

Forest Training and Applied Research Program Guide

The Forest Training and Applied Research Grant (FTARG) supports innovation through research and workforce development, creating long-term competitiveness in Nova Scotia's forest sector through two funding streams. Together, these streams strengthen collaboration, build sector capacity, and support a resilient, sustainable, and competitive forest economy.

1. **Applied Research Stream:** supports partnerships with post-secondary institutions to develop new forest products and technologies, create higher value uses for low-grade fibre and forest by-products, support entrepreneurship and market growth, and advance innovation within Nova Scotia's Ecological Forestry Triad.
2. **Training Stream** supports sector-led workforce development that addresses emerging skills needs, improves safety and productivity, and facilitates technology adoption.

Questions? Contact us: forestgrants@nscc.ca

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Be a registered business, Indigenous organization, Indigenous business, industry association, municipality, non-profit organization, or charity.
- Demonstrate that their operations, or a significant portion of their operations, are mostly in Nova Scotia.
- Be in good standing with all applicable federal, provincial and municipal laws and regulations.
- There is no minimum or maximum number of employees required.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

Projects must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Directly support one or more of the program funding priorities listed in the next section.
- Demonstrate a clear benefit to Nova Scotia's forestry sector, forest-based communities, or forest value chains.
- Have clearly defined objectives, activities, and anticipated outcomes.
- Be completed within the approved project period.
- Follow all applicable environmental regulations and ecological forestry principles where relevant.
- Projects cannot begin before receiving written funding approval from NSCC unless otherwise approved by the program.

PROGRAM FUNDING PRIORITIES

Applied research stream funding priorities

1. **Innovation and Commercialization of Forest Products and Technologies:** Research that develops new forest products, technologies, or processes with commercial potential.
2. **Low-Grade Fibre Utilization and Downstream Market Development:** Research that creates higher value uses for low-grade fibre, wood residuals, and other waste or byproducts from ecological forestry operations.
3. **Entrepreneurship and New Market Development:** Research that supports new products, market expansion, business growth, and economic diversification.
4. **Ecological Forestry and the Ecological Triad:** Research that advances innovation within one or many pieces of Nova Scotia's Ecological Forestry Triad: High Production, Matrix Forestry, and Conservation.

Training stream funding priorities

1. **Innovation in Forest Trade Upskilling:** Training that enhances or modernizes existing forest labour roles through new technologies, equipment, safety practices, or operational efficiencies.
2. **Ecological Forestry and Supply Chain Capacity:** Training that directly supports implementation of the Ecological Forestry Triad and strengthens workforce capability across the forest supply chain.
3. **Downstream Markets and Adjacent Sector Integration:** Training that prepares workers for emerging downstream and adjacent opportunities, including mass timber construction, biomass energy systems, advanced manufacturing, digital forestry tools, and AI-enabled forestry operations.

FUNDING GUIDELINES

Contribution breakdown

1. The **maximum grant** available through the program is **\$75,000**.
2. The **minimum grant** available through the program is **\$15,000**.

Project Type	Maximum Grant Program Contribution	Minimum Applicant Contribution (Cash or In-Kind)
Partnership* between applicant and post-secondary researcher or eligible training partner.	75%	25%
No eligible research or training partner	50%	50%
Led by an Indigenous group / business / underrepresented community	90%	10%

**Partnership means that a minimum of 50% of project work is being completed by the partner.*

Applicant contribution

Applicants must clearly demonstrate the ability to provide the required matching contribution. Matching contributions may consist of:

- Cash contributions
- Eligible in-kind contributions

Examples of eligible in-kind contributions include:

- Employee labour directly related to project delivery
- Equipment usage directly supporting project activities
- Facility or workspace usage directly supporting project activities

Examples of ineligible in-kind contributions include:

- Volunteer labour
- Lost revenue or opportunity costs
- Existing overhead costs
- Previously completed work without approval from the funder

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

1) Salaries and employee benefits

Salary and employee benefits for term employees of the applicant or the partner are eligible for funding.

Salary for permanent employees of the applicant or the partner are ineligible for funding but can be considered an in-kind contribution for the project. For example, a manager supervising students or contributing to training development.

2) Operating expenses

a) Materials and supplies

Consumable materials related to the direct cost of the research or training project are eligible expenses. This includes materials required for training sessions such as stationery or supplies required for research such as soil or chemicals.

b) Equipment rental or purchase

Equipment rental or purchase essential for successful project delivery. This includes space and venue rental and cannot make up more than 20% of the total project cost.

c) Specialized equipment

Specialized equipment required for unique technical or research activities. Please consult the funder by email (forestgrants@nsc.ca) to discuss any specialized equipment purchased through the project that would exceed the 20% equipment cap. These items will need to be pre-approved before being requested in the application, and the application would need to justify how the equipment directly supports project outcomes.

3) Technical services

Contracted technical expertise or professional services supporting project objectives. This includes working with subcontractors on services like lab processing fees, consultants, course development and design, community engagement and outreach, advertising, recruitment, and project evaluation.

Expenses for partners should be included in the other cost categories, not quoted as a single expense.

4) Travel

Only travel directly related to the project is eligible to be funded. See **Appendix B: Travel Guidelines** for guidelines on mileage rates, per diems, vehicle rental and fuel, and accommodations.

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Ineligible expenses include:

- Land purchases
- Salaries for permanent employees
- Building construction or major infrastructure projects
- Debt repayment
- Routine operating expenses
- Vehicle purchases
- Legal disputes or litigation costs
- Expenses incurred prior to project approval
- Activities unrelated to the approved project scope

BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Project coordinators should be informed of any deviations from an approved project budget. For budget changes greater than 5%, a formal amendment may be required.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Successful applicants must:

- Retain invoices, receipts, payroll records, participant records, contracts, and other supporting documentation for five years following project completion.
- Discuss requests for project extensions with a project coordinator and approved by the manager. Requests will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and may not extend past December 2027.
- Submit progress and final reports on project activities and expenses as required.
- Provide outcome and impact information requested by the program if asked. For example, an additional, longer-term evaluation of your project.
- Acknowledge program funding support where appropriate if asked.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Intellectual Property (IP) will be negotiated and assigned during the contract phase on a case-by-case basis.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Applications will be assessed based on:

- Alignment with one or more program funding priorities
- Potential impact on Nova Scotia's greater forestry sector
- Technical and operational feasibility
- Alignment of funding level request with perceived cost of project
- Potential for broader sector adoption, collaboration, or leveraged funding

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

NSCC reserves the right to:

- Request additional information from applicants
- Approve funding at a level different from that requested
- Reject any application that does not meet program requirements
- Modify program requirements, timelines or funding availability as necessary
- Cancel a funding call without obligation to close the program earlier than planned if all funding has been granted.
- Approve or deny a request for an amendment to the contribution agreement

NSCC Forest Training and Applied Research Grant Application Process

Step-by-step guide

This document describes the process of applying to the program.

1) Concept development

- Concepts are submitted through the FTARG web portal on the [nsc.ca website](https://nsc.ca).
- A project coordinator will review the concept and follow up within 7 business days.
- If the concept includes the services of NSCC Applied Research or customized training teams, a project coordinator will schedule a discussion with the applicant prior to submitting a full application to determine the scope, capabilities, availability, and feasibility of the project.
- If the concept is deemed to align with program objectives and eligibility requirements, the proponent will be invited to submit a full application.

2) Application development

- Applications may be submitted by email (forestgrants@nsc.ca) between September 1 and December 1, 2026, after the application receives an invitation to apply.
- Project coordinators will be available to assist with applications. This includes reviewing applications for completeness and alignment with the submitted concept.
- If NSCC is identified as a potential project partner or service provider, the project coordinator will facilitate introductions and arrange meetings with relevant faculty, researchers, and technical staff. These meetings may be used to refine project scope, confirm technical feasibility, establish budgets and timelines, and identify opportunities for student involvement or additional funding support.
- Project coordinators will work with both parties to develop a project plan that accurately reflects the proponent's needs and the capabilities of NSCC.
- Where appropriate, project coordinators may identify opportunities to leverage additional funding programs, student involvement, or external research partnerships.
- Where a project is proposed in partnership with another post-secondary institution, the proponent is responsible for initiating discussions, establishing the partnership, and coordinating project development activities with that institution.
- Project coordinators may provide general guidance on program requirements, however NSCC will not facilitate project scoping, budgeting, contracting, or partner coordination activities involving other post-secondary institutions.
- Applicants may be asked to provide additional information or clarification before their application proceeds to review.

3) Application review

- Application reviews be performed by an external committee of forestry sector representatives and will occur on the first week of October, November and December 2026.
- Committee members will score applications independently using evaluation criteria established by the program administration team and agreed upon by the review committee.
- Applications scoring 70% or higher will be considered for funding.
- The committee will discuss eligible applications and make funding recommendations based on project quality, program alignment, and available funding.

4) Funding decisions

- Applicants will be notified of funding decisions within three weeks of monthly review meetings.
- Successful applicants will receive a funding offer outlining approved activities, project budget, reporting requirements, and project timelines.
- Unsuccessful applicants may receive feedback to support future submissions.

5) Contracting and project start-up

- Contribution agreements will be finalized and signed following notification of a successful project.
- Projects may begin once all required agreements have been signed.
- Project coordinators will work with successful applicants to establish project kick-off meetings, reporting schedules, and project milestones.
- Requests to amend contribution agreements should be made to the project coordinators by email (forestgrants@nsc.ca).

Appendix A: Recognized Providers

Recognized research providers

Any recognized Canadian post-secondary institution. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC)
- Dalhousie University
- Acadia University
- Cape Breton University
- Saint Mary's University
- Mount Saint Vincent University
- St. Francis Xavier University
- Université Sainte-Anne
- University of King's College
- University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI)
- Université de Moncton
- Other recognized Canadian colleges and universities with demonstrated expertise relevant to the proposed project

Projects involving out-of-province research providers must clearly demonstrate direct benefits to Nova Scotia's forest sector.

Recognized training providers

- Any post-secondary institution that provides training that falls under one of the program priorities.
- Association for Sustainable Forestry
- High Performance Logging
- Forest Safety Society of Nova Scotia
- Commercial Safety College
- Maritime Environmental Training Institute
- MacPhail Ecological Woods Forestry (in partnership with UPEI and Acadia)

Appendix B: Travel Guidelines

Travel by road

The rate of reimbursement will be \$0.59 per kilometre for privately-owned vehicles. Vehicle rental and associated fuel costs are also eligible expenses.

Air travel

Air travel claims must include documentation providing justification for choosing air travel as the mode of transportation, purpose for travelling, departure and return dates, net amount paid for airfare, route of flight and class of travel (e.g., economy).

Per-diem meal rates

The following per-diem rates (including taxes and gratuities) are claimable for travel:

Travel within Atlantic Canada			
Breakfast	Lunch	Supper	Daily Maximum
\$10.00	\$15.00	\$25.00	\$50.00
Travel outside of Atlantic Canada			
Breakfast	Lunch	Supper	Daily Maximum
\$15.00	\$20.00	\$30.00	\$65.00

Accommodations

Accommodations are considered justified when the proponent has project-related travel located more than 125km from their regular work location. When accommodation is located within 125km of the proponent’s work location, a documented reason is required to support the reimbursement. Safety concerns due to poor driving conditions (e.g., an unexpected major snowstorm) and meetings going late into the evening are examples of reasonable explanations to support the reimbursement.

Appendix C: Equity-Deserving Groups

Projects led by, partnered with or designed to benefit equity-deserving groups may be eligible to have up to 90% of project costs covered by the grant. See below a non-extensive list of equity deserving groups. If you have questions about an equity-deserving group not listed, please reach out to a project coordinator to discuss.

- Indigenous
- African Nova Scotian
- Visible Minority
- Women working in a job in which they are under-represented
- Persons with disabilities
- LGBTQ2A