

Guidelines

Export Development Program



1. Program Objective

The Export Development Program (the “Program”) supports businesses looking to:

- Increase their sales outside Nova Scotia;
- Improve their competitiveness; and
- Positively impact the Nova Scotia economy.

The Program provides financial incentives to offset the cost of projects that assist a business’s ability to address challenges to export growth. The qualifying projects include:

- **Travel to market** – cost of visiting a new and/or existing client, partner, supplier or investor in another market
- **Inbound client visit** – cost of inviting a client, partner, supplier or investor to visit the Nova Scotia operation
- **Trade show/conference** – booth/floor costs, * cost of travel to market (airfare stipend) conference registration fees, in-market travel and accommodations (per diems)
- **Trade mission** – booth/floor costs, * cost of travel to market (airfare stipend) and in-market travel and accommodations (per diems)
- **Consultant/service provider** – cost of hiring a professional consultant/service provider to address challenges to selling outside Nova Scotia, or to provide services to improve competitiveness

2. Eligible Applicants

All applicants must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Be a Nova Scotia registered business in good standing (current registration on the [Registry of Joint Stock Companies](#)).
- 2) Have a permanent establishment in Nova Scotia.
- 3) Have most of its workforce currently residing in Nova Scotia.*** (Some exceptions may apply where it can be demonstrated that the economic benefit can be accrued to Nova Scotia. Contact the [Regional Business Development Advisor](#) in your area to discuss.)
- 4) Be engaged in, or have imminent plans to engage in, commercial activities outside Nova Scotia, with fully developed exportable product(s), service(s), technology(ies), and/or intellectual property to the satisfaction of Invest Nova Scotia.
- 5) Have a business plan and a strategy to sell products/services outside Nova Scotia outlining the business’s target market and distribution channels and challenges in the target market and how they will be overcome.
- 6) Have no outstanding or pending claims/litigation, injunctions, judgments, orders, legal or administrative actions, or similar proceedings against the business, its principals and/or any related business. (Some exceptions may apply. Contact the [Regional Business Development Advisor](#) in your area to discuss.)

- 7) The business, principals and/or any related business shall not be in default of any obligations under any other form of financial assistance and/or incentive program from Invest Nova Scotia, the Province of Nova Scotia, or any agency of the Province of Nova Scotia. For purposes of this criteria, the [Credit Union Small Business Loan Guarantee Program](#) is considered a form of financial assistance provided by the Province of Nova Scotia.
- 8) Businesses and their related entities may be limited to funding for one business only.

****For remote workforces, the remote employees must reside in Nova Scotia to be eligible.*

Eligibility is at Invest Nova Scotia's sole discretion, based on the above-outlined criteria and information provided by the applicant. Invest Nova Scotia reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to revoke an Agreement based on information discovered after the issuance of the Agreement should the information reveal that the business is not in compliance with the Program Guidelines and Terms and Conditions of the Agreement. In such cases, Invest Nova Scotia will be under no obligation to pay the business the incentive as set out in the Agreement.

Businesses not eligible for the Program include:

- Franchisees
- Games of chance operations and bingo halls
- Personal service providers
- Real estate companies such as agents, developers, brokers, etc.
- Licenced liquor establishments whose primary business is alcohol sales (except production breweries, brew pubs, wineries, and distilleries)
- Distributors, wholesalers, agents, or traders, including retailers, except where value-added products or services are part of the deliverables or for the purpose of selling Nova Scotia products/services abroad
- Associations
- Professional service providers, except where the project represents a unique and/or strategic opportunity with potential economic benefit, incremental sales outside of Nova Scotia, and/or job creation, and the product/service is scalable (Contact the [Regional Business Development Advisor](#) in your area to discuss.)
- Creative industries companies' activities that are eligible under the [Creative Industries Fund](#)
- Tourism operators
- Publicly funded organizations
- Non-revenue-generating not-for-profit organizations
- Venture capital and other private capital firms

3. Projects Assisted

The Export Development Program contributes up to a **maximum of \$15,000 CAD** of eligible costs for a business to:

- Travel to a market outside Nova Scotia to visit clients, partners, suppliers and investors, or participate in a trade mission
- Participate in an in-person trade show or conference
- Host a first-time visit from clients, partners, suppliers or investors to the business's Nova Scotia facilities

- Hire a consultant/service provider to address challenges to selling products/services outside Nova Scotia, or to provide services to improve competitiveness

The Program offers two streams to support export growth.

For specific queries on eligible and ineligible expenses in either stream, please reach out to a [Regional Business Development Advisor](#).

A completed application form must be submitted online to Invest Nova Scotia any time before the project start date. Only project costs incurred after the application date are eligible to be claimed.

Where businesses must incur expenses prior to submitting an application, such as booth space costs and conference registration fees, Invest Nova Scotia will consider approval based on exceptional circumstances outlined in the application. All costs incurred prior to approval of the project are at the applicant's own risk.

STREAM 1:

TRAVEL, INBOUND CLIENT VISITS, TRADE SHOWS, CONFERENCES AND TRADE MISSIONS

Minimum project cost is \$500 CAD

Eligible project costs (excluding PST/GST/HST/QST) include:

- Booth/floor space fees* for a non-retail trade show (50% of eligible costs)
- Conference registration fees* (50% of eligible costs)
 - **Up to two (2)** representatives of the business
 - Conference registration and booth fees for international trade shows/conferences held in Nova Scotia are eligible; per diem costs are ineligible to claim if participants reside within 100 km of the conference
- Trade missions
 - **Booth/floor costs*** (50% of eligible costs), **per diems and airfare stipends**
 - Registration fees to join missions are ineligible
- In-market meetings
 - Eligible costs include per diems and airfare stipends
 - Meetings are to be scheduled prior to travel and directly support the applicant's export objectives
 - Applicants are required to provide a summary of meetings (e.g., dates, organizations, participants, purpose) to support eligibility
- Airfare reimbursement will follow the standardized stipend chart below:

Destination	Stipend \$CAD per participant (max 2 participants)
Africa	\$1,000
Arctic	\$1,000
Asia (e.g., China, South Korea, India, Japan)	\$1,500

Australia	\$1,000
Canada - Arctic (NU, NT, YK)	\$1,000
Canada - Atlantic (NB, PE) **	Not eligible – claim per diem only
Canada - Eastern (NL, QC, ON)	\$300
Canada - Western (MB, SK, AB, BC)	\$500
Caribbean	\$500
Central & South America	\$1,500
Europe	\$750
Middle East	\$1,000
USA (United States of America) and Mexico	\$500

*The airfare stipend is only eligible to claim for round trips from Nova Scotia (some exceptions may apply). The airfare stipend includes all associated flight costs: airfare, baggage, seat selection, and change fees. For projects with multiple locations, only **one (1)** airfare stipend location can be claimed per project (highest value location will be selected). If two travellers participate in one project, the airfare stipend claimed must be for the same location. For example, a project that has a stop in Italy, France, and Spain and two travellers – total airfare stipend claimed = \$750 x 2 = \$1,500.*

***Travel to PEI and NB covered by accommodations/ground transportation per diem only.*

- Travel expenses for representatives of the business who do not reside in Nova Scotia are not eligible.
- A **per diem rate of \$200 CAD (\$400 CAD x 50%) per day for each approved traveller** is available to assist with the costs of accommodations, mileage, and in-market ground transportation/standard car rental (up to two (2) representatives of the business) for all days of travel to market and days within the market. Per diem calculation does not include personal travel days or travel of personal nature. For trade shows/conferences/trade missions, the eligible per diem includes **one travel day before the event and the days the trade show/conference/mission was attended.** Supporting rationale for all requested per diem nights should be outlined in the Project Scope section of the application.
- A per diem does NOT include the day you depart the approved destination or any portion of travel within Nova Scotia.
- **Per diem expenses are capped at seven (7) days per trip.**
- Any project expenses (e.g., accommodations, flights) covered by event organizers, suppliers, business partners, family, etc. are not eligible to be reimbursed by the Program. These expenses must be disclosed in the claim form “Additional Funding” section.
- Incoming client/partner/supplier/investor first-time visit eligible costs (up to two visiting individuals) include airfare stipend and per diem rates, subject to the guidelines above.
- The business will follow and adhere to all health protocols in all jurisdictions where the business is travelling. The business is responsible for all quarantine costs (e.g., accommodations/hotel, meals, testing, etc.). International travel should adhere to the [Government of Canada’s Travel Advice and Advisories by Destination](#).

Costs not listed under the eligible costs above are deemed ineligible. Examples of ineligible costs include but are not limited to ongoing operational activities, professional development

programs, education/training/workshops, mastermind meetings, registration fees paid to join a trade mission, lighting, electricity, wi-fi, refrigeration, booth construction, booth artwork, promotional materials, meals, galas, networking events, social events, alcohol tasting, golf, membership fees, shipping, sponsorships, business-to-consumer (B2C) events, meetings with Nova Scotia companies.

**Booth/floor costs and conference registration fees are not eligible when Invest Nova Scotia is a funding partner.*

STREAM 2:

HIRING A CONSULTANT/SERVICE PROVIDER TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES TO SELLING PRODUCTS/SERVICES OUTSIDE NOVA SCOTIA, OR TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO IMPROVE COMPETITIVENESS

Minimum project cost is \$3,000 CAD, contributes up to 50% of eligible project costs

Eligible projects include:

Project Types	Description
1. Matchmaking	Engage a consultant to undertake a market review and identify business matchmaking or lead generation in new markets.
2. Supply Chain Resiliency	Engage a consultant to support the ability to anticipate, adapt to, and recover from supply chain disruptions.
3. Business Valuations	Engage a consultant to undertake a valuation of the business for succession planning purposes.
4. Marketing Materials Development	Development and design of promotional marketing materials, including translation services and excluding printing, swag, publishing, and social media/LinkedIn platform maintenance.
5. E-Commerce	Development or improvement of an e-commerce platform for markets outside Nova Scotia, including translation services.
6. Inclusion, Diversity, Equity	Development of policies, business cases or implementation plans to support inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility.
7. Intellectual Property/Certification	Expert advice for intellectual property or certification research or development (does not cover fees for legal defence or other legal claims).
8. Market Research	Market research, feasibility, or business case analysis for proposed or existing business activity.
9. Product Development	Enhancements to a product or service (must be an existing, fully developed exportable product, service, technology, and/or intellectual property).
10. Productivity Improvements	Productivity improvements, improved efficiency measures, lean capacity improvements, sustainability practices (excludes ongoing operational activities, development programs, training/education/workshops).
11. Re-Branding	Updating an existing brand for international markets (logo, packaging, website redesign, and content creation).
12. Reduction of Carbon Footprint	Reduction of carbon footprint.

13. Market Growth Plans	Targeted market growth plans (excludes ongoing operational activities, development programs, and training/education/workshops).
14. Technology Development	Technology implementation or development (e.g., enterprise risk management, inventory control, CRM - customer relationship management). Excludes all hardware/software costs.

Eligible project costs (excluding GST/HST/PST/QST) include:

- Consulting fees
- Consultant transportation and accommodation costs directly related to the project

Any cost not listed under “Eligible project costs” above are deemed ineligible.

*Projects must be **new, unique, with defined start and end dates, and not include year-over-year work.***

Consultants/Service Providers and Statements of Work:

Selection of the consultant/service provider is at the discretion of the applicant. Applicants are expected to engage other Nova Scotian/Canadian businesses for their projects wherever possible.

The chosen consultant/service provider **must be at arms’ length from the applicant**. Refer to page 3, question 18 of the FAQs for the definition of an arm's length relationship.

Submission of a statement of work and proof of consultant/service provider expertise are required for Invest Nova Scotia to determine project eligibility and consultant/service provider suitability. Applications will be **declined** if a statement of work is not included in the submission.

Invest Nova Scotia reserves the right to contact any consultant/service provider.

The statement of work must be prepared by the consultant/service provider and **must** include:

- Project objective
- Detailed breakdown of the work/deliverables to be performed
- Timelines for the project, including start and end dates (i.e., day, month and year)
- Fee structures (hourly rates, cost per deliverable, etc.) including currency and total project costs
- For Canadian consultants/service providers: if no GST/HST/PST/QST is included in the cost, it must be noted that costs are either exempt, subject to, or inclusive of GST/HST/PST/QST
- The statement of work must be signed by both parties

For a project to be assessed, sufficient information must be provided with the application to validate the consultant/service provider and their expertise. Proof of expertise may include:

- Consultant/service provider’s biography
- Curriculum vitae (CV)
- Previous work history

- Client references

4. Ineligible Markets

Projects can take place in any country, provided Canada has not imposed sanctions against that country or against individuals/entities relevant to the proposed project. Please see the [listing of current sanctions imposed by Canada](#).

5. Program Criteria

Projects will be evaluated based on the:

- Alignment of the project to the business's strategy to sell their products/services outside Nova Scotia;
- Potential of the project to benefit the business's Nova Scotia operations;
- Potential for the project to impact the Nova Scotia economy.

6. Application Process

- Contact the [Regional Business Development Advisor](#) in your area to discuss Program alignment to your project.
- A completed Application Form must be submitted to Invest Nova Scotia. Contact information is available under Section 10c.
- Applications received outside the timeframe as set out in Section 7 of these guidelines will not be considered.
- A completed application form must be submitted online to Invest Nova Scotia any time before the project start date. Only project costs incurred after the application date are eligible to be claimed. Where companies must incur expenses prior to submitting an application, such as booth space costs and conference registration fees, Invest Nova Scotia will consider approval based on exceptional circumstances outlined in the application. All costs incurred prior to approval of the project are at the applicant's own risk.
- Responses to any requests by Invest Nova Scotia for missing or follow-up information required by Invest Nova Scotia for evaluation of the application **must be received no later than five (5) business days following the request by Invest Nova Scotia**. Non-receipt of requested information may result in an application being declined. An application is not considered complete until all required or requested information has been received by Invest Nova Scotia.
- If approved, the Export Development Program Agreement ("Agreement") will be issued and must be accepted within 15 business days to be valid. Failure to return an Agreement within 15 business days may result in Invest Nova Scotia cancelling the Agreement with no further notice.
- Written decline of applications will be provided.
- There is no application fee for this Program.
- Invest Nova Scotia reserves the right to close any draft applications not submitted within 60 days of application creation.

7. Application Intake

- Businesses can submit completed applications for the Export Development Program anytime between **March 5, 2026, and February 26, 2027, at 3:00 PM ADT.**
- Approval under the Program is subject to budget availability.
- Applications will be considered for projects started and completed between **April 1, 2026, and March 31, 2027.**

8. Terms of Incentive

- Funding is provided in Canadian dollars.
- The total amount of all Canadian government funding (federal, provincial/territorial, or municipal) must be no more than 50% of the total eligible project cost in any single fiscal year (April 1 to March 31) to a maximum of \$15,000.
- Applicants are required to pay all invoices **prior** to receiving a claim under the incentive.
- The incentive is only payable against eligible project costs as outlined in the Agreement.
- All approved projects must be completed and claimed in accordance with the timelines and other terms as outlined in the Agreement.
- An Agreement may be revoked based on information discovered after the issuance of the Agreement.
- An Engagement Survey per project must be completed prior to the claim incentive being paid out.
- Businesses must also participate in Invest Nova Scotia's annual corporate data collection process for two years following the project's completion.

9. Incentive Compliance and Claim Payment

The incentive is only payable against eligible project costs as outlined in the Agreement. There is (1) claim per approved project.

Deliverables for completed Stream 1 and Stream 2 projects must be submitted online no later than 30 days from project completion. Invest Nova Scotia reserves the right to make any adjustments to the claims as part of the claim review process.

Failure to adhere to these timelines will result in the project claim being denied, with no further notice.

STREAM 1:

Deliverables include:

- A signed Invest Nova Scotia EDP Stream 1 Claim Form
- A completed electronic Excel (not pdf) version of the EDP Stream 1 Claim Form Worksheet
- Copies of related project invoices/receipts as well as proof of payment for conference/booth expenses in the form of credit card/bank statements, copies of the front and back of cheques (indicating they have been cashed at a financial institution) or a wire or e-transfer receipt that shows the status of the transaction as "completed" or "confirmed"

- Per diem: Proof of travel must be submitted (i.e., airline boarding passes, or hotel invoice(s), etc.) to validate the per diem calculation
- Airfare stipend: Proof of airfare in the form of a detailed itinerary and/or invoice
- Proof of attendance at a trade show/conference (i.e., photo of event badge, photo of booth with the representatives you are claiming etc.)

STREAM 2:

Deliverables include:

- A signed Invest Nova Scotia EDP Stream 2 Claim Form
- A completed EDP Company Declaration Form (on website) confirming project completion
- Related project invoices from the consultant/service provider
- Proof of payment in the form of credit card/bank statements, copies of the front and back of cleared cheques (indicating they have been cashed at a financial institution) or a wire or e-transfer receipt that shows the status of the transaction as “completed” or “confirmed”

Note: The invoices and proof of payment documents must be made to/paid by the company that holds the Agreement. Invoices marked as paid, barter/contra and cash payments do not provide sufficient proof of payment.

10. Other Pertinent information

a) Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Information collected in connection with this program is subject to, and will be treated in accordance with, the [Nova Scotia Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#).

b) Public Announcements and Disclosure of Information

Approved businesses must consent to:

- Participate in any public announcement or public ceremony relating to the awarding of the Export Development Program funding to the business and related accomplishments, at a mutually agreeable time; and
- The release of project information (business name, sector, region, and total Export Development Program funding amount approved) to the media and general public.

c) Contact Information

For more information, visit www.investnovascotia.ca/edp, or contact the [Regional Business Development Advisor](#) in your region.

d) Frequently Asked Questions

For more information, refer to Export Development Program FAQ and Claims FAQ at www.investnovascotia.ca/edp.