

*Mineral Resources Development Fund
Advisory Council*

Terms of Reference

1.0 Purpose of the Advisory Council

The purpose of the Advisory Council (the Council) is to provide non-binding strategic advice, guidance and recommendations to the Minister of Natural Resources (the Minister) regarding the structure, effectiveness, ongoing and future administration of the Mineral Resources Development Fund (the Fund). The Council may be assigned responsibilities at the discretion of the Minister including, but not limited to, advice and direction regarding potential Major Projects which may be supported by the Fund, and the preparation of reports as may be required.

The Council will not have authority to govern, administer nor issue binding directives on how the Fund is to be managed and/or structured. The Council will have no responsibilities nor authority to review funding applications nor make recommendations regarding grant applications nor grant recipients. The Council and individual Council members may not be part of any grant application review process.

The Minister may, from time to time, direct questions to the Council for their consideration.

Responsibilities of the Council are further described in Section 5.

2.0 Membership

The Council will be nominated by the Minister. The Council will be comprised of five members with nominees from each of the following:

- The Mining Association of Nova Scotia (1 representative)
- The Mining Society of Nova Scotia (1 representative)
- The Prospectors Association of Nova Scotia (1 representative)
- A Nova Scotia university having a geology and/or mining engineering department (1 representative)

The organizations will nominate their Council member to the Minister. Nominations must be accompanied by a brief resume which highlights the nominee's knowledge of Nova Scotia's mineral industry, the objectives of the Fund, and commitment to serve on the Council.

The fifth member of the Council will be nominated by the Minister. The Minister will base their selection on the knowledge and experience of the nominee in the mineral industry in Nova Scotia or in Canada, and in the goals and administration of the Fund. The Minister's nominee to the Council will not be an employee of the Department of Natural Resources (the Department).

Council members will have a two-year term of service. Terms of service may be extended by the Minister but may not exceed 3 consecutive years.

A Council Chairperson (the Chair) will be selected annually by the Council members from within the existing Council membership. Other working methods and internal governance of the Council are described in Section 6.

Employees of the Department are not permitted to serve on the Council. However, Department staff may be asked by the Council to attend Council meetings to make presentations, answer questions related to the Fund, to sit as observers, or provide reasonable administrative support.

3.0 Council Support

The Department will provide reasonable administrative support for Council activities. However, the Council is not responsible for direct supervision of Department staff who may provide administrative support. The Chair will make a request for administrative support to the Executive Director of the Geoscience and Mines Branch (Executive Director) of the Department.

Where administrative support is provided by the Department, the Chair, Council members and Department staff must understand that staff are employed by and accountable to the Department, and that the Values, Ethics and Conduct Code for Nova Scotia's Public Servants, policies and legislation applicable to civil servants applies equally to Council members.

A meeting space will be provided to the Council by the Department as requested by the Chair. The Council may make an annual budget request to the Executive Director. The budget is intended to cover any reasonable, forecast administrative and travel costs incurred by the Council. The Council's annual budget, which will be approved by the Executive Director, will be covered by the Fund.

The Fund will support reasonable travel expenses incurred by Council members to carry out Council activities. All travel requests by Council members must be approved by the Executive Director in advance of the travel. The Council members must follow travel and travel expense rules defined within the Government of Nova Scotia's travel policy (reference: <https://novascotia.ca/treasuryboard/manuals/PDF/200/22601-06.pdf>).

4.0 Reporting Structure and Accountability

The Council will report to the Minister in writing on an annual basis. (See Section 6.4) The annual report will normally be submitted to the Minister by March 31.

5.0 Responsibilities

The Council is responsible for reviewing ongoing and future administration of the Fund. The Council may review aspects of the Fund including but not limited to: i) the funding streams (e.g., terms and conditions, adding/removing/modifying streams), ii) the Department's administration of the fund (e.g., the application process, the funding decision-making process, reporting requirements of grantees, etc.), iii) promotion of the Fund, iv) the Department's engagement process with industry regarding the Fund, v) developing and evaluating Fund metrics, and vi) providing recommendations and options regarding specific projects and/or types of projects that may be supported by the Major Projects funding stream.

6.0 Working Methods

6.1 Internal Governance

Following guidance provided by the Chair, the Council shall develop their own internal governance processes.

6.2 Meeting Schedule and Agenda

The Chair will schedule Council meetings. Meetings should be held at least twice a year. Extraordinary Council meetings may be held on as needed basis. Meetings may occur as face-to-face meetings, teleconferences, or electronic/web-based meetings as appropriate.

The meeting agendas will be drafted by the Chair, and shared with Council members and the Executive Director at least one week in advance of meetings.

6.3 Attendance

Meetings should be scheduled to include as many Council members as possible. Meetings should include at least 3 members.

Other people may be invited to meetings by the Chair for information sharing.

6.4 Deliverables

The principal deliverable from the Council will be an annual, written report to the Minister. The report will include the Council's annual review of the Fund, their

recommendations and advice on the Fund's future operation, activities of the Council and the Council's annual budget. The annual report will normally be submitted to the Minister by March 31.

The Advisory Council's annual report to the Minister, as well as all other Council deliverables, are the property of the Minister.

6.5 Dissenting Views

Where dissenting views exist amongst the members of the Council and they are unable to agree as to the advice that should be provided to the Minister, the advice provided in the Council's annual report should include a brief description of dissenting viewpoints and reasons for them.

6.6 Confidentiality

In general, and unless meetings of the Council are for purposes of engagement with the mineral industry or academia, the deliberations and working documents of the Council should be confidential to enable Council members to speak frankly and openly. Council members may share information with the organizations they represent with the express agreement of Council members. The Minister and Department should be consulted prior to sharing information of a sensitive nature.

Council members will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

6.7 Communication

The Chair is responsible for speaking on behalf of the Council. Plans for communication with stakeholders from the mineral industry and academia, the media, social media or with civil society should be vetted through the Department or the Minister.

7.0 Lifespan

The terms of reference for the Council shall be reviewed by the Minister at least once every 5 years.