Guidelines
RevUp! Program

1. Program Objective

The RevUp! Program (the "Program") supports high growth firms looking to enter new markets, including both geographic markets outside of Nova Scotia and national/multinational supply chain attachment opportunities.

The Program provides 75% of eligible project costs up to $150,000 to offset the cost of execution-ready projects that assist a business's ability to address immediate barriers to new market entry. This could include expenses related to:

- Addressing certifications, standards or regulatory barriers to accessing a new market
- Addressing IP or legal process barriers to entering a new market
- Product or process change, to increase productivity or scale up to serve a new market
- Completing the development, testing, or market validation of products for sale in a new market
- Hiring dedicated expertise to provide business scale up or market-specific expertise to senior management
- Hiring in-market experts to support business development and navigation within a new market

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. For remote workforces, the remote employees must reside in Nova Scotia to be eligible. (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) Have **revenues over CAD $2 Million and 15 FTEs.**
5) Be engaged 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.
6) Have a business plan and a strategy to sell products/services to a new market, including outlining the target market/supply chain opportunity, distribution channels and challenges in the target market and how they will be overcome. The applicant will be expected to demonstrate how work funded by The Program would create tangible progress towards this new market strategy and their overall business plan objectives.
7) 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.)

8) 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.
9) Businesses and their related entities may be limited to funding for one business only.

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

Note: The Program utilizes a competitive application assessment process. In addition to meeting baseline eligibility requirements, applications will be assessed and selected for approval based on additional program criteria (Section 5).

3. Projects Assisted

The Program contributes up to a **maximum of $150,000 CAD** of eligible costs for a business to:

- Hiring dedicated expertise (consultant/new hires) to provide business scale up or market-specific expertise to senior management
- Hiring in-market experts to support business development and navigation within new market

- Product or process change, to increase productivity or scale up to serve a new market
- Addressing certifications, standards or regulatory barriers to accessing a new market
- Addressing IP or legal process barriers to entering a new market
- Completing the development, testing, or market validation of products for sale in new market

For the purposes of these guidelines, a business is considered to be actively entering a new market when it is pursuing new business opportunities that are either:

- In a specific geographic market outside Nova Scotia where, in its most recent fiscal year, sales represented less than 10% of the applicant's total combined domestic and international sales.
- A new national/multinational supply chain attachment opportunity where, in its most recent fiscal year, sales to an identified anchor client represented less than 10% of the applicant's total combined domestic and international sales.

Projects must be **new, unique, with defined start and end dates.**

Companies must include a statement on the impact the proposed work will have towards progressing their new market entry strategy; **all proposed work items must contribute to one overall strategy**.

The Company will submit a Schedule of Eligible Project Costs at the time of application. A final List of Eligible Project Costs will be determined by Invest Nova Scotia upon approval of the project and will be included in the Letter of Offer/Agreement.

Companies may put forward a combination of expenses up to the funding cap of The Program, utilizing different service providers as needed. **Total project size, including all expense items put forward across all service providers, must total a minimum of $60,000**.

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

- Consulting fees (including directly related transportation and accommodation costs) associated with executing a specific, time-bound project or providing expert advice directly related to the project [**Requires Statement of Work**]
- Application/certification fees directly related to addressing regulatory barriers
- Equipment rental/use fees directly related to the project
- Consumable supplies and materials purchases used in the development and testing of a product directly related to the project
- Capital equipment purchases directly related to requirements for entering the new market
- New technical/strategic hire salaries, directly related to driving new market entry strategy execution

For specific queries on eligible and ineligible expenses, please reach out to a Regional Business Development Advisor.

A completed application form must be submitted online to Invest Nova Scotia by September 23, 2026. Only project costs incurred after signing a Letter of Offer ("Agreement") and before March 31, 2027, are eligible to be claimed.

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 Nova Scotian/Canadian businesses for their projects wherever possible.

The chosen consultant/service provider **must be at arms' length from the applicant**. An "arms' length relationship" is defined as a business or interpersonal relationship where the parties involved maintain a professional or formal distance from each other, ensuring that transactions and interactions are conducted in an objective and impartial manner. This distance helps prevent conflicts of interest, undue influence, or bias. In an arms-length relationship, each party operates independently and without any special consideration or favouritism towards the other. Non-arm's-length parties include anyone listed on the RJSC under the applicant company, familial relationships, close friendships, and related party transactions (a corporation engaging in financial transactions with a company where its executives or major shareholders have personal interests).

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

The Program utilizes a competitive application assessment process to select the final cohort of approved companies/projects.

Applications will be evaluated based on the:

- Alignment of the project to the business's new market entry strategy;
- Immediacy, tangibility, and degree of the project's projected impact towards addressing market entry barriers;
- Demonstrated depth of strategic planning, technical feasibility evaluation, and internal resources for project execution;
- Execution-readiness of the project;
- Financial stability of the company and suitable financial resources to complete the project;
- Potential of the project to benefit the business's Nova Scotia operations;
- Potential for the project to impact the Nova Scotia economy;
- Alignment with provincial economic development priorities, including priority sector alignment. Priority sectors include:
    - Energy
    - Defence and Aerospace
    - Natural Resources
    - Fisheries and Agriculture
    - Housing and Construction
    - AI and Digital Economy

Additional elements that may benefit application competitiveness:

- Company has a consistent history of export revenues;
- Demonstrated progress and commitment towards the new market entry strategy outside of the proposed project activities;
- Demonstrated demand from the new target market (such as preliminary purchase or distribution agreements, supplier qualification approval, etc.);
- Company is considered a rural client;
- Company has self-identified as a business of diversity (A business of diversity is 51% owned, operated, and controlled by 2SLGBTQIA+, Mi'kmaw/Indigenous, Women, Veterans, People living with Disabilities, New Comers, Black Nova Scotians, African Nova Scotians, and/or other persons of Color/Racialized People.).

6. Application Process

- Contact the Regional Business Development Advisor in your area to discuss Program alignment to your project.
- There is no application fee for this Program.
- A completed Application Form must be submitted online via the application portal on the Invest Nova Scotia website. An application to The Program must include:
    - Completed application form details, which will include a project overview, project timelines, identification of key technical and management resources, budgets, anticipated impacts of the project on the Company's new market entry strategy and competitiveness in global markets;
    - Schedule of Eligible Project Costs;
    - Statement(s) of Work prepared by consultants/service providers (if applicable).

- Companies submitting an application should be prepared to provide the following, as required by Invest Nova Scotia to assess the financial viability of the Company and proposed work:
    - Two years of externally prepared financial statements of the Company;
    - A two-year (minimum) financial projection statement (including the impact of the project) of the Company;
    - Any additional financial information as required by Invest Nova Scotia to assess the financial viability of the Company; and
    - Quotes and/or due diligence research to justify project cost estimates put forward under the Schedule of Eligible Project Costs.
- Applications received outside the application window as set out in Section 7 of these guidelines will not be considered.
- 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 two (2) 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.
- Written decline of applications will be provided.
- **Applications will be reviewed and shortlisted based on criteria outlined in Section 5.** Depending on the volume of applications, **applicants may be asked to meet with a small panel of Invest Nova Scotia staff to present their project and answer questions to support the final cohort selection decision.**
- If approved, Invest Nova Scotia will issue a Letter of Offer to the Company which will include (but not be limited to):
    - List of Eligible Project Costs;
    - The Eligible Rebate Amount;
    - Project completion date; and
    - Reporting Requirements.
- The Letter of Offer and must be accepted and signed within 15 business days to be valid as an “Agreement” between Invest Nova Scotia and the Company. Failure to return a signed Letter of Offer within 15 business days may result in Invest Nova Scotia cancelling the Agreement with no further notice.

7. Application Intake

- Businesses can submit completed applications for the Program anytime between **September 1, 2026, and September 23, 2026, at 3:00 PM ADT.**
- Approval under the Program is subject to budget availability.

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 75% of the total eligible project cost in any single fiscal year (April 1 to March 31) to a maximum of $150,000.
- 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.
- Attendance at a mid-point check-in meeting with Invest Nova Scotia staff to assess project status and progress is mandatory. The session may be done virtually or in person.
- 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.

Invest Nova Scotia reserves the right to make any adjustments to the claims as part of the claim review process.

Deliverables for completed projects must be submitted online no later than 30 days from project completion. Failure to adhere to these timelines will result in the project claim being denied, with no further notice.

Deliverables include:

- A signed Invest Nova Scotia Program Claim Form
- A completed Company Declaration Form 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 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 Program funding amount approved) to the media and general public.

c) Contact Information

For more information, visit www.investnovascotia.ca/revup, or contact the Regional Business Development Advisor in your region.