

Mineral Resources Development Fund 2019–2020

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Introduction

The Nova Scotia Mineral Resources Development Fund (MRDF) was established in 2018 as a replacement for the Nova Scotia Mineral Incentive Program, which operated from 2012 to 2017. The goal of program is to promote and increase mineral exploration and development in Nova Scotia. The program is administered by the Geoscience and Mines Branch of the Nova Scotia Department of Energy and Mines, and features funding streams for grass-roots mineral exploration, shared funding, innovation, education and outreach, marketing, post-secondary research, and major projects.

This report provides an overview of the 2019–2020 fiscal year of the MRDF with an emphasis on the value achieved through the grants provided for mineral exploration.

Program Funding

The MRDF had a budget of \$1,500,000 for the 2019-20 fiscal year, an \$800,000 increase compared to the 2018–2019 budget. This increase in funding allowed us to significantly increase the number of projects we were able to support.

One of the main objectives of the MRDF is to support prospectors and exploration companies in their efforts to find new mineral deposits and to advance existing projects closer to production. The Department's commitment to achieving this goal is demonstrated when examining how the funds were distributed amongst the various streams. Twenty Prospecting and Exploration grants supporting grass-roots exploration activities and totaling \$335,100 were approved this fiscal year. The Shared Funding stream saw a large increase in terms of both the number of grants issued and amount of funds awarded compared to last year. Ten Shared Funding projects totaling \$426,800 were funded, bring the total amount of funding awarded to prospectors and exploration companies to \$761,900.

Prospectors are also able to apply for funds under the Marketing stream which enables them to travel

to industry events, such as the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada convention in Toronto or the Mineral Exploration Roundup in Vancouver. A number of prospectors took advantage of this opportunity and scheduled meetings with exploration companies who have the potential to bring investment to Nova Scotia.

The Mining Association of Nova Scotia was awarded \$50,000 under the Tier 2 Marketing stream to host the Nova Scotia Gold Show. The goal of this conference was to provide a venue for exploration companies, prospectors, and investors to gather and learn about opportunities to explore and invest in our province.

The Mining Association was also issued an Education, Outreach, and Engagement grant totaling \$36,900 to host two educational seminars that stakeholders could attend to learn about industry best practices and environmental management.

Two Major Project grants totaling \$81,000 were awarded in 2019–2020. The Mineral Research Association of Nova Scotia (MRANS) was awarded \$66,000 in funding to locate an economically viable gypsum deposit in the Musquodoboit Valley. Acadia University was awarded the remaining \$15,000 to process and interpret a wide-angle seismic refraction data profile which extends from southwest Nova Scotia to the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

There were six Post-secondary Research grants issued in 2019–2020 amounting to \$204,400. The research performed in these studies has the potential to find new mineral deposits and develop new or more efficient methods of processing minerals.

Finally, two Innovation grants totaling \$165,000 were issued this year. Christa Brousseau and Robert Singer of Saint Mary's University were granted \$105,000 to research cyanide-free gold recovery. Allied Foam Tech was awarded \$60,000 to manufacture new, innovative products using Nova Scotia gypsum.