

2026-27 Nova Scotia Mineral Resources Development Fund (MRDF) Tier 2 Shared-Funding Exploration Grant

A Tier 2 Shared-Funding Exploration Grant is available to applicants who commit to investing more than \$40,000 in mineral exploration and development in Nova Scotia. The Grant will match or partially match the applicant's exploration investments and will provide awards between \$40,000 and \$100,000 for eligible expenses.

- Applicants are permitted to apply for a grant on more than one exploration licence.
- A grant may be applied to several exploration properties, provided all properties are under licence to the applicant and that the work to be done on each property is described separately on the application form. Agreements with other licence holders need to be submitted with the application.
- The grants will be matched at different rates, dependent on the stage of the project.
- Projects at exploration stage will be matched at 50%.

Eligibility

- The classification of the projects as exploration or advanced exploration/project development will be determined by Natural Resources (the Department).
- Applicants must be holders or in a registered agreement with the holder of valid licenses under the Mineral Resources Act. Where the applicant is not the licensee, the applicant must demonstrate that a Summary of Agreement(s) has been registered with the Registry of Mineral and Petroleum Titles, which clearly indicates the applicant has a valid exploration agreement(s) with the respective license holder(s). Any agreement(s) in place must accompany the application.
- Applicants for active license(s) held by a company (non-living individual) must be the registered signing officer or registered agent that is recorded in the online registry system NovaROC. Registered agents may be required to be authorized in NovaROC for reporting of

assessment work and filing of required permits (drilling notification, excavation registration, etc.). Companies must be registered to do business in Nova Scotia or be funding the work program on claims that have been optioned or joint-ventured. Where the applicant is not a registered agent (as defined above) but is a living individual who is signing on behalf of the licence holder(s), the applicant is required to submit written authorization(s) from the licence holder(s).

- The applicant must have fulfilled all commitments for any previous grants from the MRDF or the Nova Scotia Mineral Incentive Program. The applicant and/or the rights holder(s) is/are required to adhere to the Mineral Resources Act and Regulations, and all other applicable government acts and regulations. Failure to comply may render an applicant ineligible for future applications.
- Companies applying shall be registered and in good standing with the Registry of Joint Stock Companies, as per the Companies Act, to carry on business in Nova Scotia. Companies shall have an agent in the province if the company does not have a presence in the province upon which legal services can be made.
- Geoscience is a regulated profession in Nova Scotia, and the Geoscience Profession Act requires individuals and companies who offer, provide, or undertake geoscience in the province to be registered. Therefore, all Geoscientists and Companies that receive MRDF grants must be registered with the Geoscientists Nova Scotia. Also, individuals who are awarded MRDF grants are required to confirm association registration for any hired geoscience contractors.
- All correspondence with respect to MRDF grants must be communicated through mrdf@novascotia.ca only. Please note in the Subject Line of the e-mail the full grant number, i.e. MRDF-2026-SF-01 in all correspondence.
- A signed and dated Application Form and Application Checklist MUST be included with the application.
- Applicants must list all the necessary permitting required in the application.
- Applicants must provide copies of existing Crown land access permits. Copies of Crown land access permits must be provided prior to the commencement of the approved work program and received by the department no later than the preliminary report deadline (by 4.00pm on Tuesday, July 21st, 2026).
- Grantees are required to track expenses related to MRDF-funded components of their exploration programs, and to submit expenses and required MRDF reports. Any changes to the proposed budget or work proposal must be submitted by e-mail to mrdf@novascotia.ca only, and the MRDF Administrator's approval returned by e-mail. Failure to do so will mean

work related to those changes may not qualify for reimbursement. Grantees must work within all applicable federal and provincial acts and regulations.

- Grantees shall keep and preserve all books, accounts, and records relating to the MRDF grant and keep them available for examination and audit by the Minister of Natural Resources 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 at all times indemnify and save harmless the Government of Nova Scotia and the Minister of Natural Resources from and against all claims, demands, losses, costs, damages, actions, suits, and other proceedings, howsoever made, sustained, brought, or attributable to performance, part-performance or non-performance by the recipient, its servants, agents, workers, or employees, in carrying out the project or any of the provisions of these guidelines. This includes any environmental liabilities relating to any lands and watercourses, which liabilities may reasonably be inferred to be a result of the conduct of the Grantee.

Eligible Work and Expenses

All costs over \$5,000 require a reasonable estimate included at the time of application unless this requirement is waived by the Department. Detailed quotes are not required for approval at the time of application; however, if awarded a grant, funds will not be disbursed until three detailed quotes are received. Exceptions may be considered where there is a lack of available contractors for that specific proposed activity, or in the local area where the work is being carried out. The request for an exemption for providing three quotes on a cost over \$5,000 must be in the application form. If requesting sole source contracting, please include the reason for choosing the contractor. Three quotes are NOT required for laboratory analyses.

Eligible work includes, but is not limited to:

Exploration activities including, but not limited to:

- trenching
- core drilling or other drilling, reclamation, and associated mobilization costs
- location surveying by a licensed surveyor
- site preparation and line cutting

Advanced project development activities including, but not limited to:

- bulk sampling
- metallurgical work
- acid rock drainage drilling/sampling
- geotechnical drilling/sampling

- monitoring well drilling
- engineering/technical work to advance project toward development

Other eligible expenses, including:

- wages of one casual worker to assist with exploration activities such as drill core moving and cutting, sample preparation, channel sampling, geophysical surveying or other activities approved by the department in the Contribution Agreement. This work must be conducted under the supervision of the grantee or their geological contractor.
- GIS analysis, digital cartography, and 3D modelling
- sample analyses or mineral processing test costs
- contracted geophysical and geochemical surveys
- the hiring of a subject matter expert required to work on the project. Please include this information in the application under contractors to be considered and include the curriculum vitae (resumé) of the subject matter expert with the application.
- community and/or Indigenous engagement. This can include professional services to hire a consultant. If the proposed cost of the engagement is over \$1,000, a cost breakdown must be submitted with the application.
- digital compilation, digitization, and re-interpretation of historical or legacy data
- costs for hiring a consultant to carry out environmental surveys required to carry out the exploration program
- other exploration and development activities that have been pre-approved by the department before the activities are initiated.

Please note that a grant contribution agreement (to be signed and returned by the grantee) will state the approved expenditures. Expenses that are not pre-approved by the department will not be reimbursed

OPTIONAL: If the grantee is not a Professional Geoscientist (P.Geo) and does not have one employed, they are encouraged to hire a P.Geo to ensure work is conducted to CIM standards <https://mrmr.cim.org/en/practice-guidelines/exploration/> Additional funds up to \$2,500 will be granted to cover this expense.

The maximum Daily Rate covered by Shared Funding Grants for the hiring of a geological/geophysical consultant is \$500/day.

Eligible work and expenditures for MRDF differ from what is accepted for an Assessment Report, MRR Section 31. While utilizing the same format, final MRDF reports and Assessment Reports are subject to distinct reviews and approval processes.

Ineligible Expenses

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- transportation costs (excluding heavy equipment mobilization and demobilization),
- security bond required for Crown land access permitting,

- accommodations and meals,
- staff wages, with the exception of one casual worker or student,
- vehicle rental(s),
- field camp rental(s),
- wage(s) of applicant(s) or anyone with a vested interest in the property,
- costs related to acquiring, recording, grouping, renewing, transferring or maintaining an interest in a mineral property (licence and tenure management costs, i.e., NovaRoc fees),
- capital purchases,
- expenses not approved in the signed grant contribution agreement,
- Harmonized Sales Tax (HST). HST is excluded as an eligible grant expense for applicants eligible for federal government reimbursement of the tax.

Application Procedure

Applications must be submitted using the application form provided to the department at mrdf@novascotia.ca by no later than 4:00 pm, Monday June 22nd, 2026. Proposals must be accompanied by a completed Shared Funding Grant Summary Page (found on MRDF webpage). Please study the Terms and Conditions carefully before the application is submitted. Omission of critical information may lead to an application being unsuccessful.

Budgetary breakdowns must include hourly or daily rates, cost per sample, cost per metre, or equivalent.

Nova Scotia.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.

Application Review and Evaluation

Applications will be evaluated by the department based on:

- the completeness of the application and inclusion of ALL required documentation with a signed checklist,
- the applicant's access to the expertise required to complete the project,
- the organization, supporting information and clarity of the proposal,
- the geological merit of the proposal, including whether the exploration plan is well-conceived and likely to achieve the stated goals of the exploration program,
- whether the applicant demonstrates that the proposed work will advance the property closer to NI 43-101 compliance and/or development,
- the alignment of the budget to reasonable industry standards for expenditures,

- past performance of the applicant, if they have received previous Nova Scotia Mineral Incentive Program (NSMIP) or Mineral Resources Development Fund (MRDF) grants.
- Extra credit will be given for proposals that include new and/or innovative exploration ideas or approaches.

Failure to include key information at the time of submission may result in an application not meeting the scoring requirements to be eligible for funding.

Successful applicants will receive a grant Contribution Agreement (to be signed by the applicant) confirming that their project has been approved and listing the expenses that will be eligible under the MRDF. Only approved expenses incurred starting April 1, 2026, will be eligible for reimbursement under the MRDF.

Fund Disbursement

- Sixty percent (60%) of the MRDF grant will be awarded when the application is approved and the remaining forty percent (40%) 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, 2026.
- Failure to submit the complete Final Report by the required deadline may 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.
- Upon completion of a project, unspent funds can be re-allocated at the discretion of the department in consultation with the MRDF Review and Evaluation Committee.

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 Preliminary, First Interim and Second Interim Reports are to be an e-mail to mrdf@novascotia.ca, noting in the body of the e-mail the specific information requested for each report. Please do not send a detailed report as a PDF, as that is not needed until you submit the Final Report.

Preliminary Report

Grantees are required to e-mail a Preliminary Report to the department at mrdf@novascotia.ca no later than 4:00 pm, Tuesday, July 21, 2026. The purpose of this report is to confirm that funding is in hand or has been arranged, that land access has been cleared with property owners, application for Crown land access has been submitted and that contractors have been engaged to complete the work in a timely manner.

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, Monday, September 28, 2026. The report must be an e-mail to the coordinator 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 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, Monday, November 23 2026, providing an update on the status and progress of the project.
- Grantees must provide an update on progress towards completion of the Final Report.
- 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 to mrdf@novascotia.ca only no later than 4:00 pm, Tuesday, February 16, 2027.

- The Final Report must be complete when submitted, complying fully with what is required, as stated in this section, and should follow the format for a Technical Report used for the Reporting of Assessment work under the Mineral Resources Regulations Section 37. While using the same format, MRDF final reports and Technical reports submitted for Assessment work are subject to distinct reviews and approval processes.
- The Final Report must include a clear statement of only eligible MRDF costs and paid receipts totaling 100% of grant funding. 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, 2026. The report must include the completed Shared Funding Grant Expense Form. The receipts must have a zero balance, or the bill must be signed and dated by the vendor as paid.
- The report must include the completed Shared Grant Expense Form. New – Please make sure that the Final Report Expense Form and receipts are submitted separately and not embedded in the Final Report.
- Please make sure that work submitted to be reimbursed under the MRDF is allowable under the grant contribution agreement.
- Wire transfers are not acceptable as proof of payment. Proof of payment can include: 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. For proof of payment of land access from landowners, please contact the MRDF Administrator directly. The MRDF Administrator may ask for additional proof of expenditures, and the grantee shall comply with this request.
- If the grant involves a casual worker, the report must include a detailed description of their duties.
- Please make sure that work submitted to be reimbursed under the MRDF is allowable under the grant contribution agreement.
- All data must be conveyed electronically. The Final Report must be a PDF with all components (e.g., figures, assay information, etc.) in one file, as all Mineral Resource Development Fund grant reports will be published as Open File Reports after two years. Datasets that cannot be reasonably added to a PDF file can be sent as separate files.
- If drilling, geochemical, or geophysical work was funded as part of the grant, this work must be included in the Final Report and follow the reporting requirements as noted in the Mineral Resources Regulations. If assays or analytical results are reported in the report, a description of the analytical methods, indicated detection limits, and clearly legible and signed copies of the certified laboratory reports must be included as appendices.

- Maps must clearly show location of completed work, claim boundaries, and include an index map showing approximate location of the project area in the province. Maps must be submitted at an appropriate scale, clearly showing detailed geology, legends, structural data, relevant geophysical/geochemical data, and previous drill collar locations (including longitudinal sections if applicable).
- 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 only. Receipt of the Final Report and any additional data will be confirmed by the department by e-mail, before expenses can be reimbursed.
- In the Claims section of the Final Report, please list the claims applied for in the application, not what the current claim holdings are.
- The locations of all samples analyzed, trenches, drillholes, and other exploratory work that pertains to the grant must be provided in an acceptable digital format (spreadsheet or database file) using UTM NAD 83 projection and datum co-ordinates. This information must also be included in the Final Report. NEW – We require pictures of the diamond drill hole final casing before it is removed (georeferenced), and also of the hole when cemented.
- The results of any surveys (e.g., geochemical, geophysical, lidar) carried out as part of the grant must be included in the report as digital maps, and the data associated with these surveys must be provided in an acceptable digital format, georeferenced to UTM NAD 83 projection and datum.
- 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. Final Reports are kept confidential for two years. Final Reports will be released by the department after two years. Grantees may request an early release of their reports by sending an e-mail request to mrdf@novascotia.ca, who will acknowledge receipt of the request.
- Please ensure the Final Report and media releases acknowledge that the project was supported by the MRDF.
- 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. Grantees 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.

Notes

- Any changes to the proposed budget or work proposal must be submitted by e-mail to mrdf@novascotia.ca only and MRDF Administrator's approval returned by email. Failure to do so may mean work related to those changes will not qualify for reimbursement.
- 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. If the grantee requires a change in project scope, they must request this to the MRDF Administrator by email and receive the MRDF Administrator's approval returned by e-mail.
- Grantees will be required to demonstrate fiscal responsibility while managing MRDF funds.