

Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership

Competitive. Innovative. Resilient.

Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program Guidelines

2024-2025



Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership

The Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP) is a five-year (2023-2028), \$3.5-billion investment by federal-provincial and territorial governments to strengthen competitiveness, innovation, and resiliency of the agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products sector. This includes \$1 billion in federal programs and activities and \$2.5 billion in cost-shared programs and activities by federal, provincial and territorial governments.

In Nova Scotia, \$46 million will be invested through a federal-provincial partnership that is linked to five priority areas: 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 support the development of diverse and inclusive industries. We welcome individuals from all equity-deserving 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 Objectives

The objective of the Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program is to increase the environmental resiliency of agricultural landscapes by accelerating the adoption of on-farm land use and management practices that maximum provisions of multiple ecological goods and services (EG&S). Ecological goods and services are the benefits society derives from healthy functioning ecosystems. This includes the maintenance and provision of healthy soil and water resources, wildlife habitat and biodiversity, as well as adapting to the impacts of climate change (e.g. increasing carbon storage and resilience to floods and droughts).

Specific outcomes for this program include:

- GHG reductions
- Improved soil health
- Increased conservation and restoration of critical wildlife habitat
- Strengthened resilience of agricultural lands
- Improved water quality

Projects must provide an incremental benefit in ecological goods and services.

Eligibility

Applicants

- Currently registered in the correct income category under the Farm Registration Act
- Registered landowner on the current Certificate of Title or Deed to the land; or
- Be entitled to become the registered landowner on Certificate of Title or Deed to the land under a contract, court order or any other legal instrument; or
- Have an agreement of purchase and sale under the Veterans' Land Act; or
- Have a valid land rental agreement (or lease agreement for agricultural Crown Lands) to manage land for the relevant term of the project, and acknowledgement from the registered Landowner; or
- Be Indigenous (Mi'kmaq, Métis Nation, Inuit): A Mi'kmaq, Métis Nation or Inuit single person or a Mi'kmaq, Métis Nation or Inuit organization managing agricultural land. For example, be a Mi'kmaq Peoples in lawful possession of farmland under subsections 20(1), 20(2), or 20(3) of the *Indian Act*, or be a Mi'kmaq Band meeting these preceding conditions with an interest in farmland within the meaning of the *Indian Act*; or
- Demonstrates not-for-profit status by providing documentation with land committed from members; or
- Be a delivery Agent, who is acting on behalf of several individual producers and landowners who qualify as an eligible applicant within the above section, and who are working on lands listed as eligible lands. Delivery agents will be identified on a case-by-case basis through the FPT bilateral process.

Agri-environmental Risk Assessment

- Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) (current within 5 years or in process)

Eligible Lands:

- Privately owned farmland, including all managed lands for agricultural production (e.g., crop land, grazing, orchards, etc.), as well as associated wetlands, woodlots, yard sites, associated with farm entities/operations.
- Land rented for agricultural production from another private third party;
- Federal, Provincial, Municipal, or Territorial Crown Land, under lease for the purpose of agricultural practices; and
- Indigenous lands being managed for the purpose of agricultural production.

Land Use Agreement

The Land Use Agreement (LUA) will identify the agreed upon lands and activities to be undertaken, as well as identify the payment / compensation method and details. For Nova Scotia producers, a Land Use Agreement will be issued for a minimum of five years and in some cases ten years from the date on the signed agreement. Activities undertaken on rented lands should include acknowledgement by landowners, while compensation payments can be delivered to land renters implementing and maintaining the project or the landowner, depending on specific arrangements between land manager and owner.

Financial Assistance

Program funding will be allocated according to each stream. All payments will be made in year 1 of the issued agreement unless specified. See detailed streams below.

	Funding Details	Maximum Assistance
Stream 1: Reduced Tillage	\$200/acre OR 50% cost share up to the maximum*	\$30,000
	\$40/acre for limestone up to the maximum	\$4,000
Stream 2: Pollinator Habitat <i>On cropland ONLY</i>	\$600/acre for areas over 0.5 acres.	\$10,000
Stream 4: Buffers and Shelterbelts <i>Smaller acreages for buffers and margins will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.</i>	100% of the establishment costs up to \$1,500/acre for creating or widening of buffers. Signing a 10-year agreement: land-rent payment of \$5,000/acre for Riparian Buffers ONLY.	Case-by-case basis

*Projects will be approved on the lessor of \$200/acre converted to reduced tillage or 50% cost share up to \$30,000.

Note 1: This program is anticipated to be offered again in 2025-26, 2026-27 and 2027-28. However, programs may be modified or discontinued based on budget availability, industry feedback, and government priorities.

Note 2: No more than 100% of non-repayable funding can be received for any eligible project cost incurred and paid for by the applicant. This applies to all Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture Programs.

Note 3: Quotes are required for reduced tillage equipment and must be provided with the application.

Eligible Project List

Stream 1: Reduced Tillage
<p>Description</p> <p>An agricultural management approach that aims to minimize the frequency or intensity of tillage operations to promote economic and environmental benefits. Includes zero tillage, reduced tillage and strip tillage.</p> <p>The objective of the Reduced Tillage stream includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improved soil and water quality, carbon sequestration, climate change adaptation, biodiversity, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. • increased crop yield associated with moisture conservation, reduced erosion, improved soil organic matter, and better management of nutrients, crop residue, and pests; • reduced labour and equipment costs associated with doing less tillage.
<p>Eligible Expenses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeding and post seeding implements for low disturbance placement of seed and fertilizer for transition to reduced or zero tillage (equipment purchase). • Limestone as a one-time support payment to help establish a reduced tillage system. This is only eligible if you are purchasing a piece of equipment for transition to reduced or zero tillage.
<p>Additional Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers must show a 3-year cropping plan indicating reduced tillage. • Limestone funding contingent on implementing reduced till practices and acres reported converted to reduced till. • Involvement in cover crop rotation that supports reduced tillage. • Equipment or items funded or eligible to be funded under On-Farm Climate Action Fund will not be eligible.

Stream 2: Pollinator Habitat

Description

Promoting pollinator habitat supports climate change adaptation, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity. The objective of the pollinator habitat stream includes:

- Improved pollination service provided by wild (unmanaged) and managed bees by: a) Increasing floral diversity and ensuring continuous and diverse bloom; b) Increasing undisturbed habitat/ground; c) Increasing nesting opportunities for tunnel-nesting bees; and d) Providing pollinator refugia.
- Increased abundance of beneficial insects and host plants important for pest management.
- Improved cost efficiency (e.g., removal of marginal crop land from production and/or improvement of produce quality from enhanced pollination).
- Improve wildlife habitat.

Eligible Expenses

- Establishment of pollinator strips or other perennial cover for pollinator habitat or other biodiversity purposes in fields or field margins of existing cropland
- Purchases of pollinator seed mix:
 - Seeding mixes should target multiple different species of pollinator-friendly flowering plants, including wildflowers, legumes, and/or trees and shrubs with bloom times throughout the season. More than six (6) species is encouraged.
- In-kind or contract labour for planting or maintenance of pollinator habitat.

Additional Requirements

- Be cropland that is planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity four of the previous six crop years from 2016-2022. Grassland is not eligible.
- Acres selected for pollinator habitat must be at least 0.2 ha (0.5 acres).
- The pollinator practice must be maintained for the duration of the contract.
- Mow only 30% of the pollinator habitat per year.
- Seed mix must not contain species listed in the Nova Scotia Agricultural Weed Control Act as a Noxious Weed.
- Pollinator strips should be left season-long before harvest to maximize habitat potential.
- Pollinator Habitat installations over 20 acres will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- Payment will be split with half (\$300/acre) provided initially for project establishment and \$300/acre paid in a future year of the program for maintenance (year 3,4 or 5).

Stream 4: Buffers and Shelterbelts

Description

Buffers support climate change adaptation, carbon sequestration, water quality, and biodiversity. Buffers and shelterbelts can also provide improved habitat on highly sensitive areas of the landscape. Objectives include:

- protection of aquatic life,
- maintaining the quality of the surface water supply,
- providing habitat for biodiversity,
- providing extensive upland ecosystems,
- protection of soil, crops, livestock (including bees), and infrastructure from climatic conditions.

Eligible Expenses

- Creation or widening of buffers (grasses, trees or shrubs) in agricultural fields adjacent to surface water sources, as well as other actions to protect existing riparian areas such as reshaping of edges and fields.
 - Grass, plant, shrub and tree establishment costs (requires a 5yr conservation agreement)
 - Material costs and arms-length labour or contractor costs are eligible.
 - Livestock fencing along the field/riparian edge (Must be suitable to exclude livestock from the riparian area and only the length of the riparian area would be covered.)
 - Remote watering covered 100% up to \$1,500/project that is being installed at the same time as the riparian zone. (Nose pumps, solar pump)
 - Species providing an agricultural value are not eligible
 - Payment will be made in the year of project completion
- Land-Rent payments:
 - For riparian areas only, \$5,000/acre of crop land taken out of production. A 10-year conservation agreement will be required and the land-rent payment will be made in one payment in year 3, 4 or 5 of the funding program
 - For example, a 10m wide buffer project in 2024 along a 300m stretch of river would yield a \$3,700 payment in 2026
- Establishment of shelterbelts or tree buffers for farmyards, livestock facilities, and fields as well as intercropping with trees on annual cropland
 - Eligible activities can include: Maintenance of existing windbreaks/shelterbelts that improve/maintain function.
 - Replacement of old shelterbelts is eligible where the current shelterbelt in place is unhealthy.

*Riparian area pertains to the area along the edges of a river, stream, or other watercourse.

Additional Requirements

- Projects on land without a riparian buffer must have a minimum of 5m of new buffer.
- Trees and shrubs cannot be planted on agricultural marshland.
- Tree/shrub species should remain on the landscape for natural lifespan (i.e. not harvested). Coppicing or pollarding can be permitted if appropriate (but not funded). Species should also be native to the area.
- Projects should be greater than 0.5ac, smaller projects may be eligible on a case-by-case basis
- Watershed based projects representing larger acreages may receive priority.

Ineligible Expenses

These include but are not limited to:

- administrative / general overhead
- buildings / building modifications
- production expansion activities
- tools
- multiple pieces of equipment with the same function (e.g. two specialized sprayers)
- ongoing software licensing costs or fees
- operating expenses / existing staff salaries
- HST
- Travel

Carbon Offsets

Activities funded under Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program will not be entitled to carbon credits/GHG offsets for the duration of the agreed upon land use agreements, after which, producers may be eligible for the Federal and Provincial GHG Offset Systems.

Application Process

To apply for the Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program:

1. Submit a complete application with all supporting project quotes(if required) by **June 30, 2024**.
2. Eligible project expenses will be recognized within the Activity Period stated in the table below. Please refrain from making purchases before receiving a Letter of Agreement from the Programs Office.

Application Intake	Activity Period	Claim Deadline
April 1, 2024 – June 30, 2024	April 1, 2024 – February 28, 2025	February 28, 2025

Note 1: An applicant may only complete one application per year. Applications will be evaluated on:

- Eligibility requirements are met
- GHG emissions reduction
- Prior program funding of applicant

Note 2: Clients new to Programs since 2023 must complete the Program Funding Registration form (PFR). Returning clients, 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. Completed applications will be reviewed by the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture (NSDA) as they are received.
2. If approved, applicants will receive a **Letter of Agreement (LOA)** which identifies the eligible project activities, Program funding offered and the terms and conditions under which Program funding is approved.
3. Applicants will also receive a Land Use Agreement (LUA) which identifies the agreed upon lands and activities to be undertaken, the tenure and structure, as well as identify the payment and compensation method and details. Land use agreements will be for a minimum of five years and can be up to ten years. Activities undertaken on rented lands should include acknowledgement by landowners.
4. Review, sign, and return the LOA and LUA to Programs within **30 days** of the date of the letter or your Program funding will be forfeited.

Claiming Process

1. After Programs receives your signed Letter of Agreement, a **Program Claim Form** will be sent to you.
2. Complete and sign the Program Claim Form by **February 28, 2025**.
3. Attach copies of all invoices for eligible project costs incurred and paid for by the applicant.
4. Attach proof of payment for each invoice – e-transfer confirmation, debit slips, cleared cheques, or credit card/bank statements. (Invoices marked paid and signed by the supplier are not accepted)
5. Submit your claim with the required supporting documentation to the Programs office by the claim deadline.

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

Leased Land

Eligible projects must be directly applicable to the registered farm qualifying for assistance on agricultural land owned or leased. A copy of the long-term lease (10 years) or rental agreement must accompany the Application for all physical projects applicable to the leased/rented land. It is a condition of approval that the lease be of at least 10 years duration. You must advise us immediately, in writing, if the lease is terminated, if the term of the lease changes or if the identity of the lessor changes in any way (for example, if the lessor assigns the lease or if the lease changes in composition).

Authority

NSDA shall have the authority to deny an application if there is evidence of misrepresentation of pertinent information or if NSDA believes that an application does not conform to the spirit of the Program.

Evaluation and Audit

Review and evaluation of projects may be carried out by NSDA, Government of Canada or other parties chosen by NSDA 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 or upon project completion. Applicants may be asked to complete an evaluation survey related to their final claim.

Between 10% and 20% of projects will be audited to verify program objectives. Initial mapping to establish a baseline of the field before work is completed may be required.

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 MP or Senator will be allowed to obtain financial benefit from this funding except in accordance with the Parliament of Canada Act.

Confidentiality

Applicants consent to the release of their name and the amount of support received under the Program. This specific information is deemed to be public information, to be actively disseminated by NSDA. NSDA may provide any information from an applicant to another public body or a law-enforcement agency in Canada to assist in an investigation, undertaken with a view to a law-enforcement proceeding or from which a law-enforcement proceeding is likely to result. Any other information provided, unless disclosed in the manner and for the purposes stated above, will be subject to the confidentiality and disclosure provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPOP) Act.

Contact Information

Please submit all documents to Programs at the address, email or fax number below. For more information, please 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
Fax: 902-893-75797
Email: prm@novascotia.ca

Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture Regional Offices		
Western	Yarmouth	902-223-8085
	Digby	902-638-2395
	Kentville	902-679-6021
	Lunenburg	902-634-7575
Eastern	Truro	902-893-6575
	Nappan	782-370-2278
	Antigonish	902-863-7180
	Sydney	902-563-2000