

The Regional Economic Partnership Program (REPP)

Application Guide



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Introduction

The Regional Economic Partnership Program (REPP) will support regional economic development in rural Nova Scotia across three focus areas:

1. Business Navigation and Pathfinding
2. Business Retention and Expansion
3. Regional Coordination Functions

Small businesses are critical to the Nova Scotia economy, driving employment, innovation, and regional development. They make up over 95% of all businesses in the province and provide the majority of private-sector jobs, particularly in rural communities. Small businesses support key sectors such as fisheries, forestry, manufacturing, tourism, and technology, helping to diversify the economic base and reduce reliance on a few major industries.

Their local ownership ensures that profits are reinvested within communities, supporting local suppliers and services. Small businesses also play a critical role in fostering entrepreneurship, encouraging innovation through adaptability and niche market development. In a province with a small population and dispersed geography, these businesses provide essential goods and services that maintain community vitality. Moreover, small businesses help attract and retain skilled workers by offering meaningful employment opportunities close to home.

REPP will align regional partners around shared strategic priorities, establish province-wide minimum business service support standards, and reduce duplication across the economic development network. REPP aims to ensure province-wide access so any business in Nova Scotia, regardless of where they choose to locate, can access a consistent baseline of support, providing seamless coverage across the province.

The role of the Department of Growth and Development

The Department of Growth and Development (“The Department”) is responsible for creating the climate for broad-based economic growth and prosperity including establishing plans and policies for economic growth and community economic development in the province.

The authority to approve or deny applications for REPP lies with the Department.

Applications are evaluated based on their potential economic impact on Nova Scotia. The strength of alignment between your proposed outcomes and the evaluation criteria in this guide is the primary factor in funding decisions. Budget constraints and current economic development priorities may also influence the outcome.

About this guide

This guide explains the application process and the information you need to prepare your application for REPP. The application must be completed in full before it is considered by the Department.

Privacy

Information you provide as part of this application process is treated in accordance with *Nova Scotia’s Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPOP).

Eligibility

All applicants must meet the following criteria and apply annually:

- Are a registered not-for-profit, non-profit societies, intermunicipal organizations, municipality, or First Nation
- Headquartered in Nova Scotia
- Have its workforce currently residing in Nova Scotia

The following are not eligible to apply:

- A business
- An individual
- Post-secondary and research institutions

Eligible Costs

Eligible expenses must be directly related to the three activities of focus and may include:

- Staffing Costs – wages, benefits, etc.
- Training and professional development for staff
- Travel expenses within the Province
- Advertising and Promotion
- Resource Materials
- Customer Relationship Management or Client Tracking Systems
- Events and Workshops
- Administration

Eligible costs include all reasonable direct and incidental costs deemed essential for the implementation of the activities. A cost is reasonable if, in nature and amount, it does not exceed that which would be incurred by an ordinary prudent person in the conduct of a competitive business.

Examples of costs that would NOT be eligible:

- General organizational overhead unrelated to the activities
- Capital purchases (buildings, major equipment)
- Activities primarily related to advocacy or lobbying
- Fixed/period charges including recurring charges such as property taxes and reasonable provision for depreciation
- Insurance, dues, and other membership fees
- Interest costs, bond discount, and other financing costs or other non-incremental expenditures
- Bonuses and severance payments to employees

About The Application Process

Deadlines

Applications are accepted at a specified intake period and will be communicated in the call for applications.

Submit by Email

Completed applications must be submitted by email: REPP@novascotia.ca

Expect to receive confirmation of receipt within two business days. If you do not receive confirmation, contact us:

Phone: 902-424-0377

Email: REPP@novascotia.ca

Application Checklist

- Application Form with Proposed Budget
- A recent Statement of Financial Position / Balance Sheet

Completing The Application

Section 1: About the Organization

Fill in the following sections:

- Organizational Legal Name, RJSC Number, Type of Legal Entity, Mailing Address
- Contact Person's Name, Position, Telephone Number, Email Address
- Describe your organization and its history in about 250 words
- Provide a brief overview and history of the lead organization
- Geographical Coverage: list the Municipalities and First Nations where the activities will occur within
- Existing Agreements: list all formalized agreements currently in place to work with the Lead Organization and their expiry such as Intermunicipal Agreements, Memorandum of Understandings, Council Resolutions, etc.
- Project Team: identify key members of the project team and titles. Explain their experience and expertise and how they tie into the execution. If the staffing and organizational composition is dependent on successful application and funding add "New Position" in the Full Name section. In this case, it is still important to highlight how they will tie into the execution of the activities.
- Governance: Provide an overview of your current or proposed governance structure and list all current or proposed board members and their position if applicable. If the board composition is dependent on successful application and funding, please indicate accordingly.

Section 2 - About the Activities

This section serves as a description of the activities, desired outcomes, the plan to achieve and measure the success of these outcomes. Where applicable, refer to existing programs and initiatives that will continue and support these activities, and highlight the experience and success in each area.

Activity 1: Business Navigation and Pathfinding

Objective

Your organization will support regional economic development by strengthening connections within the local business ecosystem and improving awareness of available programs, services, and resources for small and medium-sized enterprises (SME). Through ongoing engagement with the business community, your organization will help businesses better understand the supports available to them and facilitate connections to the appropriate service providers.

Your organization will maintain current knowledge of available resources, funding streams, and programs, and provide informed referrals tailored to each business' needs and goals.

Activities may include:

- Maintaining awareness of programs, services, and resources available to support SME
- Promoting awareness of relevant funding opportunities, supports, and initiatives through ecosystem partners
- Facilitating connections between businesses and appropriate service providers based on identified needs and opportunities
- Referring to specialized partners such as Invest Nova Scotia, incubators, accelerators, Community Business Development Corporations (CBDC), etc.

Activity 2: Business Retention and Expansion

Objective

Your organization will work directly with businesses across the region through one-on-one engagement while assessing needs, facilitating access to resources, and building the trust needed for proactive, timely support.

Activities may include:

- Intentional, targeted outreach to businesses within your defined region
- Proactively nurturing relationships to support growth and operational sustainability
- Gathering business intelligence (both company-specific and systemic) to understand needs and inform the broader ecosystem
- Sharing trends and barriers with partners to strengthen regional response

Activity 3: Regional Coordination Functions

Objective

Your organization will play a local convening and coordination role by promoting collaboration among businesses, support organizations, and ecosystem partners. By maintaining awareness of available programs and initiatives, your organization will help businesses identify relevant opportunities and make informed connections to organizations such as Invest Nova Scotia, incubators and accelerators, Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs), and other partners that provide specialized advisory services and programming.

Activities may include:

- Convening municipalities, First Nations, employers, sector partners, community organizations, and other partners to strengthen regional planning
- Hosting a standing forum for partners to share priorities, surface gaps, and align efforts
- Supporting local business engagement through networking events, information sessions, and business-to-business learning opportunities
- Keeping partners and all levels of government informed of regional trends, challenges, and opportunities
- Connecting local and sector-specific efforts to a broader shared regional strategy
- Facilitating thought leadership and issue management across the business and resource ecosystem
- Encouraging collaboration among regional partners to strengthen the local business support ecosystem
- Developing, implementing, and monitoring a regional economic development strategy

Note: Activities outside these priorities may continue through referrals or alternative funding sources are not eligible for REPP funding.

Section 3: Proposed Budget

This section provides an overview of the cost associated with each activity from August 1, 2026 - July 31, 2027 in the inaugural year of the REPP, and the respective fiscal year (April 1 – March 31) in all subsequent years.

Complete only the budget lines relevant to your request. Unused rows should be left blank.

Section 4: Disclosures

Answer “yes” or “no” to the questions about:

- Any current or pending legal actions or litigation you are involved in
- Whether you are in default for contracts or other financing arrangements
- Your current tax and payroll deduction status
- Whether you have applied for or received any other government (municipal, provincial, or federal) funding for these activities

Section 5: Required Documentation and Submission Instructions

Provide a copy of the Application Form with Proposed Budget and a recent Statement of Financial Position / Balance Sheet attached to the email when submitting.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used to evaluate the strength and alignment of the application with the purpose of the REPP. Probing questions for each criterion are listed below.

Alignment with 3 Focus Areas and Scope of Impact

- How closely does the application align with the objectives of the three focus areas?
- Are the metrics realistic?
- Has the applicant clearly communicated 'what success looks like?' in their region?
- Are the proposed activities proportionate and balanced across all three focus areas?

Awareness of Provincial Priorities

- Does the application demonstrate awareness of the provincial strategic sectors (Defence and Aerospace, Clean and Conventional Energy, Natural Resources, Fisheries and Agri-food, Housing and Construction, and Artificial Intelligence and Digital Economy)?
- Does the application demonstrate awareness of the provincial budget and business plan?

Geographic coverage

- How many municipalities and First Nations will be covered?
- Does the proposal ensure that businesses in remote or underserved areas within the region have equitable access to services?
- Are there gaps in coverage?
- How many businesses are within the proposed region?

Note: overlap with other applicants will not be scored favorably, it is encouraged to have conversations with neighboring organizations prior to submission

Regional collaboration

- Does the application identify key partners and describe the nature of the relationships?
- Does the organization have any formal agreements with partners?
- Has the applicant missed obvious opportunities for collaboration?

Regional Impact

- How many businesses will be supported and reached through each the activities?
- What impact will the activities have on businesses?
- Will there be widespread benefits to a sector and/or the region?
- What focused support will be provided for individuals from equity-deserving communities?

Experience and Plan

- Does the organization have existing programs that align with the activities?
- Does the application demonstrate a proven track record in delivering on the activities in rural and regional contexts?

Governance and Sustainability

- Does the organization have proven leadership capacity to provide strategic oversight?
- Does the applicant demonstrate a plan for long-term sustainability beyond the current funding period, including diversified revenue or partnership commitments?

Fiscal Responsibility

- Is the proposed budget realistic, detailed, and well-justified relative to the scope of activities?
- Does the budget demonstrate a fair value for money and are resources allocated efficiently across the three focus areas?
- Is there evidence of cost-sharing, leveraged funding, or in-kind contributions that strengthen the overall fiscal position of the program?
- Does the funding request reflect a fair and proportionate share of available resources relative to the applicant's geographic coverage, businesses served, and scope of activities?