

INVEST NOVA SCOTIA EARLY STAGE COMMERCIALIZATION FUND 2023-2024 INFO KIT

Invest Nova Scotia's Early Stage Commercialization Fund (ESCF) helps move Nova Scotia university, college and university-affiliated research to market.

ESCF:

- promotes and accelerates technology transfer activities in Nova Scotia post-secondary institutions
- provides the opportunity to assess the commercial potential of intellectual property
- narrows the gap that exists at the beginning of the commercialization process
- enables projects to move closer to industry collaboration or a spin-out opportunity

If you're a researcher engaged in information technology, life sciences, clean technology, ocean technology, or other technology development with market potential, this opportunity is for you.

Up to \$50,000 in funding is available per project.

Low Carbon Stream Nova Scotia's Department of Natural Resources and Renewables (NSDNRR) and Invest Nova Scotia are partnering to offer the Low Carbon Technology Stream of ESCF. The organizations will work together on the evaluation process and curriculum.

We're delighted to once again work with our friends at New Brunswick Innovation Foundation (NBIF) to offer ESCF. While our two organizations are co-promoting the opportunity and partnering on the evaluation process and curriculum, [applications from New Brunswick institutions have to apply through NBIF](#).

HOW TO APPLY

The **deadline** for winter round submissions is **Monday, February 12, 2024, at 11:59 pm AT**.

Applicants are asked to use our [Microsoft Word proposal form for ESCF](#), complete the table and project description sections and sign the applicant authorization. [Submissions are made online](#) by completing the webform and uploading the proposal form along with the CV of the principal investigator(s), highlighting any previous experience in research commercialization.

Phase two applicants must submit their final phase one report prior to the application deadline.

ELIGIBILITY

Nova Scotia university and college faculty members, as well as staff, clinicians and researchers in university-affiliated institutions, are eligible to apply.

Applications from graduate students and post-docs will be considered, provided a faculty member is a co-applicant. The lead applicant (or principal investigator) must be the faculty member who holds the research account.

Invest Nova Scotia portfolio companies and Accelerate program companies (past or present) are ineligible for this opportunity.

PROCESS

ESCF has two rounds: fall 2023 and winter 2024. Each round has two types of funding: phase one and phase two.

Phase one is for first-time projects with technologies in the initial stages of development and an opportunity for commercialization identified.

Phase two is for projects that have:

- received phase one funding for the same project in the past; and
- identified an opportunity for commercialization, target markets and potential revenue streams; and
- initiated discussions with potential customers; and
- established a collaboration with a commercial partner or identified a spin-out opportunity*

** Through ESCF, Invest Nova Scotia seeks to find and build technologies with the potential for venture capital investment. Although we welcome ESCF applicants who might consider licensing their technology, preference will be given to projects with the potential for a venture-grade spin-out company.*

In both phases, funds can be used to cover up to 100 per cent of a project to a maximum of \$50,000. Past ESCF recipients are ineligible for phase one with the same technology; however, they may apply for phase two if the project has further advanced and meets the requirements described above. Past phase one recipients who wish to apply for phase two must submit the final report for phase one prior to the application deadline.

EVALUATION

Applications will be reviewed by Invest Nova Scotia staff and partners, as applicable. Applications may also be reviewed by external experts as needed. All external reviewers will sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA).

Applications will be assessed based on the following criteria:

1. Uniqueness and importance of technology; considerations may include:
 - Features and benefits
 - Current stage of development
 - Proprietary position
2. Commercial significance of technology; considerations may include:
 - Description of market
 - Competitive analysis
 - Potential for commercial return
3. Commercial readiness of technology; considerations may include:
 - Closeness to commercial readiness
 - Qualifications/experience of the project team
 - Understanding of potential obstacles and alternatives
 - Strength of IP, regulatory and reimbursement strategy
 - Potential for a venture-grade spin-out company

Low Carbon Technology Stream applications will also be assessed based on:

1. Potential carbon impact of technology; considerations may include:
 - Carbon emissions intensity of the solution the market uses now
 - Carbon emissions reduction that could be achieved on mass adoption

FUNDING AND ELIGIBLE COSTS

1. Funds can be used for intellectual property development; assessment of market potential; development of go-to-market strategies, business plans and strategic plans; development of intellectual property protection strategies; proof-of-concept or prototype development (can cover cost of students and post-doctoral researchers but not the principal investigator); technology design and optimization; pre-clinical testing; clinical validation; and leveraging other funds.
2. Eligible costs are limited to labour, direct materials and expenses, and business consulting. Patent costs are limited to 10 per cent of the overall funding request. Equipment and other costs that are difficult to attribute directly to an individual project are generally ineligible but may be considered. Company development activities such as website creation, marketing materials and conferences are generally ineligible but may be considered. Note: Overhead and administration is not an eligible cost.
3. In phase two, the maximum amount for legal costs is \$10,000. Note: Any third-party support will be mutually agreed upon by the awarded applicant and Invest Nova Scotia.
4. A submission that significantly understates the costs necessary to accomplish the tasks outlined is deemed to fall short of the potential to achieve the stated goals and objectives and will not be considered. An approved project should commence and be completed within the allowable timeframe.
5. Individual project duration is limited to 12 months from the date of authorization, with all costs incurred and paid within that time. Projects can be completed in a shorter time than the maximum duration permitted.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. A final report (month 12) detailing tasks and outcomes achieved is required. A final project account printout from an institution's financial services office must be included with the report.
2. Quarterly progress meetings are required with an Invest Nova Scotia advisor and must be attended by the principal investigator. Follow-up contact after project completion may occur and is intended to determine long-term outcomes from the program and gather recommendations for improvements.
3. Failure to provide the necessary reports may disqualify future applications from the affiliated institutions.

FALL 2023 TIMELINE

Monday, February 12, 2024	Proposals due
Friday, March 1, 2024	Shortlist notified
Friday, March 8, 2024	Shortlist reviewed and researchers meet with evaluation committee
Monday, March 11, 2024	Recipients notified

Confidentiality: All information received from the applicant will be kept strictly confidential. All external reviewers will sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA). However, the successful applicant herein authorizes Invest Nova Scotia, or its designated representative, to reveal the following ESCF information: the applicant's name, title, affiliate institution, title and lay summary of the project, duration of support, and approved funding amount. The information received may also be used in evaluating the benefits attributable from the program to the Nova Scotia economy. The applicant's permission will be sought before releasing any further information. Prior award recipients' names and the above details may also be used in subsequent promotion of the ESCF program.

Intellectual Property: Invest Nova Scotia does not claim ownership or rights to any intellectual property (IP) resulting from funded projects. Such rights will be governed according to the applicant (inventor) and the inventor's institution in accordance with its institutional IP policies. In cases where multiple partners contribute to the project development, the partners must provide evidence of a mutually agreeable IP and commercialization agreement.