [Granville Biomedical Inc.](#) (St. John's, NF)
- [Sofia Bonilla](#), Founder & CEO of [HOPE Pet Food](#) (Toronto, ON)
- [Linda Biggs](#), Co-Founder of [joni](#) (Victoria, BC)
- [Atena Amanati](#), Co-Founder & COO of [Pocket Clinic](#) (Toronto, ON)
- [Bronwyn Bridges](#), Co-Founder & CEO of [PragmaClin Research Inc.](#) (St. John's, NF)
- [Sylvia Gedge](#), Founder & CEO of [ScriptString.AI](#) (Burlington, ON)
- [Lu Yao](#), Founder & CEO of [Smile Wide](#) (Ottawa, ON)
- [Rana Hyatt](#), Founder of [Solis](#) (Calgary, AB)
- [Sydney Robinson](#), Co-Founder & CEO of [Vessl Prosthetics](#) (London, ON)
- [Amy Lorincz](#), Co-Founder & CEO of [Voqe Medical](#) (Montreal, QC)
- [Sarj Dhaliwal](#), CEO & Co-Founder of [Wyrk](#) (Vancouver, BC)
- [Payal Singh](#), CEO & Co-Founder of [YoGPS](#) (Toronto, ON)

The SheBoot Call for Applications attracted almost 100 qualified startup founders from across the country. Following a rigorous criteria-based evaluation, SheBoot selected 15 founders for the 2023 cohort. This includes entrepreneurs from 11 cities across the following five provinces: Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec, Ontario, Calgary, and British Columbia. Their businesses span a diverse array of industries and sectors, including healthcare, Artificial Intelligence, SaaS, education, food & beverage and more.

The strong response to this national call for applications underscores the need for the investment-readiness training and support offered through SheBoot. [Moreover, companies founded solely by women secured only 2.1% of the total capital invested in venture-backed startups in the US in 2022 according to Pitchbook.](#)

Designed by women investors and entrepreneurs for women founders, SheBoot aims to address the long-term systemic challenges facing women entrepreneurs in the investment landscape. The program supports founders at the early stage of development where the funding gap is most significant and the need for investment is critical.

SheBoot has a dual mandate: to increase access to capital for women-owned and led, scalable technology or technology-enabled firms and to increase the number of women investing. The program catalyzes the growth, investment potential and long-term commercial success of women-led startups, equipping high-potential entrepreneurs with the fundamental knowledge, skills and resources they need to become investment-ready. It also facilitates community building, peer networking and introductions to investors and investor networks at the right time, with the goal of helping every founder acquire funding. To date:

- 38 founders have completed the SheBoot program; this new cohort will boost the total number of participating founders to 53.
- Since its inception in Canada's Capital in 2020, SheBoot has helped to catalyze more than \$15 million in new investment for participating founders (the value permitted to be shared publicly).

As a new non-profit corporation, SheBoot has partnered with Mistral Venture and Welch LLP and secured up to \$700,000 in funding from the National Research Council of Canada Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC IRAP) over two years (2023-2025). This critical support is enabling the organization to accelerate progress towards its goals, expand nationally and, ultimately, help more women founders acquire the investment they need to grow and thrive.

## Quotes

"It is incredibly exciting to welcome 15 new founders from across the country to SheBoot. These diverse entrepreneurs underscore the immense potential of women-led startups in sectors that are critical to our economy and quality of life. I am eager to collaborate with these inspirational founders, and all supporting SheBoot investors, partners and champions this year. Leveraging this powerful collaboration, we will empower women founders at the early stage of development, help bridge the funding gap and foster long-term commercial success."

- Jane Baird, Executive Director of SheBoot

"We are delighted to announce the fourth cohort of SheBoot, marking another significant step towards empowering women in technology entrepreneurship. We are inspired by the passion

and determination of the Canadian entrepreneurs in our 2023 cohort. We are also very grateful to the 30 women who invested 10K each to establish our prize money and to the large group of coaches, advisors, partners, and sponsors who play an invaluable role in the success of our national program. We are united in our mission to level the playing field for women founders and create a more equitable investment landscape.”

- [Julia Elvidge](#), Co-Founder and Chair of SheBoot

“Sincere congratulations to all founders selected for our fourth cohort of SheBoot. These entrepreneurs are role models for the next generation, helping to create a stronger and more inclusive economy and society. We look forward to helping these founders achieve key objectives with many committed collaborators. Leveraging critical support from NRC IRAP, and partners and sponsors such as Invest Ottawa, Capital Angel Network, Mistral, and Welch LLP, we will catalyze the growth of more high potential women-led and owned startups in Canada.”

- [Jennifer Francis](#), Co-Founder, Vice Chair and Director of SheBoot

“It is an honour to welcome 15 inspirational founders to our next cohort of SheBoot. These entrepreneurs are building visionary ventures targeting global markets, opportunities, and challenges. As we continue to take steps on our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion journey, and building on our commitment to support women founders from many walks of life, we are delighted that approximately 50% of founders self-identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and Other People of Colour). Together with like-minded investors and partners, we will continue to drive the creation of a more equitable entrepreneurial and investment ecosystem across Canada and the world.”

- [Sonya Shorey](#), Co-Founder, Secretary and Director of SheBoot

## About SheBoot

SheBoot is a national non-profit corporation headquartered in Ottawa, Ontario, that prepares women founders across Canada to pitch their business and secure investment. Founded by Julia Elvidge, Jennifer Francis, and Sonya Shorey and built together with the Capital Angel Network and Invest Ottawa in early 2020, this organization aims to help address the funding gap facing women entrepreneurs by increasing the number of women making and receiving investment. Designed and delivered by women investors and entrepreneurs, SheBoot’s annual training program arms technology and technology-enabled startups with investment-readiness skills paired with support services that prepare entrepreneurs to secure investment. The bootcamp portion of the program starts in the fall and culminates in a pitch competition for a minimum of \$300,000 in equity-based capital. This investment is made by women investors committed to fueling the next generation of women-owned and led firms. SheBoot is grateful to

receive advisory services and funding from the National Research Council of Canada Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC IRAP) and partner with Mistral Ventures and Welch to accelerate progress towards its goals. It also benefits from previous investments through the ScaleUp platform supported by FedDev Ontario and delivered by Invest Ottawa. For additional information, visit [www.sheboot.ca](http://www.sheboot.ca).

## About the Capital Angel Network

Capital Angel Network (CAN) is the largest early-stage investor group in the National Capital Region and one of Canada's most active angel groups. The membership is made up of more than 50 Angel Investors, VCs, Family Offices and funds. 30% of CAN members are women. Over the past two years CAN members invested \$15M into Pre-seed, SEED and Series A startup rounds across Canada and primarily along the Montreal - Waterloo investment corridor. In 2022 56% of direct investments were placed with women founded and co-founded startups. CAN members deliver \$1M value annually in volunteer mentorship via portfolio relations, investor readiness and partner programs.

Since inception in 2009, CAN Members invested \$65M into more than 160 companies; 85% of direct investments have been into Gatineau, Ottawa and Kanata area startups. This funding has led to half a billion dollars in additional investment through grants, syndication with other angel groups and venture capital funds.

## About Invest Ottawa

Invest Ottawa is the lead economic development agency for knowledge-based industries in Canada's Capital, facilitating economic growth and job creation in Ottawa. Guided by a vision to help realize Ottawa's full potential as a globally recognized, innovative, inclusive, and future-ready city, Invest Ottawa delivers venture development, global expansion and talent programs and services that catalyze the growth and success of entrepreneurs and firms. These include small business training, mentorship, acceleration for technology firms, foreign business and investment attraction, local business retention and expansion in targeted sectors, commercialization, and marketing Ottawa's diversified economy and high quality of life. Invest Ottawa is also the manager of Bayview Yards, Ottawa's innovation hub and one-stop business acceleration shop, and founder and operator of Area X.O, the R&D complex for next-gen smart mobility, autonomy and connectivity technologies. Since 2013, Invest Ottawa has supported almost 14,000; contributed to the creation of more than 14,700 jobs; helped domestic companies raise \$1.86 billion in capital; and attracted \$1.47 billion in domestic and foreign direct investment to Ottawa. Explore Invest Ottawa's 2022 Economic Impact Report for additional details, or visit [www.investottawa.ca](http://www.investottawa.ca).

## About Mistral Venture Partners

Mistral is a seed-stage venture capital firm with offices in Toronto, Ottawa, and California. Mistral is currently investing from their third fund, with a focus on SMB and enterprise software. Since they were founded in 2012, Mistral has invested in more than 40 startups – including companies like Ritual, Symend and Rewind. [www.mistralvp.com](http://www.mistralvp.com).

## About Welch LLP

Welch LLP is a Chartered Public Accounting firm that has deep roots in the communities it serves. Since 1918, Welch has been providing a wide range of accounting, tax and advisory services to private enterprises, government, and not-for-profit businesses. Welch experts are industry specialists who have an in-depth understanding of marketplace influences, issues, and trends unique to each sector. A true partner, Welch takes a collaborative, relationship-driven approach to client service. Big firm expertise, with small firm service and value. Welch LLP is a firm like no other. For more information, please visit <https://welchllp.com/>

## Here for All Women

When we use the term “women,” we refer to all individuals who identify as women. This includes women of colour, transgender women, and women with gender-diverse identities, including non-binary people and gender non-conforming women (as we know, gender is fluid and can change throughout one’s lifetime). These women have historically and systemically been excluded from many mainstream programs, services, and opportunities. At SheBoot, we are making a concerted effort to prioritize equity, access, and inclusion in everything we do. Our goal is to ensure that anyone who would like to access programs and services truly feels welcome and supported. We recognize that every founder has unique needs and lived experiences and that, in some cases, we are not currently well-equipped to address these unique needs. At SheBoot, we still need to systematically assess how to enhance our programming and advisory to support all founders best. As an example, our advisors and program teams have not yet received training to help them address the needs of racialized and gender-diverse founders. However, this is now in process at Invest Ottawa, one of the founding organizations of SheBoot. Leveraging the diversity of our partners and networks, their internal DEI experts and our generous, committed community, we will do our best to support the needs of all participants. We welcome all women to SheBoot and are committed to listening, learning, and helping every founder to thrive.

## Media Contact

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