

Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership

Competitive. Innovative. Resilient.

Market Opportunities and Diversification Program Guidelines

2026-2027



Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership

The Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership is a 5-year, \$3.5-billion investment by federal, provincial and territorial governments to strengthen competitiveness, innovation, and resiliency of Canada's agriculture, agri-food, and agri-based products sector. This includes \$1 billion in federal programs and activities and a \$2.5-billion commitment that is cost-shared 60% federally and 40% provincially/territorially for programs that are designed and delivered by provinces and territories.

In Nova Scotia, \$46 million will be invested through a federal-provincial partnership that is linked to five program streams: 1) Building Sector Capacity, Growth and Competitiveness; 2) Climate Change and Environment; 3) Market Development and Trade; 4) Science, Research, and Innovation; and 5) Resiliency and Public Trust.

We are also committed to the development of diverse and inclusive industries. We welcome individuals from all underrepresented and underserved communities including but not limited to women, persons with disabilities, Black and African Nova Scotians, Mi'kmaq, Indigenous peoples, 2SLGBTQI+ and racialized individuals to apply to programming.

Program Objective

The objective of the Market Opportunities and Diversification Program supports local and export marketing activities that enable eligible producers, processors, and industry associations to:

- Determine the necessary product and packaging modifications required to meet specific export market requirements and preferences.
- Undertake marketing activities to meet changing requirements or emerging opportunities in domestic and export markets.

Eligible Applicants

Stream 1:

- Agricultural industry associations

Streams 2 and 3:

- Registered Farms
- Mi'kmaq conducting farming activities in Mi'kmaw communities
- Agri-businesses
- Agricultural industry associations

Program Criteria

Farms must:

- be currently registered under the *Farm Registration Act*.
- be actively farming in the program year and the applicant must be 19 years of age or older.
- generate an annual eligible gross farming income of \$30,000 or more. The eligible farming income will be based on the Farm Registration income level.

Agricultural industry associations must:

- demonstrate not-for-profit status by providing documentation
- represents identifiable Nova Scotia agriculture and agri-food products (see note below).

Agri-businesses must:

- represent identifiable Nova Scotia agriculture and agri-food products (see note below).
- generate an annual eligible gross income of \$30,000 or more based on 2025 T2 Corporation Income Tax Return and/or internal Income Statement; 2024 documentation will be accepted if 2025 taxes have not yet been filed.
- use the table below to show proof of purchase of a certain level of local ingredients based on their income level.
 - example: An eligible applicant has \$55,000 in income, based on the table below they will need to show proof of \$10,000 in local inputs.

Proof of local ingredients:

Income Level	Minimum annual purchases of raw agricultural ingredients
\$30,000 - \$49,999	\$5,000
\$50,000 - \$99,999	\$10,000
\$100,000+	\$25,000

Note: Identifiable agriculture and agri-food products are products supporting economic growth using Nova Scotia primary agricultural ingredients.

Financial Assistance

Applicants can apply to receive Program funding up to **50%** of eligible expenses, to a maximum of **\$20,000**, across all streams. The maximum an applicant can receive over the life of the Sustainable CAP Program (2023-2028) is **\$60,000**.

Program funding for farms and agri-businesses will be based on the 3 levels below. Agricultural industry associations can apply for a maximum of \$20,000/year.

Income Level	Maximum Funding/Year
\$30,000 - \$99,999	\$5,000
\$100,000 - \$249,999	\$10,000
\$250,000+	\$20,000

Note: This program is anticipated to be offered again in 2027-28. However, programs may be modified or discontinued based on budget availability, industry feedback, and government priorities.

Note 2: Quotes are required for all projects under this program and must be provided with the application.

Eligible Expenses

The following items are eligible in this program:

Stream 1: International Market Studies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conducting in-market research, planning, and study preparation to determine if there is demand for the product(s) in new export markets (outside of Canada). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ includes identifying key data such as market potential, cultural and consumer preferences, competition, regulatory requirements, pricing strategy, distribution and logistics, risk assessment, and potential partnerships.
Stream 2: Digital Marketing Activities (Local and International Markets)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • website development (one-time cost) – no monthly fees or subscriptions • website updates – customizations for new market requirements • e-commerce • digital marketing activities for new target markets • graphic design for product labels, packaging • graphic design for marketing materials (no printing or purchasing of packaging) • design for trade show booth materials • product photography and video
Stream 3: International Trade Events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consolidated product sample shipping costs including logistical support. <p>Note: International Trade Events are being coordinated through the Department of Agriculture Marketing Division. Please contact info@nsfoodbeverageexports.com for more information.</p>

Additional Expense Eligibility Requirements

Program funding will only be offered on transactions (invoices) that do not involve a supplier/service provider that is associated with the applicant, unless it is proven that an associated supplier/service provider is the only registered company providing that service in the area. In such cases that it is necessary to proceed with an associated supplier/service provider, the applicant must apply for a pre-approval from Programs before proceeding to ensure that the associated costs will be approved for reimbursement.

Ineligible Expenses

Ineligible expenses are expenses that will not be compensated under this program and include but are not limited to, the following expenses:

- travel expenses
- administrative/general overhead
- purchase of ongoing software licensing costs or fees
- purchase of standard software programs
- operating expenses/existing staff wages/salaries
- printing/packaging costs
- HST

Application Process

To apply for the Market Opportunities and Diversification program:

- Submit a complete application by **May 31, 2026**.

Application Intake	Activity Period	Claim Deadline
April 1, 2026 – May 31, 2026	April 1, 2026 – February 28, 2027	February 28, 2027

Note: An applicant may only complete one application per year for this program.

Note 2: Applicants new to Programs since 2023 must complete the Program Funding Registration (PFR) form. Returning applicants must update the form as needed with any changes to business information including contact information, structure, commodities, environmental farm plan and Premise ID.

Approval Process

1. Complete applications will be reviewed by the Department of Agriculture as they are received.
2. If approved, applicants will receive a **Letter of Agreement (LOA)** that identifies the Program funding offered and the terms and conditions under which Program funding is approved.
3. The applicant is responsible for reporting any errors in the LOA, including the program funding amounts provided.
4. The applicant must review, sign and return the LOA to Programs within **30 days** of the date of the LOA or the Program funding will be forfeited.

Note: Approval of applications is subject to availability of Program funding. The total amount of Program funding awarded to each applicant, or to associated applicants, may be limited at the discretion of the Department of Agriculture to ensure opportunities for additional applicants to access Program funding.

Claiming Process

A **Program Claim Form** will be sent to the applicant after the signed LOA is received.

To submit a claim, applicants must:

1. Complete and sign the Program Claim Form.
2. Attach copies of all invoices for eligible project costs which they have incurred and paid for.
3. Attach proof of payment for each invoice – e.g. e-transfer confirmation, debit slips, cleared cheques, or credit card/bank statements. (Invoices marked paid and signed by the supplier are not accepted).
4. Submit the claim with the required supporting documentation to the Programs office by **February 28, 2027**.

Note: No payment will be made for claims under \$20.00.

Authority

The Department of Agriculture shall have the authority to deny an application if it does not meet the requirements described in the Program Guidelines or there is evidence of misrepresentation of pertinent information.

Evaluation and Audit

Evaluation and audit of projects may be carried out by the Department of Agriculture, Government of Canada, or other parties chosen by the Department of Agriculture for the purpose of audit, analysis, evaluation, program development and determining financial assistance. This review and evaluation process may be conducted prior to project commencement, during work and/or upon project completion. Applicants may be asked to complete an evaluation survey related to their final claim.

Conflict of Interest

No current or former Federal public servant or public office holders will receive benefits from this funding except in compliance with Conflicts of Interest Act (Canada), the Conflicts of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons, or the Federal “Values and Ethics Code” for the public sector and the Federal “Policy on Conflicts of Interest and Post-Employment”. No Member of Parliament or Senator will be allowed to obtain financial benefit from this funding except in accordance with the Parliament of Canada Act.

Contact Information

Submit all documents to Programs at the address or email below. For more information, contact Programs or your regional office.

Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture

Programs Office

74 Research Drive

Bible Hill, Nova Scotia B6L 2R2

Telephone: 902-893-6377

Toll Free: 1-866-844-4276

Email: prm@novascotia.ca

Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture Regional Offices		
Western (Covering West Hants, Kings, Annapolis, Digby, Yarmouth, Shelburne, Queens, and Lunenburg counties)	Yarmouth	902-223-8085
	Digby	902-638-2395
	Kentville	902-679-6021
	Lunenburg	902-634-7575
Eastern (Covering Colchester, Cumberland, East Hants, Halifax - including HRM, Pictou, Antigonish, Guysborough, Richmond, Inverness, Cape Breton, and Victoria counties)	Truro	902-893-6575
	Nappan	782-370-2278
	Antigonish	902-863-7180
	Sydney	902-563-2000