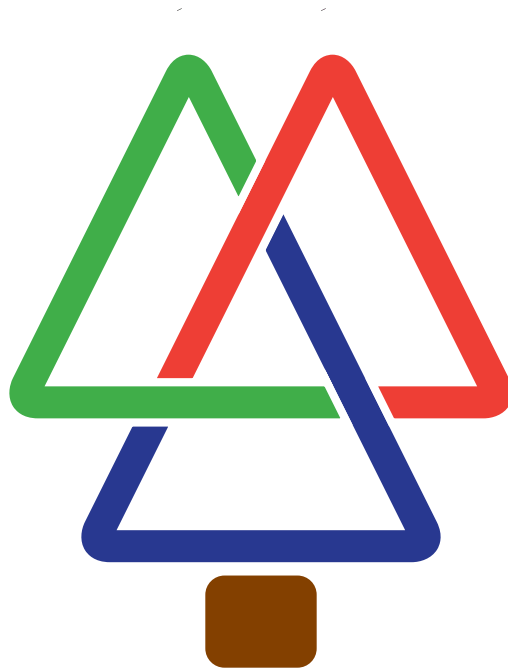


Nova Scotia Forestry Innovation Transition Trust
**Application and Proposal Guidelines for
Organizations and Individuals**



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Introduction

What is the Nova Scotia Forestry Innovation Transition Trust?

The Nova Scotia Forestry Innovation Transition Trust (FITT) is a \$50 million dollar fund that will help the Nova Scotia forestry sector become more diversified and sustainable by transitioning to a triad model focused on

1. ecosystem protection and biodiversity
2. high-production forestry projects that contribute to both ecological conservation and commercial forestry
3. ecosystem-based management

FITT will provide funding for eligible projects while funds remain in the trust and will close no later than March 31, 2025.

The purpose of the Nova Scotia Forestry Innovation Transition Trust is to accelerate or enhance the production, use, and ecological sustainability of Nova Scotia's forestry and biological resources in ways that will result in

- the development of new, high-value products
- new or enhanced business models, processes, or services
- new inclusive economic growth opportunities in forestry
- new ecological services, (including, without limitation, carbon sequestration)
- retraining or training for eligible applicants in cases where no other provincial or federal program covers the costs of the program

This document will give you information on how to apply for funding for your project or training.

The FITT secretariat office will only consider proposals and applications that have been completed in full. Follow this guide to ensure yours meets the requirements.

Any information you provide as part of this application process will be treated in accordance with the Access to Information and the Privacy acts, as well as provincial and territorial legislation.

Who is Eligible?

You are eligible for FITT funding if you are one of the following:

- An individual who is
 - currently employed in the Nova Scotia forestry sector, or have been employed in the sector any time in the two years before applying for FITT, and
 - have applied to an approved educational program to train or retrain for employment in the forestry or biological resources sectors
- A recognized post-secondary institution or research institution in Nova Scotia engaged in applied research in support of the forestry or biological resources sectors.
- A not-for-profit organization in Nova Scotia with an objective to advance the forestry or biological resources sectors. This includes organizations incorporated as societies, registered charities, or non-profit co-operatives.
- A community interest corporation in Nova Scotia that
 - has a purpose beneficial to the forestry or biological resources sectors, and
 - agrees to reinvest a minimum of 90 per cent of your net profits annually for five subsequent years into the forestry or biological resources sectors.
- A qualified incubator, accelerator, or makerspace in Nova Scotia that works with entrepreneurs in the forestry or biological resources sector.
- A sole proprietorship, incorporated enterprise, or partnership
 - that is active in the forestry or biological resources sector seeking to develop new products, or new or enhanced processes or services, and
 - whose head office and principal place of business is in Nova Scotia.

If you do not meet any of these descriptions, you are not eligible for FITT funding.

What is the Application Process?

When can you apply?

FITT will be open for funding no later than March 31, 2025, and will have three funding rounds each year.

Exception: If you are an individual applying for funding for training or retraining, you may submit your application at any time during the year.

Application requirements for organizations:

If you are applying as an organization, you must

- complete the application form in full and provide all the supporting documentation the form asks for (see page 7, How to Complete the Application Form)
- provide a description of your project demonstrating how it will advance FITT's purpose (see page 1) and how your project meets the evaluation criteria (see page 6)
- provide a total budget for your project, including a breakdown of eligible costs (see page 4 Eligible Costs)
- disclose all funding sources for the project and the status of these funding sources
- agree to enter into a contribution agreement with FITT if your request is approved
- provide any additional information that may be reasonably requested to evaluate your application

Application requirements for individuals:

If you are applying as an individual, you must

- complete the application form in full and provide all the supporting documentation the form asks for (see page 7 How to Complete the Application Form)
- provide a total budget for your program costs, including a breakdown of eligible costs (see page 4 Eligible Costs)

Who approves the applications?

The FITT trustees will review all applications to determine whether they meet with FITT's purpose. The trustees have the authority to approve or refuse funding.

How are project applications evaluated?

The trustees will evaluate your project application based on the following:

- confirmation that you are eligible
- confirmation that you (and your project partner(s), if applicable) have the management and financial capacity to successfully complete your proposed project
- the strength of your project (see page 6 Evaluation Criteria section)

Other considerations:

Your project application will be compared to other applications received during that funding round. It will also be measured against how well it meets that round's funding priorities, if any. Funding priorities will be communicated before each funding round.

Eligible Costs

What is an eligible cost?

An eligible cost is a direct cost you need to pay to complete the project or training you described in your proposal and funding application.

Eligible costs for organizations

With some exceptions (see below), any cost is eligible if it is directly related to your project and is considered reasonable by the trustees. In determining reasonableness, trustees will consider such factors as whether the costs are generally recognized as normal and necessary for your project to work and whether your costs are in line with generally accepted sound business practices.

Ineligible costs for organizations

The following are **not** eligible costs:

- core recurring operating expenses including
 - overhead and general administration
 - insurance
 - rent or mortgage payments
 - real property taxes
 - utilities
 - supplies and equipment such as photocopiers, furniture, telephones, computers and printers
- costs to develop your proposal, business case, or supporting documentation
- salaries and wages, benefits, mandatory contributions or employment-related benefits to permanent employees
- bonuses or dividend payments
- legal and audit fees
- fees paid to members of a board of directors for their time
- travel, unless it fits with acceptable travel costs (see page 5)
- any goods or services that are received through donations or in-kind

Eligible costs for individuals

If you are applying for funding for training or retraining, the following costs are eligible:

- The annual cost of tuition for an approved program
- The cost of school fees, books, and other supplies necessary for you to complete the program

If your program is multi-year, you may be approved for all or a portion of your eligible costs for each year you are in the program on the condition that you successfully complete each year and re-enrol for the next.

Ineligible costs for individuals

The following are **not** eligible costs:

- The cost of accommodations while you are in the approved program
- Any costs eligible for assistance under another program or service offered by the federal or provincial governments
- The cost of travel to and from the program

Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax/Provincial Sales Tax

You can include as an eligible cost any portion of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) or Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) that is not refundable by Canada Revenue Agency as an input tax credit or a rebate.

The same is true for the Provincial Sales Tax (PST); the PST that is not refundable by the respective tax authority qualifies as an eligible cost.

Travel Costs

Organizations

You can include any reasonable travel expenses that are necessary for your project's performance.

In your proposal, you must document the purpose of each trip along with a breakdown of the expenses.

All travel expenses must be at economy rates for normal public transportation.

If you are using your personal automobile, the eligible travel costs will be based on a per-kilometre rate determined by the FITT trustees.

If you are using a business or commercial vehicle (such as a larger vehicle or a special purpose vehicle), you can claim the kilometre allowance that is in line with your organization's established travel policy or guidelines.

Costs for food and accommodation at the destination are also eligible. FITT will determine a rate for meals. You must keep receipts for all items except meals. Entertainment (hospitality) costs are not eligible.

Individuals

No travel costs are eligible for individuals applying to take training or retraining.

Evaluation Criteria

Your proposal will be measured against the following criteria. You do not have to meet every item, but you should consider them all when preparing your proposal.

Evaluation criteria – Organizations

The trustees will consider the following when reviewing your proposal:

1. Whether your project meets FITT's purposes, contributes to improved social and economic outcomes, and supports inclusive economic growth in the forestry and biological resources sectors.
2. How your project contributes to creating new knowledge in the forestry and biological resources sectors.
3. How much incremental benefit is created by your project as a result of funding from the trust, including potential to leverage further investment from non-provincial sources.
4. How your project considers new and innovative ways of doing things across the forestry sector.
5. How your project builds upon partnerships and collaborations among institutions, government departments and agencies, the forestry sector, foundations, and other private sector organizations, to advance FITT's purposes.
6. What impact your project will have on the forestry and biological resources sectors in Nova Scotia.
7. How you will evaluate the success of your project.
8. How your project will comply with all applicable laws, including Canada's trade obligations set out in conventions, agreements, or otherwise, and Nova Scotia's existing exemption in relation to softwood lumber.
9. How your project builds upon an eco-forestry model in private woodlots in Nova Scotia by engaging or incenting private wood-lot owners to participate in eco-forestry, builds efficiencies and/or cuts costs in the operating model, and encourages creativity in the use of equipment.

Evaluation criteria – Individuals

The trustees will consider the following when reviewing an application for funding for training or retraining:

1. Whether the educational program meets FITT's purposes.
2. Whether you have exhausted other programs and supports for education offered by both the provincial and federal governments.

Note: you cannot receive funding from FITT for training or retraining if you are receiving funding from another existing provincial or federal program.

Evaluation criteria for applicants that have previously received funds

If you have previously received funding from FITT, the trustees will consider the following when evaluating a subsequent funding request:

1. The manner in which you have used, or not used, any amounts previously received.
2. How your use of previous funding furthered (or failed to further) FITT's purposes.
3. Whether your use of any previous funding was consistent or inconsistent with FITT's purposes.

How to Complete the Application Form

Organizations

This information will guide you to fill out your application. Your application must be completed in full to be considered. Once you have completed your application, move on to How to Complete Your Project Proposal, below.

Section A) Applicant Profile

Enter the

- full legal name of your organization and operating name (if different)
- primary contacts
- type of organization (see Who Is Eligible, above, for a list of qualifying organizations)

If your project is selected for funding, you will enter into a contribution agreement with the Forestry Innovation Transition Trust and payments will be made to your organization's legal name.

Section B) Project Information

Enter the

- physical location of the project
- project name
- key stakeholders
- brief project description*
- estimated total project costs
- funding amount requested from FITT
- estimated start and completion dates

Indicate whether you are currently receiving other grant or trust funding, and whether you have made any financial or legal commitment to the project.

*This description should be brief. You will provide a more detailed project description in your project proposal which will accompany your application. See page 10 How to Complete Your Project Proposal.

Section C) Ownership

Provide the required information on the principal owners, as well any parent company, subsidiaries, and/or other related businesses.

Section D) Governance and Management

Provide the

- names of all directors/members of the board, and key management personnel
- names and contact information for professional advisors
- banking information for your financial institution

Section E) Required information and Documents

Provide copies of

- current and last three years' financial statements
- completed project proposal

Section F) Disclosures

Provide information about

- the potential environmental impact of your project
- how you will engage with Indigenous groups or communities near the project area
- 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 this project

Section G) Consent and Certification

Review the consent and certification statements.

Print your name and title and sign the application. By signing, you are confirming that all information contained in the application form is accurate and complete.

Individuals

Your application must be completed in full to be considered. You do not need to submit a proposal as an individual; once you complete your application, you are ready to apply. See page 12 How to Submit Your Application.

Section A) Applicant Profile

Enter your

- full legal name
- mailing address
- telephone and/or cell number
- email address

Section B) Description of Training Program

Provide the

- name of the institution providing the training
- name of the training program
- degree or certification issued upon successful completion of the program
- location of the program
- brief description of the program
- length of the training program (in months) and the start/end dates
- total estimated eligible costs (excluding HST) and the amount you are requesting from FITT
(See page 4 Eligible Costs)

Indicate whether you are receiving funding for this training from another source, and whether you have applied for assistance through any other provincial or federal program.

Important notes:

- FITT will only be considering training programs related to forestry or biological resources sectors
- FITT will not provide funding if you are receiving funding from an existing provincial or federal program

Section C) Employment History

Provide information, including a contact person, about your last 24 months of employment prior to making this application date.

Your past employers will be contacted to confirm employment history.

Note: you must be currently employed in the Nova Scotia forestry sector or have been employed in the industry at any time in the two years prior to making this application. If you do not meet this qualification, you will not receive FITT funding.

Section D) Consent and Certification

Review the consent and certification statements.

Print your name, then sign and date your application. By signing, you are confirming that all information contained in the application form is accurate and complete.

Note: the information you provide in the application will be shared with provincial and federal agencies and departments to confirm whether existing funding is available for the training program.

How to Complete your Project Proposal—Organizations

The following section **does not apply** to individuals. If you are an individual applying for funding for training or retraining, your application form is all you need to submit.

You must provide the following information in your project proposal. Be sure you carefully review the evaluation criteria (see page 6 Evaluation Criteria) and ensure your proposal details how your project aligns with those criteria.

Required Information

Project title: Provide a short, concise title that conveys what your proposed product/process/service will be once the project is complete.

Project summary: Provide a non-technical description (two pages maximum) of

- your proposed product/process/service
- the issues it will address
- its significance for the Nova Scotia forestry sector

Management's experience: Identify key project management members. Provide a summary of their roles and responsibilities and their experience in managing projects such as the one you are proposing.

R&D/technical team: Identify key members of the project team and provide a summary of their roles and responsibilities. For each member identified, provide a résumé (two pages maximum) of their specific expertise and experience for the work involved.

Summary of equipment and/or facilities: Provide a description of the main equipment and/or facilities required during the project. Identify any risks associated with access to these resources during the timeframe of the project.

Key collaborators: Identify your key collaborators, alliances, or other linkages relevant to the project. Describe their roles and responsibilities and include a rationale as to why they are important to the project.

Summary of work completed to date: Provide a summary of work already completed leading up to this proposal, including any technical evidence (e.g. proof of concept, supportive data, references, literature review) that support the feasibility of the proposed project. Describe the current stage of development of the proposed project.

Project schedule and milestones: Provide the project schedule for the primary project activities using a format similar to the table below.

	Activity Description	Start Date	Finish Date
1			
2			
3			
4			

Identify and describe the project’s major milestones, indicators of success, and the targeted completion dates using a format similar to the table below.

Project milestones act as markers of significant achievements over the course of your project. They measure your progress along your critical path and may span several of the project’s activities. Milestones can be related to any aspect of the project (e.g. technical, financial, management, commercialization of the resulting product/process/service).

	Major Milestone Description	Indicator of Milestone Success	Completion Date
1			
2			
3			
4			

Financial Information

The trustees will use the information you provide in this section to evaluate your financial capacity to complete the project. Make sure you disclose the total project budget and anticipated sources of funding. Provide the following information and supporting documentation:

- External financial statements for your previous three most recently completed fiscal year-ends.
- Interim financial statements if you are more than three months into your current fiscal year.
- Three-year projections starting with the current fiscal year.
- Any liability limits and insurance coverage necessary to handle environmental and other risks associated with the project.
- Project costs estimates (cash and in-kind costs) to be covered by all sources of funding. You can use a format like Table 1 (below) to present this information. Please disclose all project-related expenditures, not just those eligible for funding through FITT.
- Sources of project funding. You can use a format like Table 2 (below) to present this information. Please indicate the status of funding requests made to external partners.

Table 1: Project budget

Project Expenses (list all costs associated with the project)	Cost (\$) Net of HST
Total Project Costs	

Table 2: Project funding sources

Project Funding Summary	Amount of Funding	Status of funding
Applicant(s) contribution		
Support from industry		
Support from other sources (specify)		
Support from FITT		
Total Project Funding		

How to Submit your Application and Proposal

Organizations and Individuals

Physical copies of applications and supporting documentation will not be accepted.

Submit your application and proposal, including any supporting documents, one of two ways:

1. Email to FITT@novascotia.ca

You will receive a confirmation of receipt within two business days.

2. USB drive

Deliver the USB drive in person to the address below, or mail it using traceable delivery (registered mail or courier).

Ensure the USB drive is password protected. Send the security information to FITT@novascotia.ca

Nova Scotia Department of Inclusive Economic Growth
 Attention: Forestry Innovation Transition Trust Secretariat
 c/o Forestry Innovation Transition Trust
 1809 Barrington Street (CIBC Building), Suite M103
 Halifax, Nova Scotia
 Canada B3J 3K8

You will receive a confirmation of receipt within two business days.