

Guidelines

REFINE | Buyer Engagement Program *Seafood, Food & Beverage Cohort (Fall 2026)*



Program Objective

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

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

The Program

REFINE | Buyer Engagement helps businesses:

- identify where to focus their buyer engagement efforts before investing further time or resources;
- strengthen buyer positioning and buyer-facing communications;
- better understand buyer expectations and requirements relevant to their identified opportunity;
- refine their approach based on practical, business-specific guidance;
- develop or strengthen tools to support buyer conversations and follow-up; and
- approach future buyer engagement with greater clarity and confidence.

The program is collaborative. Participant involvement is an important part of the process, helping ensure the recommendations and buyer tools reflect the business, products and goals.

Step 1: Build the Foundation

Complete a Company & Opportunity Profile exercise and participate in a discovery session that helps the delivery team understand your business, products, goals, existing materials and the buyer or sales opportunity you are preparing to pursue.

Step 2: Understand the Opportunity

Build on your initial research and strengthen your understanding of your identified opportunity through targeted market intelligence. Identify strengths, gaps and priority areas for action.

Step 3: Strengthen Your Buyer Approach

Refine your buyer positioning, strengthen your communications and develop a core messaging framework.

Step 4: Develop Buyer Tools

Receive two customized buyer tools designed to support future buyer engagement.

Every participant receives:

- Market intelligence snapshot
- Individual discovery session
- Buyer engagement readiness assessment
- Buyer engagement readiness brief
- Core messaging framework
- Two customized buyer tools
- Editable source files, where appropriate

Buyer tools 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

Eligibility

To be eligible for REFINE | Buyer Engagement, applicants must:

- be a Nova Scotia registered business in good standing with the Registry of Joint Stock Companies; federally registered businesses with a head office registered in Nova Scotia may also be eligible;
- have a permanent establishment in Nova Scotia;
- have the majority of their workforce currently residing in Nova Scotia (some exceptions may apply);
- be a product-based seafood, food or beverage business;
- have a commercially ready product;
- have identified a buyer or sales opportunity they are preparing to pursue and completed some initial research relevant to that opportunity; and
- have plans to engage in buyer meetings or other sales development activities within the next 12-18 months.

Meeting the eligibility criteria does not guarantee acceptance into the program. Applications will be reviewed through a competitive selection process based on the program criteria outlined below.

Evaluation Criteria

Submissions are evaluated on the following criteria:

Commercial readiness: The business has a commercially ready product and demonstrates sufficient commercial and operational capacity to act on the buyer or sales opportunity identified in its application.

Defined opportunity and groundwork: The business has identified a buyer or sales opportunity it intends to pursue and completed sufficient initial research and preparation to provide a foundation for the program's individualized support.

Buyer engagement needs: The business identifies clear areas where its buyer positioning, communications, materials or approach could be strengthened or refined.

Program fit and potential to benefit: The business's identified needs align with the scope of the program with clear potential to benefit from its specialized expertise, individualized guidance and buyer tools.

Readiness and capacity to participate: The business demonstrates that it has an appropriate representative and sufficient time and internal resources to participate fully in the program.

Ability to apply program outcomes: The business has planned buyer meetings or other sales development activities and demonstrates the ability to apply the guidance and tools developed through the program.

Participation Commitment

REFINE | Buyer Engagement is an individualized and collaborative program. Participants are expected to:

- commit an appropriate company representative to participate in all program activities;
- complete a structured exercise providing information about their products, identified buyer or sales opportunity, related sales development activities and current preparation for buyer engagement, along with other required activities within established timelines;
- participate in scheduled one-on-one meetings and provide the information required to support the assessment and development of buyer tools;
- provide timely feedback throughout the program; and
- commit the time and internal resources necessary to complete the program.

Participants are expected to actively contribute knowledge of their business, products, customers, identified opportunity and sales objectives. The quality and relevance of the recommendations and buyer-facing materials developed through REFINE | Buyer Engagement

will depend on the information and input provided by the business.

Application Process

Applications must be submitted through the [REFINE | Buyer Engagement online application form](#) by the deadline of **October 8, 2026, at 3:00 pm ADT**. Applicants are responsible for ensuring their application is complete and that all requested information has been provided.

Up to 12 businesses will be selected to participate in the REFINE | Buyer Engagement – Seafood, Food & Beverage Cohort.

Applications will be reviewed to confirm eligibility and assessed based on the program criteria outlined in these guidelines. As REFINE | Buyer Engagement is a competitive program with limited capacity, meeting the eligibility requirements does not guarantee acceptance.

Invest Nova Scotia reserves the right to request additional information or clarification from an applicant as part of the assessment process.

Successful applicants will be notified by Invest Nova Scotia and will be required to confirm their participation and complete any required program documentation within the timelines provided.

Participant Contribution

The program requires a participation fee of **CAD \$750 + HST**.

Successful applicants will receive a Letter of Offer/Agreement outlining the terms and conditions of participation in the program. To confirm their participation, successful applicants must return the signed Agreement and pay the participation fee by the date specified by Invest Nova Scotia.

Additional Information

a. Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Information collected in connection with the 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 applicants must consent to participate in any public announcement relating to the program and related accomplishments, as well as the release of program information (e.g., company name, sector, region) and the information regarding their participation in REFINE | Buyer Engagement to the media and public.

c. Program Survey

Businesses must complete the feedback survey for the program and participate in Invest Nova Scotia's annual corporate data collection process for two (2) years following the program's completion.

d. Application / Document Submission

All documentation must be submitted [via the website](#). For questions, please contact:

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