

FAQ

REFINE | Buyer Engagement

Seafood, Food & Beverage Cohort (Fall 2026)



About REFINE | Buyer Engagement

1. What is REFINE | Buyer Engagement?

REFINE | Buyer Engagement helps Nova Scotia seafood, food and beverage businesses strengthen their approach to buyer engagement and prepare to pursue identified buyer or sales opportunities.

Through one-on-one support, participants will refine their buyer positioning and communications, better understand buyer expectations relevant to their identified opportunity, and develop practical tools to support future buyer engagement.

2. How do I know if REFINE | Buyer Engagement is right for my business?

REFINE | Buyer Engagement may be a good fit if your business:

- has a commercially ready product;
- has identified a buyer or sales opportunity and completed some initial research relevant to that opportunity;
- wants practical support to strengthen its approach to buyer engagement; and
- is ready to build on work already completed.

Eligibility

3. My business already sells outside Nova Scotia. Can I still apply?

Yes. REFINE | Buyer Engagement can support businesses pursuing new buyer or sales opportunities as well as businesses looking to strengthen their approach to buyer engagement within areas they already do business.

4. My product is commercially ready, but I haven't pursued this particular buyer or sales opportunity before. Can I apply?

Yes. You do not need to have previously sold to the buyer, customer type or market associated with the opportunity. However, you must have identified a buyer or sales opportunity you are preparing to pursue and completed some initial research relevant to that opportunity.

5. Do I need to complete research before applying?

Yes. REFINE | Buyer Engagement builds on the work your business has already undertaken. Applicants are expected to have identified a buyer or sales opportunity and completed some initial research relevant to the opportunity before entering the program.

The program will build on this groundwork through targeted market intelligence, sector expertise and individualized support.

6. How defined does my buyer or sales opportunity need to be?

REFINE | Buyer Engagement builds on an opportunity your business has already identified. Applicants should be able to describe the buyers or customers they are preparing to pursue and the context for that opportunity, which may include a particular geography, customer segment or sales channel.

This information provides the foundation for the targeted market intelligence, sector expertise and individualized support delivered through the program.

7. Can service-based businesses apply?

The Fall 2026 Cohort is intended for product-based seafood and food & beverage businesses only.

Program Delivery

8. How is REFINE | Buyer Engagement delivered?

REFINE | Buyer Engagement is delivered virtually through a structured, one-on-one process. You'll work directly with an experienced sector expert engaged by Invest Nova Scotia through a series of activities that build upon one another — from understanding your business and identified opportunity through to developing customized buyer tools.

9. Who will I be working with?

Participants work one-on-one with an experienced sector expert engaged by Invest Nova Scotia to deliver the program. The delivery provider is selected based on expertise relevant to the cohort.

10. Will I be working with other businesses?

No. While businesses are selected as part of a cohort, program activities are delivered individually. Recommendations and buyer tools are tailored specifically to your business and identified opportunity.

11. Are there mandatory workshops?

No. There are no mandatory group workshops as part of the REFINE | Buyer Engagement program.

12. How much time will I need to commit?

REFINE | Buyer Engagement is designed to fit alongside the day-to-day demands of running a business.

Participant involvement is spread throughout the program and includes:

- completing the Company & Opportunity Profile exercise;
- participating in scheduled one-on-one meetings;
- providing information and feedback as required; and
- reviewing program recommendations and buyer tools.

The delivery team completes much of the analysis and development work, but active participation from the business is important to ensure the outputs are relevant and useful.

Buyer Tools

13. What is the Buyer Engagement Assessment?

The Buyer Engagement Assessment brings together information from your Company & Opportunity Profile exercise, Market Opportunity Snapshot, Discovery Session and existing materials to identify strengths, gaps and priority areas for buyer engagement.

You'll receive practical, business-specific findings and recommendations that help guide the positioning, messaging, Buyer Tools and advisory support developed through the remainder of the program.

14. What are buyer tools?

Buyer tools are practical, buyer-facing resources developed through the program to support future buyer engagement.

Examples may include:

- Product specification package
- Buyer one-pager
- Product portfolio guide
- Capability statement
- Leave-behind material
- Buyer sales presentation
- Buyer meeting toolkit
- Buyer FAQ
- Meeting follow-up toolkit
- Buyer-focused webpage strategy and copy

15. How are the two buyer tools selected?

Buyer tools are recommended based on the needs and priorities identified through the program and agreed upon with the participant.

Recommendations consider:

- your business goals;
- existing materials;
- your identified buyer or sales opportunity;
- identified buyer engagement needs; and
- planned buyer engagement activities.

16. Will I receive editable files?

Yes, where appropriate. Editable files are provided to support future updates, adaptation and translation.

17. Does REFINE | Buyer Engagement provide translation services?

No. Translation is outside the scope of the program. However, buyer tools are developed to support future translation where appropriate.

Program Scope

18. Will REFINE | Buyer Engagement build my website?

No. REFINE | Buyer Engagement may provide strategy and copy for a buyer-focused webpage, but website design, development and implementation are outside the scope of the program.

19. Will REFINE | Buyer Engagement redesign my logo or brand?

No. Brand development and logo design are outside the scope of REFINE | Buyer Engagement.

20. Will REFINE | Buyer Engagement identify buyers or sales opportunities for my business?

No. Applicants are expected to enter the program with an identified buyer or sales opportunity and some initial research relevant to that opportunity.

REFINE | Buyer Engagement builds on that groundwork through targeted market intelligence and sector expertise to strengthen the company's understanding of the opportunity and its approach to engaging buyers.

21. Will REFINE | Buyer Engagement conduct customer discovery or primary market research?

No. Customer discovery and primary market research are outside the scope of the program. REFINE | Buyer Engagement builds on research already completed by the business and provides targeted market intelligence relevant to the identified opportunity.

22. Can I continue working with the delivery provider after the program ends?

Yes. Any work beyond the approved scope of REFINE | Buyer Engagement would be arranged directly between your business and the delivery provider.

Additional work is:

- outside the scope of REFINE | Buyer Engagement;
- not funded by Invest Nova Scotia; and
- entirely at the discretion of the participant company and delivery provider.

Applications

23. How do I apply?

Applications are submitted through the Invest Nova Scotia [online application portal](#). Applicants must complete the online application and provide all required information and supporting documentation.

24. How are applications evaluated?

Applications are first reviewed to confirm eligibility.

Eligible applications are then assessed through a competitive selection process based on:

- commercial readiness;
- defined opportunity and groundwork;
- buyer engagement needs;
- program fit and potential to benefit;
- readiness and capacity to participate; and
- ability to apply program outcomes.

Meeting the eligibility requirements does not guarantee acceptance.

25. Is everyone who is eligible accepted?

No. REFINE | Buyer Engagement is a competitive program with limited capacity. Up to 12 businesses will be selected for the Fall 2026 Cohort.

26. When will I know if I've been accepted?

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified following completion of the evaluation process.

Participant Contribution

27. Why is there a participant contribution?

Participants contribute **CAD \$750 + HST** toward the cost of program delivery. Invest Nova Scotia funds the remaining cost of the program, including sector expertise, market intelligence and individualized advisory support.

28. When is payment due?

Payment is due upon acceptance into the program. Participation is confirmed once Invest Nova

Scotia has received:

- a signed Letter of Agreement; and
- the participant contribution.

General

29. Why does REFINE | Buyer Engagement focus on only two buyer tools?

REFINE | Buyer Engagement is designed to help businesses focus their time and resources where they can have the greatest impact. Focusing on two customized buyer tools aligned with the business's identified opportunity and buyer engagement needs helps ensure the work completed through the program is practical, focused and relevant to future buyer engagement.