

Proposal Guidelines

Is your organization or department involved in activities or research designed to assist companies in Atlantic Canada explore, enter or succeed in new markets? If so, the Canada/Atlantic Provinces Agreement on International Business Development may be able to help.

What is the Agreement on International Business Development?

The Agreement on International Business Development is a pan-Atlantic agreement designed to promote trade development by Atlantic Canadian companies. The agreement is jointly managed by the four Atlantic Provinces and the Government of Canada in an effort to pool limited resources and coordinate international export activities in the Atlantic region.

What are the objectives of this agreement?

The objectives of the International Business Development Agreement (IBDA) are to increase the number of new exporters in Atlantic Canada, help diversify the markets of current exporters, increase the value of exports in existing markets and develop a stronger “culture of exporting” in the Atlantic region.

What types of projects are eligible for funding?

To help meet these objectives, the IBDA provides financial assistance to projects that are pan-Atlantic in nature and fall under one of four strategic elements:

- **Export Training and Awareness** — to expose companies and sector stakeholders to export market opportunities and ensure that they are well prepared with the capability, knowledge and information required for developing international business.
- **Market Information and Intelligence** — to assist sectors and companies by obtaining market intelligence and contacts, identifying international market opportunities and applying this knowledge to trade development activities.
- **International Business Development Activities** — to undertake business activities that support sector export development strategies and contribute to contacts, alliances and ultimately sales for both existing and new exporters.
- **Planning and Research** — to develop longer term strategies and implementation plans for international business development and undertake supporting research on companies’ needs and best practices.

What are the eligibility criteria for funding?

The Management Committee will consider the following criteria when evaluating new projects.

- focus on one of the four IBDA strategic elements and ideally on one of the priority sectors and markets;
- involve all four Atlantic provinces, where possible;
- do not place one province in competition with another or benefit one province at the expense of another;
- contribute to the long-term economic development of Atlantic Canada;
- demonstrate a high degree of support from the private or non-government sector — this could be in the form of written support from industry associations or secured funding from non-government sources;
- develop and test new models for international business development;
- demonstrate the ability to become self-financing in the longer term, if applicable;
- have not received funding under other joint federal/provincial programs; and
- indicate all sources of private-sector funding and demonstrate how the absence of IBDA funding would affect the project.

Additional consideration will be given to those proposals that:

- include value-added activities, such as preparedness/training, matchmaking, site visits, follow-up activities. Note that these activities are not mandatory, but are strongly encouraged where and when appropriate; and
- include SMEs that are new-to-market or new exporters in their recruitment of trade shows/fairs/exhibitions.

Who can apply for funding?

Funding requests are accepted from not-for-profit corporations, business associations, post-secondary educational institutions, a provincial or municipal government or an agency thereof, or a legal entity owned or controlled by that government or agency. Commercial entities, such as individual companies, and federal Crown corporations are not eligible recipients.

What are the priority sectors and markets?

The IBDA gives priority to projects that target the sectors and markets listed below. Projects that do not target these sectors and markets, but clearly have the potential of contributing to the objectives of the agreement, may also be considered.

Sectors

- Aerospace and Defence
- Building products and construction
- Business, professional and education services
- Energy
- Consumer—wholesale
- Cultural industries
- Environmental industries
- Food (agrifood and seafood)
- Fish and aquaculture technology
- Information and communications technologies
- Life sciences
- Ocean industries
- Plastics and metals

Markets

- Active market focus – United States' Eastern Seaboard, Western Europe and Caribbean
- Some development focus – United States Midwest, Nordic countries and Japan
- Emerging markets of interest – Chile, Mexico, India, China

How much financial assistance is available?

The maximum levels of funding vary according to the nature of the project.

How does my organization or department apply for funding?

If you are a trade or sector officer in the government, you should develop your project proposal in consultation with your provincial and federal counterparts in all four Atlantic provinces. You should also ensure your provincial or departmental IBDA representative is aware of your project.

If you are a representative of a non-government organization, you should contact your provincial IBDA representative for guidance in preparing your project proposal.

What should project proposals include?

A proposal template is available to assist you in developing your proposal. Some of the information requested includes:

- executive summary;
- name and background of your organization;
- detailed project description, including background information, objectives, timeline, and targeted participants;
- anticipated outcomes, including how the results will be measured;
- budget, outlining all costs and other funding sources; and
- communications plan, where applicable.

How do I submit a project proposal?

Requests for funding should be submitted at least four months prior to a project's anticipated start date and at least three weeks prior to an IBDA Management Committee meeting or conference call. If a proposal is received after the three week deadline, it will be deferred to the next Management Committee meeting/conference call. Discuss your proposal with your provincial IBDA representative before submitting (in both hard copy and electronic form):

How are project proposals evaluated?

Project proposals are reviewed and evaluated by the IBDA Management Committee on a regular basis, according to the evaluation criteria outlined above. The Management Committee is available to discuss your proposal and provide any necessary clarifications.

What happens after a project is approved for funding?

If your project is approved for funding, you will be sent a letter of offer outlining the terms of the funding as well as the procedures for the payment of claims. To receive the IBDA funds, your organization or department must submit claims for all approved costs. All claims must be supported by original invoices and proof of payment.

You must also submit a final report (a template is available to assist you) to the IBDA Management Committee outlining the results of your project or activity. A percentage of the final payment is normally withheld until the report is tabled and approved by the IBDA Management Committee.

How do I get more information?

If you would like to discuss whether a particular project or idea might be eligible for funding under this Agreement, contact your provincial IBDA representative or IBDA Secretariat at:

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