

SEP

Service Export Program

Helping Businesses Grow Their Top Line

GUIDELINES

The Service Export Program (SEP), is designed to provide funding to Nova Scotia companies, with a focus on small and medium-sized enterprises seeking to seize export opportunities.

The SEP supports the domestic and international marketing efforts of Nova Scotia organizations primarily engaged in the provision of business, educational or professional services.

The program offers funding to assist in the later stages of the sales cycle by supporting face-to-face business interactions that have a high potential for significant business benefits to the Nova Scotia company.

Who qualifies

- Incorporated businesses, partnerships, proprietorships or educational institutions based in Nova Scotia and operating in a range of service sectors are eligible. These include: architectural, construction and engineering services, banking and insurance, education and training, energy and environmental services, entertainment, health care, information, telecommunications, legal and other business services.
- Applicants who can clearly demonstrate that they possess a fully-developed exportable service.
- Applicants with sufficient management and marketing capability to pursue the opportunity.
- Applicants with sufficient financial capacity to undertake the project.
- The provision of services or other intangibles must represent over 80% of the applicant's anticipated revenue from this application.

Shared eligible costs include

- Return economy airfare or equivalent transportation to visit a client in another market, or for a foreign client to visit the organization's Nova Scotia facilities.
- In-market ground transportation.
- Standard-class accommodations.
- Interpretation fees.
- Costs to produce marketing materials and presentations specifically designed for this sales opportunity, including writing, design and translation.
- Please note, in-house output is not eligible, nor is duplication of standard marketing materials

Applicants are responsible for 100% of all other costs.

Funding limits

- The non-repayable contribution from SEP will not exceed 50% of approved eligible costs to a maximum contribution of \$5,000 per project application with a maximum of 5 projects per year. The maximum contribution to any individual applicant, or non-arm's length related applicants, in each fiscal year (April 1 to March 31) is \$20,000.
- The minimum funding contribution that can be considered in any single application is \$1000 (minimum total project cost of \$2000).

FAST FACTS

Supported activities

- Maximum contribution of \$20,000 per fiscal year (April 1 to March 31).
- Non-repayable contribution will not exceed 50% of approved eligible costs to a maximum contribution of \$5,000 per project application.
- A decision can normally be expected within 15 working days.
- Funding can be used to assist with activities necessary to cultivate an identified business opportunity in the later stages of the sales cycle.
- Applicants must have an established relationship with the potential client or partner. This opportunity must be outside of the Maritime provinces.

Typical activities

- In-market meetings with prospective partners and clients.
- Development of proposals, presentations, or collateral materials specific to this export application.
- In-bound visits by potential clients.

Return, or multiple, visits to pursue the same sales opportunity will not be supported.

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SEP administration

All completed project applications will be assessed by a Review Panel of three individuals representing Nova Scotia Business Inc., and two representatives from either provincial or federal government departments with export development mandates.

The Program Coordinator will initially review the application to ensure completeness of information, confirm that basic eligibility criteria are met, and forward to the Review Panel for consideration; a decision can normally be expected within 15 working days. If accepted, a letter of offer will be forwarded for the applicant's approval.

Thereafter, any changes to timing, program elements or maximum costs must be submitted in writing and approved by the Review Panel. Otherwise these costs, or the entire project, may be deemed unsupportable through the program.

Application evaluation

The Review Panel will consider each project on its own merits and the extent to which it is determined to meet the overall goals of the SEP using the information provided in the application form. The panel will assign particular weight to the following considerations:

- Is this a project which meets the 80% service criterion?
- Does the applicant possess the capabilities to undertake the project?
- Is the proposed activity clearly identified and deemed to be at the later stages of the sales cycle?
- Will the majority of benefits accrue to Nova Scotia?
- Are submitted costs reasonable and in accordance with the program guidelines?
- Proceeds from the project must generate economic development for the applicant's base within Nova Scotia.

How is reimbursement made for costs incurred

All disbursements under the program are made on a reimbursement basis for direct costs incurred. Funding advances are not provided.

Clients must submit a SEP Claim Form and Report, available from the Program Coordinator, within four weeks of completion of all project activities. This must be supported by the project report and copies of receipts for all eligible expenses claimed. If the claim has not been submitted by this time the file will be closed and the project will be ineligible for reimbursement.

Clients will be contacted by NSBI six months following their return from market to report on the final results of their project. Clients with the 6 month reports still outstanding will be ineligible to submit new application until the reporting requirement are up-to-date.

How do I apply?

Contact the Program Coordinator, at 902.424.5054, or fax at: 902.424.6823
or by email: bbaker@nsbi.ca
www.nsbi.ca/trade

Costs and activities that are not eligible

- Prospecting
- Marketing research / marketing plans
- Trade missions, trade shows, fairs or exhibitions
- Transportation of goods or equipment
- Salaries, commissions or per-diem expenses
- Meals, entertainment and hospitality costs
- Phone, fax and Internet
- Travel immunization, insurance or medical expenses
- PST, GST/HST and VAT

The eligibility of all costs will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the SEP Review Panel. Costs incurred prior to the date of formal project approval, will not be eligible for reimbursement, except in exceptional circumstances, and with advance written consent from the Program Coordinator. SEP cannot support any project costs that have, or will, receive a financial contribution through another federal or provincial government program.