

2024-25 Nova Scotia Mineral Resources Development Fund (MRDF) Research Grant – Terms and Conditions

Research Grants

- Grants are available through the Mineral Resources Development Fund (MRDF) for research studies intended to support and encourage mineral exploration, deposit development, mineral processing, and value-added end-use applications of minerals in Nova Scotia. Research studies can also include industry applicable studies by consultants on topics such as mineral exploration impact on species at risk, tailings management and any other studies that help inform and support the mineral sector.
- A grant provides up to \$100,000 per project. Projects may extend in phases over more than one year, up to a maximum of two years. The entire project must be described in the application for the first year, with a breakdown of budget requests and deliverables per year. The funding in the year subsequent to the first year is subject to successful completion of the deliverables in the first year and available funding for the MRDF. A letter of intent to support phases of the project beyond the first year will be sent to successful grantees at the time of the first contribution agreement.

Eligibility

- Eligible research projects may include but are not limited to consulting projects and university and community-college projects. Post-secondary projects should support the development of highly qualified personnel (HQP) and could include research work by graduate and/or undergraduate students and/or postdoctoral researchers.
- A single application may include funding for more than one person working on related research projects.

Research projects that will be considered for funding include, but are not limited to:

- Research on Nova Scotian mineral occurrences and deposits, including metallic minerals, industrial minerals, gypsum, coal, and building stone
- Local- to regional-scale deposit modelling and metallogeny studies
- Relevant market (supply and demand) characterization and analysis for a mineral commodity that is or could potentially be produced in Nova Scotia
- The development or improvement of mining or mineral processing methods

- Metallurgical studies
- Research that demonstrates the competitive advantage of a product that uses a mineral produced in Nova Scotia over another product
- Studies designed to reduce the costs of or create new or improved processes associated with mine and tailings reclamation or management
- Studies related to mineral sector issues and/or support the mineral sector
- Proposals from Nova Scotian institutions will be prioritized over those from other jurisdictions.
- Applicants who have failed to produce the deliverables promised in previous grants issued under the MRDF or under the Nova Scotia Mineral Incentive Program (NSMIP) may be ineligible for funding.

Eligible Expenses

- All costs directly related to collection of field data
- Laboratory and analytical expenses
- Student salaries or stipends
- Postdoctoral researchers' salaries
- Research assistant salaries
- Fees associated with work performed by a technician for the project
- Consultant fees for desktop and/or field-based studies
- Travel expenses related to conference travel for students to present results at relevant meetings

Ineligible Expenses

- University overhead or administrative costs

Application Procedure

For the 2024-2025 funding year, Research Grant proposals will be accepted from January 2 – January 29, 2024.

Proposals must be accompanied by a completed Research Grant Summary Page (found on MRDF webpage).

The proposal must include:

- An executive summary
- Objective(s)
- A detailed description of the project
- The applicability and relevance of the research in supporting mineral exploration, development, processing, and/or value-added processing in Nova Scotia
- Key performance indicators
- A discussion of how the project will support the development of HQP
- A detailed budget
- Deliverables
- Timelines and detailed work plan for project duration (must include a start and finish date)
- The principal researcher(s) and/or consultant(s), their organizational affiliation, and contact information
- A description of any planned collaboration with partners or other stakeholders
- How the proposal builds upon previous research (if applicable)
- A detailed location map (if applicable)

Expected deliverables will depend on the scope and nature of the research but must include a final report that will be published as-is by the Department. It may also include other deliverables such as the presentation of results at relevant conferences, publication of the results in a serial publication and/or a thesis.

Proposals must be submitted to the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables (“the department”) at: mrdf@novascotia.ca **no later than 4:00 pm Monday January 29, 2024.**

Please study the Terms and Conditions carefully before applying. Omission of critical information may lead to an application being unsuccessful.

Novascotia.ca e-mail accounts can only receive 30MB of data per e-mail; if the application and data exceed this, please notify the MRDF Administrator, who will send you a secure

file transfer link. (It is recommended you check with your e-mail provider to inquire about size limits for sending e-mails with large data amounts).

Proposal Review and Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- The clarity of the proposal (clearly communicated and well drafted)
- The scientific significance of the proposal's objectives (quality and feasibility of the proposed plans, goals and objectives, research focus, and themes)
- The feasibility of the proposed approach and research methods
- The applicability and relevance of the project to the exploration and mining industry in Nova Scotia
- The alignment of the budget to reasonable industry standards for expenditures
- The underlying rationale of the research
- How it builds upon previous research grants
- External factors that could affect research success

For more details, please read the Research Grant Evaluation Form on the MRDF webpage.

Response Process

- All correspondence with respect to MRDF grants must be communicated through the MRDF Administrator at mrdf@novascotia.ca
- Applicants can expect a funding decision prior to March 1, 2024, contingent on available funding. Contribution agreements will be written in April 2024.
- Successful applicants will receive a contribution agreement (to be signed by the applicant) confirming that their project has been approved and listing the expenses that will be covered under the MRDF. Only approved expenses incurred after April 1, 2024, will be eligible for reimbursement under the MRDF.

Fund Disbursement

- Fifty percent (50%) of the MRDF grant will be awarded when the contribution agreement is signed, forty percent (40%) will be paid on the approval of the 2nd Interim Report, and the remaining ten percent (10%) will be awarded upon confirmed completion of the approved work program.
- Completion of the work program means that the Final Report, expense statement, receipts, and digital data obtained using MRDF funds have been received and

approved by the department. All invoices submitted for reimbursement for work eligible under the terms of the grant contribution agreement must be fully paid for and dated no earlier than April 1, 2024.

- Failure to submit the *complete* Final Report by the required deadline will result in a penalty of 25% of eligible expenditures. Additionally, the grantee may not be eligible to apply for future MRDF grants, as determined by the department.

Withdrawal of Funding

If it appears to the department that the project is not going to proceed, the grant may be withdrawn. The grantee may be required to attend a meeting with the department to explain delays in the project. Grantees will be responsible for returning funding to the department upon the department's request. Grantees shall comply with this request, or they may not be eligible to receive future MRDF grants.

Reporting Requirements

The reporting schedule is to be developed in collaboration with the grantee.

Preliminary Report

- Grantees are required to e-mail a Preliminary Report outlining progress to date on the project to mrdf@novascotia.ca no later than 4:00 pm on the date agreed upon in the contribution agreement.

First Interim Report

- Grantees are required to submit a First Interim Report to the department at mrdf@novascotia.ca no later than 4:00 pm on the date agreed upon in the contribution agreement. The report must be an e-mail providing an update on the status and progress of the project.
- Grantees must inform the MRDF Administrator if they will not be proceeding with a project on or before the First Interim Report deadline. Failure to do so may result in the grantee being ineligible for future MRDF grants.
- Signed contracts with any contractors must be provided by the First Interim Report deadline and sent to the MRDF Administrator by email with the Interim Report.

Second Interim Report

- Grantees are required to submit a Second Interim Report to the department at

mrdf@novascotia.ca no later than 4:00 pm on the date agreed upon in the contribution agreement. The report must be an e-mail providing an update on the status and progress of the project.

- Any anticipated issues that may delay or affect timely completion of the Final Report must be communicated to the MRDF Administrator at this time.

Final Report

- A Final Report must be submitted digitally no later than the date outlined in the contribution agreement.
- The Final Report, expense statement, any digital data obtained using MRDF funds, and scanned paid receipts, are to be sent to the department at mrdf@novascotia.ca. Receipt of the Final Report and any additional data will be confirmed by the department by e-mail.
- All data is to be conveyed electronically. The Final Report must be a PDF with components (figures, assay information, etc.) in one file.
- The Final Report submission must include the completed Research Grant Expense Form. This must include a clear statement of only eligible MRDF costs and paid receipts totaling 100% of grant funding.
 - Please make sure that work submitted to be reimbursed under the MRDF is allowable under the grant contribution agreement.
 - The department requires official receipts from vendors confirming payment of invoices directly related to the costs incurred. Receipts are only eligible for work on or later than April 1, 2024. **The receipts must have a zero balance, or the bill must be signed and dated by the vendor as paid.**
 - Proof of payment can include: cheques for personal bank accounts, a copy of the scanned cheque with a bank stamp showing that the cheque has been processed, bank statements demonstrating payment of invoices, confirmed and accepted e-transfers, official paid receipts from vendors, vendor signing and dating the bill as paid, or letters/emails from vendors confirming payment of invoices directly related to the costs incurred, and the pay stub for payment of wages to a student. Wire transfers are not acceptable as proof of payment.
- Final payment will not be issued until the department has approved the **completed** Final Report, including data collected, discussion of results, proof of eligible expenditures and other related documents.

- Please ensure the Final Report, external publications, presentations, and/or media releases acknowledge MRDF funding.
- Final reports will be published and made public. If the grantee thinks a confidentiality period is required, they will need to apply to the department in writing at the time the application is made, requesting a period of confidentiality. Requests for confidentiality will not be considered after the contribution agreement has been signed.
- Grantees shall keep and preserve all books, accounts, and records relating to the project and keep them available for examination and audit by the Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables for a period of not less than two years after receipt of funding. The recipients shall have complied with all applicable provincial and federal laws and regulations, including those respecting mineral resources, surface rights, health, environment, safety, and conditions of labour.
- Grantees shall be solely responsible for any declaration required under the *Income Tax Act* relative to the contribution made in respect of this program. HST is excluded as eligible grant expense for applicants eligible for federal government reimbursement of the tax. Please refer to <http://novascotia.ca/sns/paal/tax/paal050.asp> to confirm whether registration for an HST number is required.

Notes

- Any changes to the proposed budget or work proposal must be submitted by e-mail to the department, and the MRDF Administrator's approval returned by e-mail. These changes must be approved prior to submission of the Final Report. Failure to do so may mean work related to those changes may not qualify for reimbursement.
- Projects funded by research grants under the MRDF may also be funded from additional sources.
- If the grant proposal is to fund a student research project, the applicant or supervisor is required to ensure the project is completed in the event the student withdraws from their program or does not complete their project. If deliverables cannot be met, the entire grant amount may be requested to be returned.
- An on-site inspection of projects may be conducted by the department to verify project progress, compliance, and completion.
- It is recommended that the grantee maintain regular contact with the MRDF Administrator throughout the duration of the project.