

Guidelines

Business Development Program

1. Program Objective

The Business Development Program (“the Program”) supports Nova Scotia businesses looking to increase their export capacity. The program provides financial incentives to engage with an external expert to address challenges or barriers within the business.

The focus of the Program is either

to assist a business in growing current exports or participating in a global supply chain by removing barriers to export and:

- becoming a new exporter, increasing export sales, and/or entering a new market; and
- improving productivity, efficiency, capacity; or increasing revenue and/or investment

Or

to understand and address how to overcome barriers faced by executive management to successfully scale their company and increase export sales.

The outcomes of the program focus on growth through increased export activity and focus on high-growth sectors* and businesses that have a positive impact to the economy of Nova Scotia.

*Refer to the [Nova Scotia Business Inc. 2020-2021 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*; federally registered businesses with a head office registered in Nova Scotia may be eligible)
- 2) have a permanent establishment in Nova Scotia
- 3) the majority of its workforce currently reside in Nova Scotia (some exceptions may apply)
- 4) be engaged in, or plan to engage in, commercial activities outside of Nova Scotia, with fully-developed exportable product(s), service(s), technology(ies), and/or intellectual property
- 5) have an export plan outlining the products or services intended to market; the company's target market and distribution channels; and challenges in the target market and how they will be overcome
- 6) if a company is pre-revenue, they must clearly demonstrate the development of both a business plan and an export plan; applications may be subject to additional review or require additional information

Stream 2 applicants must meet the following additional criteria:

- 7) have a minimum of \$500,000 CAD in total revenue in its previous fiscal year

Businesses not eligible for the Program include:

- Franchises
- 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, except where value-added products or services are part of the deliverables
- Associations
- Professional service providers, except where the project represents a unique and/or strategic opportunity with potential economic benefit and/or job creation
- Creative industries companies including, but not limited to, Fashion/Design, Film and TV, Music, Performing Arts, Production and Fine Craft, Visual Art and Applied Arts, and Publishing.¹
- Tourism operators
- Publicly funded organizations
- Non-revenue-generating not-for-profit organizations

Applicants are eligible to apply to the program if they have received funding from NSBI in previous years under the Small Business Development Program or Executive Management Growth Program. Repeat applicants must demonstrate the project represents new initiatives and will yield incremental results.

3. Projects Assisted

The Program supports the acquisition of a private sector consultant to provide professional expertise under the program objective.

Stream 1: All eligible businesses can apply for 50% of eligible project costs to a maximum of \$15,000 CAD per fiscal year. Minimum project cost is \$5,000 CAD.

Focused on specific barriers to export growth, this stream will help your business overcome a certain pain point keeping your business from growing.

Eligible Stream 1 projects include:

- 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
- Intellectual Property or Certification research or development (does not cover legal fees)

¹ If your business is in the Creative Industries, please refer to the [Creative Industries Fund](#)

- Technology implementation or development
- (Re)Branding for international markets

Stream 2: All eligible business can apply for 75% of eligible project costs to a maximum of \$30,000 CAD per fiscal year. Minimum project cost is \$10,000 CAD.

Focused on senior executives, this stream will help you and your business identify and develop the leadership skills needed to grow.

Eligible Stream 2 projects include:

- Management consulting
- Strategy development
- Growth or leadership coaching
- Operations management (financial advisory, human resources, supply chain, etc.)

The project must clearly demonstrate a beneficial impact to business operations in Nova Scotia with respect to improvements in business strategy, operations, leadership skills/development, revenue generation, profitability, productivity, and/or competitiveness.

To maximize the impact and benefits of the project, businesses are expected to commit the appropriate personnel, time, and financial resources necessary to develop and implement recommendations from its consultant as appropriate.

Stream 2 projects are limited to a single project and consultant.

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

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

Any cost not listed under “Eligible project costs” above are deemed ineligible.

4. Application Process

1. Contact the [Regional Business Development Advisor](#) in your area to discuss Program alignment to your project.
2. Submit a **completed** Application Form to the Regional Business Development Advisor in your area, in electronic format.
 - For an application to be considered complete, all of the following must be submitted **prior** to the application deadline:
 - Completed and signed Application Form (all questions must be answered)
 - Statement of work from the consultant (see Section 6)
 - Proof of consultant’s expertise (see Section 6)
 - If applying for Stream 2, financial statements for the business’ previous complete fiscal year
3. If requested, provide additional financial and company information to assist in the assessment of the business’ financial viability.
4. If approved, the business must sign and return the Business Development Program Letter of Offer within 15 days of receipt of the Letter of Offer.

The applicant's historical performance, together with the tie between its export plan and the project outcomes, will be used to assess a business' application.

Funding decisions will be based upon the application demonstrating that the program objective would be met. Project applications are subject to a competitive process and not all applications that meet these criteria may be approved.

Projects must commence after the submission of a **completed application**. Only project costs incurred after the application date are eligible to be claimed. Any expenses incurred prior to approval are at the business' own risk.

There is no application fee for this Program.

5. Application Intake

Applications for the Business Development Program are accepted anytime between March 26, 2020 and January 15, 2021. **Applications must be received no later than 5:00pm (Atlantic Standard Time) on January 15, 2021.**

6. Consultants and Statements of Work

Selection of the consultant business is at the discretion of the applicant.

Nova Scotia Business Inc. encourages applicants to engage other Nova Scotia businesses for their project; choosing a consultant from outside Nova Scotia does not preclude a business from the application process.

The chosen consultant must be at arms' length from the applicant.

The statement of work must be prepared by the consultant and must meet the following criteria:

- Detailed description of the work to be performed including timelines and hourly rates or fee structures
- For Canadian consultants: if no GST/HST/PST is included in the cost, it must be noted that costs are either exempt, subject to, or inclusive of GST/HST/PST

Statements of work are subject to review by NSBI and may be rejected if insufficient project details are provided.

For a project to be assessed, sufficient information must be provided with the application to validate the consultant and consultant's expertise. Proof of expertise to be included with the application must consist of:

- Consultant's biography and/or curriculum vitae (CV)
- Previous work history and/or client references

Nova Scotia Business Inc. reserves the right to contact any consultant business directly.

7. Terms of Incentive

- This is a discretionary, non-entitlement incentive program.

- Incentive is in Canadian dollars, net of GST/HST/PST/QST.
- Stream 1: The total amount of the incentive is the lesser of 50% of total eligible project costs or \$15,000 CAD per fiscal year.
- Stream 2: The total amount of the incentive is the lesser of 75% of total eligible project costs or \$30,000 CAD per fiscal year. Funding is limited to one project per business per fiscal year.
- Applicants are entitled to apply to one stream per fiscal year.
- Applicants are required to pay all invoices prior to receiving the incentive.
- Activities must be of a one-time, non-recurring nature.
- The project completion date must be no later than March 31, 2021.
- Projects are to be completed and disbursed within the fiscal year (between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021).
- Project funds are not intended to replace funding that can be obtained from other government departments or agencies.
- The applicant and the consultant may be requested to provide updates to NSBI throughout the duration of the project.
- Businesses must participate in NSBI's annual corporate survey for two years following the project's completion.

8. Incentive Compliance and Payment

Deliverables for project completion must be submitted no later than 30 days from project completion. For projects completed in March, deliverables must be submitted no later than March 31, 2021. Failure to adhere to these timelines will result in the project claim being denied.

Deliverables include:

- Consultant's final report detailing work completed and outcomes
- Proof of project completion (i.e. marketing material, screen shots, business plan)
- Related project invoices from the consultant indicating they have been paid
- Proof of payment in the form of the front and back of cleared cheques, or other means satisfactory to NSBI
- Impact statement from the business via an NSBI-issued questionnaire.

All claims must be submitted to NSBI's Program Claims Coordinator at claims@nsbi.ca.

9. 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 created 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 or public ceremony relating to the awarding of the Business 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 Business Development Program funding amount being approved) to the media and general public.

c) Contact Information

For more information, visit www.novascotiabusiness.com/bdp, or contact the **Regional Business Development Advisor** in your region.