

Guidelines

Export Development Program



1. Program Objective

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

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

The Program provides financial incentives for projects that assist a business’ ability to overcome barriers to export growth. This includes:

- Supporting **travel to market** associated with visiting a client, potential partner, or investor in another market, or inviting a foreign client and/or potential partner to visit the Nova Scotia operation;
- Mitigating traditional **trade show/conference costs** by funding floor space, conference fees, travel, and accommodation costs;
- Mitigating **virtual trade show/conference costs** by funding participation fees, conference fees and virtual booth space;
- Hiring a **consultant/service provider** to address challenges or barriers to selling outside of Nova Scotia including to improve their competitiveness;
- Purchasing **software and software platforms** to enhance remote working productivity, e-commerce solutions and the digitization of internal operations.

*Refer to the [2022-23 Business Plan](#)

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 of 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 of Nova Scotia outlining the business’ 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(es) (some exceptions may apply, contact the Regional Business Development Advisor in your area to discuss).

- 7) the business, principals and/or any related business(es) 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 by 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.

A business' 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 and 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 developers, agents or brokers
- Licenced liquor establishments whose primary business is alcohol sales (excepting production breweries, brew pubs, wineries, and distilleries)
- Distributors, 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. Contact the [Regional Business Development Advisor](#) in your area to discuss.
- Creative industries companies' activities which are eligible under the Creative Industries Fund
- Tourism operators
- Publicly funded organizations
- Non-revenue-generating not-for-profit organizations

3. Projects Assisted

The Export Development Program contributes up to 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$30,000 CAD for a business to:

- Travel to a market outside of Nova Scotia to attend a trade show, conference or to visit clients, potential partners or investors;
- Participate in a virtual trade show, mission or conference;
- Have foreign clients, potential partners or investors visit the business' Nova Scotia facilities for the first time;
- Hire a consultant to address challenges or barriers to selling their products/services outside of Nova Scotia including to improve competitiveness;
- Purchase software and software platforms to enhance remote working productivity, e-commerce solutions and the digitization of internal operations.

The Program offers three streams to support export growth.

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

A completed application form must be submitted online to Invest Nova Scotia prior to the commencement of the project. 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 cost and conference 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 and Virtual Trade Missions

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

- Floor space cost or virtual booth space for a non-retail trade show*;
- Conference* registration fees (up to two representatives of the business**);
- Return base economy airfare (up to two representatives of the business**);
- A **per diem rate of \$200 CAD (\$400 x 50%) for each approved traveller** to cover accommodations, mileage, and in-market ground transportation/standard car rental (up to two representatives of the business**) for all days of travel to and from market and days within the market. A per diem does NOT include the last day of travel and any portion of travel within Nova Scotia. **Per diem expenses are capped at 7 days per trip;**
- Fees for translators or interpreters related to the project;
- Fees for translating marketing materials for a virtual trade show/mission;
- Incoming client/partner/investor first time visit eligible costs (up to two individuals) include return base economy airfare and per diem rates, subject to the guidelines above.
- International travel permitted; the Company will follow and adhere to all health protocols in all jurisdiction(s) where the Company is travelling. The Company is responsible for all quarantine costs (ex: accommodations/hotel, meals, testing, etc.). International travel should adhere to federal government guidance (current guidance is available at: <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>).

*International trade shows/conferences held in Nova Scotia are eligible.

**Travel expenses for representatives of the business not based in Nova Scotia are not eligible.

Any costs not listed under the eligible costs above are deemed ineligible. Minimum project cost is \$1,000 CAD.

Stream 2: Hiring a Consultant/Service Provider to address challenges or barriers to selling products/services outside of Nova Scotia

Eligible projects include:

- Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Business growth, strategic and marketing plans
- Market research, feasibility or business case analysis for proposed or existing business activity

- Product research, development, and design
- Development plan for e-commerce platform for markets outside of Nova Scotia
- Business matchmaking or lead generation in new markets
- Business valuations for succession planning
- Productivity, efficiency, lean, capacity improvements, sustainability and reduction of carbon footprint
- Intellectual Property or Certification research or development (does not cover fees for legal defence or other legal claims)
- Technology implementation or development
- (Re)Branding for international markets
- E-commerce solution improvement

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

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

Minimum project cost is \$5,000 CAD. Any cost not listed under “Eligible project costs” above are deemed ineligible.

Consultants/Service Providers and Statements of Work:

Selection of the consultant/service provider is at the discretion of the applicant.

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, subject to the review and satisfaction of Invest Nova Scotia.

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

Invest Nova Scotia encourages applicants to engage other Nova Scotia businesses for their project, though choosing a consultant/service provider from outside Nova Scotia does not preclude an applicant from the program. The chosen consultant/service provider must be at arms’ length from the applicant.

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

- Detailed description of the work to be performed
- Timelines for the project
- Fee structures (hourly rates, cost per deliverable, etc.)
- 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

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

Stream 3: Digital Adoption

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

- Initial expenses incurred while implementing new software, and software platforms, related to operational digitization and automation, e-commerce and digital marketing upgrades, new processes to aid remote working and broadband and connectivity upgrades.

Eligible costs include*:

- Consultant fees related to the development and implementation of the technology solution
- Inventory control software
- CRM software
- ERP software
- Accounting software
- Video conferencing software
- E-commerce platform and plug-in subscriptions when an initial expense upon implementation
- Remote working suites such as Google docs, Office 360 and ZOHO
- Cloud computing and web hosting such as Azure, Amazon Web Services (AWS), Google Cloud Platform (GCP)

*If software is a subscription, up to one year of expenses will be eligible and must be paid and claimed prior to March 31, 2023.

Ineligible costs include (but are not limited to):

- Computer hardware
- Photography equipment
- Internal labour costs
- Paid advertising space
- Website maintenance and pre-existing hosting fees
- Cloud storage fees
- Desks, workstations, furniture/fixtures
- Small appliances (ex. air purifiers, etc.)
- Lighting
- Shipping, freight, duties & tax
- Warranty plans, insurance
- Accessories (ex. Peripherals, air pods/earbuds, mouse, keyboard, cords, connectors, covers, cases, bags, etc.)
- Office supplies
- Smartphones
- Monthly subscriptions (after initial implementations)

All individual expense items must have a minimum value of \$250 before HST/PST/GST/QST. For subscriptions, the total value of the monthly subscription costs must be more than \$250. Minimum project cost is \$2,000 CAD.

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- 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 supports businesses looking to:

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

Projects will be evaluated based on the:

- Alignment of the project to the company's strategy to sell their products/services outside of Nova Scotia;
- Potential of the project to benefit the company'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 of 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 **prior** to the commencement of the project. 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 cost and conference 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 5 business days following such request by Invest Nova Scotia. Non-receipt of requested information from Invest Nova Scotia 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 10 business days to be valid. Failure to return an Agreement within 10 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 complete applications for the Export Development Program anytime between **March 21, 2022, and January 13, 2023, at 5:00 PM AST.**
- Applications will be considered for projects started and completed between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2023.

8. Terms of Incentive

- Funding is provided in Canadian dollars.
- The total amount of all Canadian government funding (federal, provincial/territorial, or municipal) is set at 50% of the total eligible project cost in any single provincial government fiscal year (April 1 to March 31). The business must pay 50% of the total eligible project cost.
- 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.
- Businesses must complete the feedback survey for the Program and 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. Deliverables for project completion must be submitted online no later than 30 days from project completion. In the case of Stream 1 projects, claims must be submitted online within 30 days of completion of each project/trip.

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

Stream 1:

Deliverables include:

- Claim Form Worksheet
- Copies of related project invoices/receipts as well as proof of payment such as credit card/bank statements, copies of the front and back of cheques (indicating that 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 payment will not be required for accommodations and ground transportation; however, proof of travel must be submitted (i.e., airline boarding passes or accommodations invoice, etc.) to validate the per diem calculation

Stream 2:

Deliverables include:

- A signed Invest Nova Scotia Attestation Form (on website) confirming project completion
- Related project invoices from the consultant/service provider indicating they have been paid
- Proof of payment such as credit card/bank statements, copies of the front and back of cleared cheques (indicating that 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"

Stream 3:

Deliverables Include:

- Claim Form Worksheet
- A signed Invest Nova Scotia Attestation Form (on website) confirming project completion (if the project used a consultant/service provider)
- Related project invoices from the consultant/service provider indicating they have been paid
- Proof of payment such as credit card/bank statements, copies of the front and back of cleared cheques (indicating that 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”

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 (company 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.