



Business Development Program

Innovation Skills Development Initiative

What is the Innovation Skills Development Initiative?

The Innovation and Skills Development Initiative (ISDI) helps small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) acquire or enhance innovation management and technical skills in order to make them more productive and globally competitive.

ISDI is a component of the Atlantic Investment Partnership (AIP) and is delivered through the Business Development Program (BDP).

How does ISDI work?

ISDI addresses critical needs in the areas of:

- Training and skills development for SMEs' current staff;
- Recruitment of experienced experts and managers; and
- Recruitment of recent graduates of recognized post-secondary institutions who have the leading-edge skills required for R&D and other technology-related activities.

What does this mean for your business?

Any technology-oriented small and medium-sized enterprise in Atlantic Canada that demonstrates a commitment to, and plans for, enhancing their innovation and skills capabilities could qualify for contributions of up to 75 per cent of approved costs of a project.

Eligible project costs may include a variety of training/skills development options, the hiring of expertise, recruitment costs and an individual's salary. The assistance will be in the form of a non-repayable contribution and will be less than \$100,000. Assistance is available through the Initiative's three major components: Innovation Management Skills; SME Technology Advancement; and Technical Graduate Leadership.

Innovation Management Skills

This component focuses on building and strengthening the capabilities and skills of a company's existing management and senior technical staff in order to develop, commercialize or adopt new technologies. It does so by improving people's access to advanced training resources.

To be eligible for support from Innovation Management Skills, a company must:

- be technology-based, or an adopter of technology;
- have a business plan that indicates an export and growth objective; and
- have a technology skills development plan that identifies the firm's current skills gaps and demonstrates how the proposed project will meet the skills requirements for growth.

SME Technology Advancement

This component focuses on strengthening and enhancing a company's technology management skills and/or specialized technical skills requirements. It does so by supporting the recruitment of technological managers, including chief technology officers and other skilled specialists with extensive knowledge and experience of technology solutions and applications for business.

To be eligible for support from SME Technology Advancement, a company must:

- be technology-based, or an adopter of technology;
- have a business plan that indicates an export and growth objective;



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- have a technology skills development plan that identifies the firm's current skills gaps and documents how the technology manager/senior technical expert required will contribute to, or enhance, key innovation capabilities of the firm; and
- have a proposal outlining the qualifications, role and performance targets for the skilled professional proposed.

Technical Graduate Leadership

This component enables companies to strengthen their innovation capabilities through the hiring of recent, qualified graduates of recognized post-secondary institutions who possess the leading-edge skills required for commercial R&D and other technology-related activities.

To be eligible for support from Technical Graduate Leadership, a company must:

- be technology-based, or an adopter of technology;
- have a business plan that indicates an export and growth objective;
- employ a recent graduate from a recognized post-secondary institution; and
- provide a detailed work plan describing the role and responsibilities of the graduate and expected performance targets and measures.

Environmental assessment

As part of its project assessment process, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) requires that all projects conform with the environmental guidelines set out in *the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*.

Let's talk

Understanding how innovation and technology skills development can broaden your business opportunities is as easy as getting in touch with us. Contact your local ACOA office:

New Brunswick: 1-800-561-4030

Prince Edward Island: 1-800-871-2596

Newfoundland and Labrador: 1-800-668-1010

Nova Scotia: 1-800-565-1228

Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation: 1-800-705-3926

ACOA Web site: www.acoa.gc.ca

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