



PROCESS GUIDE:

Managing an RNS- Supported Project

Guidance for Recipients & Host Organizations

May 2026

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

Research Nova Scotia invests in research and innovation to support economic growth and deliver benefits to communities across Nova Scotia. These investments are funded through public resources and are intended to advance knowledge, build research capacity, support the research community, and contribute to long-term economic outcomes.

This guide establishes the requirements for the recipient and host organization(s) for the management of RNS-funded projects. It establishes the standards for project administration, use of funds, reporting, and compliance with the Research Project Agreement and Collaborative Research Agreement, as well as applicable Research Nova Scotia policies. In this guide, “Research Agreement (RA)” refers to either a Research Project Agreement (RPA) or a Collaborative Research Agreement (CRA).

Research Project Agreement (RPA)

An agreement between Research Nova Scotia and the recipient that outlines the terms and conditions of the Research Nova Scotia investment, including the recipient’s responsibilities for the conduct of the project and use of funds. Where applicable, the RPA operates alongside a separate agreement between Research Nova Scotia and the host organization that governs the administration of funds.

Collaborative Research Agreement (CRA)

A comprehensive, legally binding agreement between Research Nova Scotia, the recipient(s), and the host organization(s) that outlines the terms and conditions of the Research Nova Scotia investment. A CRA is used in place of an RPA where project structure, funding arrangements, or roles and responsibilities require a more detailed or customized approach. In such cases, the Collaborative Research Agreement supersedes other related agreements.

Compliance with the requirements outlined in this guide is a condition of funding.

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INTRODUCTION

Status of This Guide

In the event of any conflict between this guide and the Research Agreement (“RA”), the RA will prevail.

The recipient is responsible for reviewing the RA and this guide, in full prior to accepting RNS funding. By signing the RA, the recipient and host organization agree to comply with the requirements described in both the RA and this guide.

Recipient

The individual or individuals to whom RNS funding has been awarded and who are responsible for leading the project (may also be referred to as the project lead(s)). The recipient is responsible for ensuring that the project is conducted in accordance with the approved milestones/objectives, workplan, and budget.

Host Organization

The organization from which the application to RNS originated and which will be responsible for administering RNS funding on behalf of the recipient. Examples may include universities, health authorities, companies, community organizations, or other eligible organizations.

RNS reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to interpret the provisions of this guide and to take any actions necessary to ensure appropriate use of public funds, including modifying payment schedules, imposing additional conditions, suspending funding, or terminating funding where warranted.



About Research Nova Scotia

RNS supports, organizes, and coordinates the funding of research to increase economic growth and productivity in Nova Scotia across three priority sectors: (1) natural resources, climate change, and clean energy; (2) life sciences and health sciences; and (3) construction and transportation. This work also contributes to the growth of the province's research capacity and research community.

As an administrator of public funds, RNS is responsible for ensuring that its investments are managed in accordance with established requirements and deliver intended outcomes. The recipient and host organization share responsibility for ensuring compliance with funding conditions and project requirements.

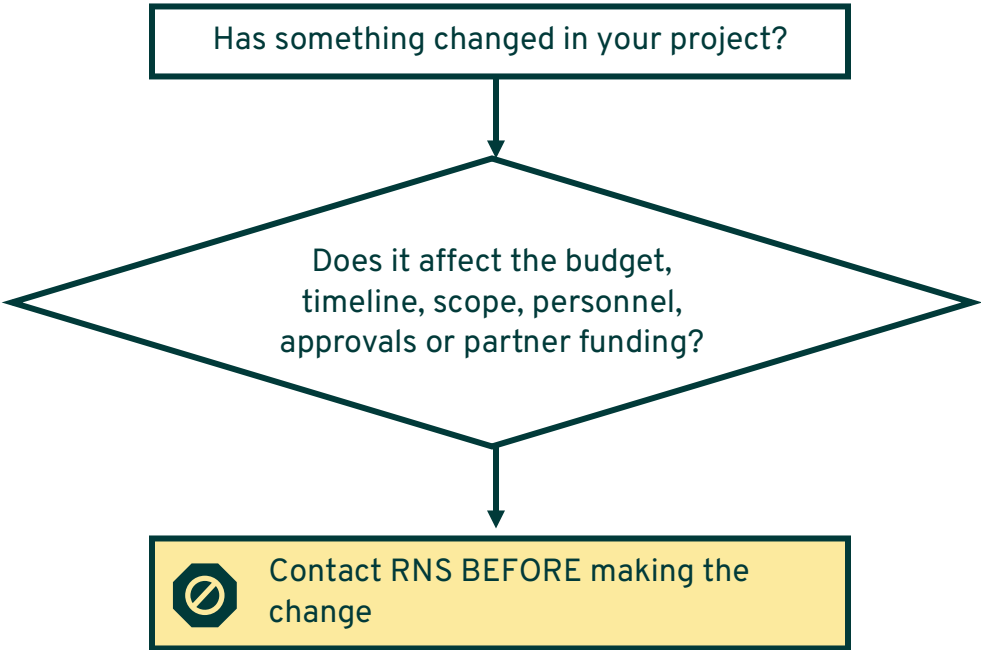
Funded projects must demonstrate progress against defined objectives and milestones and contribute to economic growth and productivity in Nova Scotia.



When Do I Need to Contact Research Nova Scotia?

The recipient and host organization **must** contact RNS whenever a change or issue may affect the administration of an RNS-funded project.

The table below outlines common situations where RNS should be notified or approval must be obtained.



Contact RNS Immediately

Recipients must notify RNS as soon as possible if any of the following occur:

- ✓ Ethics approval is revoked before its expiry date
- ✓ Partner funding changes or is withdrawn
- ✓ The recipient leaves the host organization
- ✓ A research security concern is identified
- ✓ The project can no longer proceed as planned

Prompt communication allows RNS to work with recipients and host organizations to determine appropriate next steps.

Contact RNS Before Making Changes

Certain changes require **prior written approval from RNS** before they can be implemented.

Examples include:

- ✓ Making budget changes exceeding 10% of a budget line (see section 3.3 for details)
- ✓ Creating a new budget category not included in the approved budget
- ✓ Changing project milestones, scope, or workplan
- ✓ Replacing or adding a recipient or key personnel
- ✓ Moving project activities to another organization or location

Requests for these types of changes must be submitted to RNS before changes can take place.



Contact RNS When Planning Key Project Activities

Recipients must notify RNS when planning significant project activities or communications, including:

- ✓ Public announcements related to the project (minimum five business days in advance)
- ✓ Major research findings or commercialization announcements
- ✓ Project launch events or public presentations

This helps ensure appropriate coordination of communications and acknowledgment of RNS funding.

Contact RNS If Project Timelines Change

Recipients must contact RNS if the project timeline needs to change.

Examples include:

- ✓ A project extension request (must be submitted at least 30 days before the project end date)
- ✓ Recipient leave of absence that may affect project delivery
- ✓ Significant delays affecting milestones or reporting timelines

When In Doubt, Reach Out

Successful project management relies on early and transparent communication. If you are unsure about reporting requirements, payment conditions, financial reporting, use of funds, or an administrative rule, contact us before taking action.

General Inquiries:

Email: info@researchns.ca

Phone: 902-220-8555

Please keep your contact information current so we can reach you with important updates. The email address and phone number associated with your Jura account will be the contact information of record. If you need to update this information, reach out to us at the email address above.



PART I:

GETTING STARTED

QUICK SUMMARY

Before beginning your project, recipients and host organizations must review and sign the RA and ensure that all conditions of funding have been met.

Key requirements:

- ✓ Projects may only begin once the RA has been fully executed and all conditions of funding have been satisfied.
- ✓ Conditions of funding may include requirements such as ethics approval, merit review, partner funding confirmation, research security review, proof of purchase for major equipment, and confirmation of project plans or budgets.
- ✓ The host organization holds shared responsibility for administering RNS funds.
- ✓ Both the recipient and the host organization share responsibility for ensuring that project funds are used appropriately and that reporting requirements are met.

Section 1: Receiving Your Offer from RNS

Quick Start Checklist

- ✓ Review the RA and all schedules in full
- ✓ Confirm acceptance of the award
- ✓ Ensure the RA is approved by all parties
- ✓ Work with RNS to satisfy all conditions of funding
- ✓ Confirm the project start date before incurring any expenses



Critical Deadline: All conditions noted in the RA must be satisfied within six months of the offer date, or the offer will be rescinded.

Project Duration

EAR TO THE GROUND (E2G): 6 to 36 months

FOCUSED RESEARCH INVESTMENTS (FRI): 24 to 60 months

Project timelines are established in the RA.



1.1 CONDITIONAL FUNDING OFFERS

In some cases, RNS may identify conditions that must be addressed before a final funding decision can be made. In these situations, RNS may issue a conditional funding offer letter in lieu of a RA. The letter will outline the conditions that must be satisfied before funding can be confirmed.

The recipient must address all conditions specified in the letter before an RNS investment can be finalized.

- Where conditions relate to scientific or methodological concerns, responses may be shared with the original reviewers for feedback and final recommendation.
- Conditions related to administrative or organizational matters will be reviewed and assessed by RNS staff.

Once all conditions have been addressed to the satisfaction of RNS, an RA will be issued to confirm the award.

1.2 RECEIVING YOUR RESEARCH AGREEMENT

Applicants whose projects have been approved for funding will receive an RA outlining the terms and conditions of the investment. The RA may reference attached documents that provide additional details regarding the approved project, budget, payment schedule, and administrative requirements.

The recipient and, where applicable, the host organization should review the RA carefully before accepting funding.

Failure to review the RA in full may result in misunderstandings regarding project obligations, reporting requirements, or funding conditions. RNS cannot be held responsible for any misunderstandings arising from a failure to review these stipulations.

1.3 ACCEPTING OR DECLINING THE AWARD

To accept RNS funding:

1. The recipient and/or the host organization must agree to the RA in writing. Written agreement confirms acceptance of the funding and the terms of the RA.
2. The agreement must be accepted in writing to RNS by the date specified in the RA.

Projects may not begin until the RA has been executed and all conditions of funding have been met.

If an applicant chooses to decline the award, RNS should be notified as soon as possible.



1.4 CONDITIONS OF FUNDING (POST-AWARD ACCEPTANCE)

Conditions of Funding

Requirements that must be satisfied before RNS funding can be released.

RNS funding is released according to a payment schedule. Each payment is tied to one or more conditions of funding that must be satisfied before the payment can be released.

Conditions of funding are used by RNS to ensure that projects are progressing as approved and that public funds are being managed responsibly.

Conditions may apply to any payment in the project lifecycle, including the initial payment, subsequent milestone payments, and holdback payment.

No payment will be released until all conditions associated with that payment have been met and approved by RNS.

Review of Conditions

All conditions of funding are reviewed and confirmed by RNS staff. The recipient and host organization are responsible for submitting the required documentation or information needed by the due date established to demonstrate that conditions have been satisfied.

If conditions are not met by the scheduled payment date, the payment will be delayed until the conditions are fulfilled.

Common Conditions of Funding

Conditions of funding vary depending on the project but may include:

- research ethics approval and annual renewals
- research security review
- scientific merit review
- confirmation of project start date
- confirmation of the annual workplan
- confirmation of the annual project budget
- project charter
- confirmation of partner funding agreements
- proof of purchase for equipment exceeding \$150,000
- confirmation that the remaining balance of previously released funds is below the threshold defined in the payment schedule for the release of subsequent funds
- submission of invoices required for payment
- submission and approval of progress or final reports



Additional conditions may be included in the RA depending on the nature of the project.

Timing of Conditions

For the first payment, all conditions must be satisfied within six months of the offer date specified in the RA. If the conditions associated with the first payment are not satisfied within this timeframe, the funding offer will be cancelled.

For subsequent payments, conditions must generally be satisfied within six months of the scheduled payment date. If conditions remain unmet after this period, RNS may determine that the funding should be cancelled.

Changes to Conditions

RNS may impose additional conditions of funding if circumstances arise that require further oversight or documentation. When this occurs, RNS will provide written notification to the recipient and host organization describing the additional conditions that must be met before funding can proceed.

1.5 WHEN SPENDING CAN COMMENCE

Project spending using RNS funds may begin once all applicable conditions of funding have been met and the project start date has been reached.

Expenses incurred before the official project start date are not eligible for reimbursement from RNS.

The recipient is responsible for ensuring that project spending aligns with the approved budget, funding period, and project scope.

1.6 PROJECT START DATE

Recipients are responsible for selecting a project start date within six (6) months of the date of their funding offer. If circumstances require a change to the proposed start date (e.g., delays in hiring, onboarding, or obtaining required approvals), recipients must submit a request to RNS in writing as soon as possible. Any revised start date must remain within six (6) months of the original offer date.



Section 2: Roles & Responsibilities

Successful management of an RNS-funded project requires collaboration between RNS, the host organization, the recipient(s), and, where applicable, project partners.

RNS requires that all parties involved in administering RNS investments understand their responsibilities and work together to ensure that projects are delivered as approved.

The host organization holds shared responsibility for administering RNS funding. The recipient is responsible for carrying out the research activities and ensuring that funds are used in accordance with the approved project and budget.

RNS will work with both the host organization and recipient(s) to ensure that projects remain compliant with the terms of the RA.

2.1 ROLE OF RESEARCH NOVA SCOTIA

RNS is responsible for the **administration of RNS funding and ensuring that public investments are used appropriately.**

RNS responsibilities include:

- administering funding competitions and approving investments
- issuing RAs and payment schedules
- reviewing conditions of funding
- reviewing progress, financial, and final reports
- monitoring project progress and outcomes
- conducting audits where required
- reviewing project changes, extensions, or transfers
- ensuring projects align with RNS policies and strategic priorities both upon funding approval and throughout the course of the project

RNS reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to:

- ✓ modify payment schedules
- ✓ impose additional conditions of funding
- ✓ request additional documentation or reporting
- ✓ suspend payments
- ✓ require repayment of funds
- ✓ terminate funding if agreement terms are not met

These measures will be taken where necessary to ensure appropriate stewardship of public funds.



2.2 ROLE OF THE HOST ORGANIZATION

The host organization is the recipient of RNS funds and is responsible for administering the funds in accordance with the RA, organizational policies, and agreements with RNS (e.g., Organizational Agreements, MOUs), as applicable.

The host organization's role is to ensure that:

- RNS funds are administered through the organization's financial systems
- financial oversight is provided for the project
- annual Statements of Account are prepared and submitted to RNS in a timely manner
- financial reports are certified by an authorized signing officer
- project expenditures comply with the approved budget and scope
- the recipient meets reporting obligations
- any issues related to financial administration are addressed promptly

Host organizations must also cooperate with RNS in the event of audits or financial reviews.

If the host organization is not one of the Nova Scotia post-secondary institutions or health authorities which already have an Organizational Agreement with RNS, a separate agreement may be required before funds can be administered.

2.3 ROLE OF THE RECIPIENT

The recipient is responsible for the delivery of the approved project and ensuring that research activities align with the milestones described in the approved application.

A recipient is expected to:

- manage the project in accordance with the approved workplan
- oversee the use of RNS funds in accordance with the approved budget
- notify RNS of any proposed project changes
- ensure required reports are submitted in full and on time
- work with the host organization to provide financial information as required
- ensure ethics approvals and research security requirements remain valid
- acknowledge RNS funding in all public communications

Recipients should communicate with RNS as soon as they become aware of any issues that may affect the project's progress, timelines, or budget. They are also responsible for ensuring that their contact information remains current and that RNS communications are monitored.



2.4 ROLE OF THE END USER

End users play a critical role in ensuring that research is relevant, actionable, and aligned with real-world needs.

End Users

Individuals or groups who directly apply or implement the outputs of a research project to achieve real-world outcomes. This includes organizations, practitioners, or communities who will use the results of the research in practice and excludes research colleagues applying the outputs for further research.

In working with the recipient, end users are expected to:

- contribute to shaping the project to ensure alignment with practical needs and intended outcomes
- provide input on the applicability and usability of research activities and outputs
- support the implementation, testing, or adoption of project results, as appropriate
- engage with the project team throughout the project lifecycle to ensure continued relevance
- provide feedback on progress, results, and potential barriers to uptake
- support the translation of research findings into real-world applications, where applicable

The recipient must ensure that end users are meaningfully engaged throughout the project and play an active role in advancing the pathway to impact. Their level of involvement may vary depending on the nature of the project but should be sufficient to support the intended use and uptake of project outputs.



2.5 RESPONSIBILITY MATRIX

TASK DESCRIPTION	RNS	HOST ORGANIZATION	RECIPIENT(S)
Issue funding agreement (RPA/CRA)	●		
Execute funding agreement (RPA/CRA)		● (CRA)	● (RPA)
Administer RNS funds		●	
Manage research activities			●
Ensure spending aligns with approved budget	●	●	●
Submit annual financial statements		●	● (review)
Submit progress and final reports			●
Approve project changes	●		
Notify RNS of project issues		●	●
Maintain ethics approvals		●	●
Approve and accept reports	●		
Administer payments to Host Organizations	●		
Participate in audits	●	●	●
Acknowledge RNS funding publicly		●	●



PART II:

MANAGING YOUR PROJECT

QUICK SUMMARY

Recipients and host organizations are responsible for managing their project in accordance with the approved scope, workplan, and budget.

Key things to know:

- ✓ RNS funding may only be used for project-related expenses directly attributable to the approved project and that are eligible per [RNS policies](#).
- ✓ Budget changes greater than 10% to any budget line or changes to project scope require prior approval from RNS.
- ✓ Payments are released when conditions of funding have been met and required documentation has been received and approved.
- ✓ Progress reports are required at least annually and must be approved by RNS before subsequent payments are released.
- ✓ Projects must maintain required approvals, including research ethics and research security review where applicable.

Section 3: Managing Your Award

Recipients of RNS funding are responsible for ensuring that funds are used only for activities that directly support the approved project. As a steward of public funds, RNS requires that all expenditures be reasonable, clearly attributable to the project, and consistent with the approved budget and scope of work.

Recipients and host organizations must ensure that RNS funds are administered in accordance with the RA, this guide, RNS policies, and applicable organizational policies.



3.1 USE OF FUNDS

RNS funding may be used for project-related costs that are directly attributable to the delivery of the approved project. All expenditures must align with the approved project scope and workplan, align with the approved project budget, and occur within the approved project timeline. Expenditures that fall outside the approved scope or budget must receive prior written approval from RNS before funds are spent.

Examples of eligible expenses may include:

- ✓ personnel costs (e.g., research assistants, technicians, trainees)
- ✓ consumables and supplies
- ✓ equipment and infrastructure required for the project
- ✓ travel required for project activities
- ✓ knowledge mobilization and dissemination activities
- ✓ other direct project costs

RNS funding does not support costs that are not directly attributable to the project. Examples of ineligible expenses may include:

- ✗ indirect or overhead costs
- ✗ salary support for individuals whose compensation is already provided by the host organization for similar research activities
- ✗ expenses incurred outside of the approved project timeline

Recipients should consult the [RNS Eligible Expenses Policy](#) for additional guidance.

3.2 ALIGNMENT WITH APPROVED BUDGET AND SCOPE

When submitting an application to RNS, applicants provide a detailed project budget describing how funds will be used. This approved budget forms the basis for financial oversight of the project.

Recipients must ensure that:

- ➔ spending aligns with the approved cost categories
- ➔ expenditures support the approved research activities
- ➔ funds are not redirected toward unrelated or unapproved activities or purchases

Changes that alter the nature of project expenditures may require prior approval from RNS. For example, funds approved for project personnel may not be redirected toward purchasing major equipment not originally in the project budget without prior written approval.



3.3 BUDGET VARIANCE

RNS recognizes that some flexibility may be required when implementing research projects.

Recipients may adjust spending by up to 10% to any approved budget line without prior approval from RNS, provided that the change does not alter the overall project scope. Budget changes that exceed 10% to any budget line require prior written approval from RNS.

Similarly, prior approval is required for:

- creating a new budget category that was not included in the original budget
- reallocating funds between major cost categories
- making expenditures that were not originally described in the approved budget
- significant delays in planned spending relative to the approved workplan and budget



Requests for budget changes must be submitted to RNS before the change is implemented.

RNS will review change requests to determine whether the proposed modification remains consistent with the original project milestones and funding approval.

Allowed: Minor Adjustments



Minor operational changes that do not alter the nature of the project. For example:

- Adjusting spending within any budget line by up to 10%
- Hiring two research assistants instead of one research coordinator (using the same allocated personnel funds)
- Hiring a different individual than anticipated
- Minor adjustments to travel or supply costs



Requires Prior RNS Approval

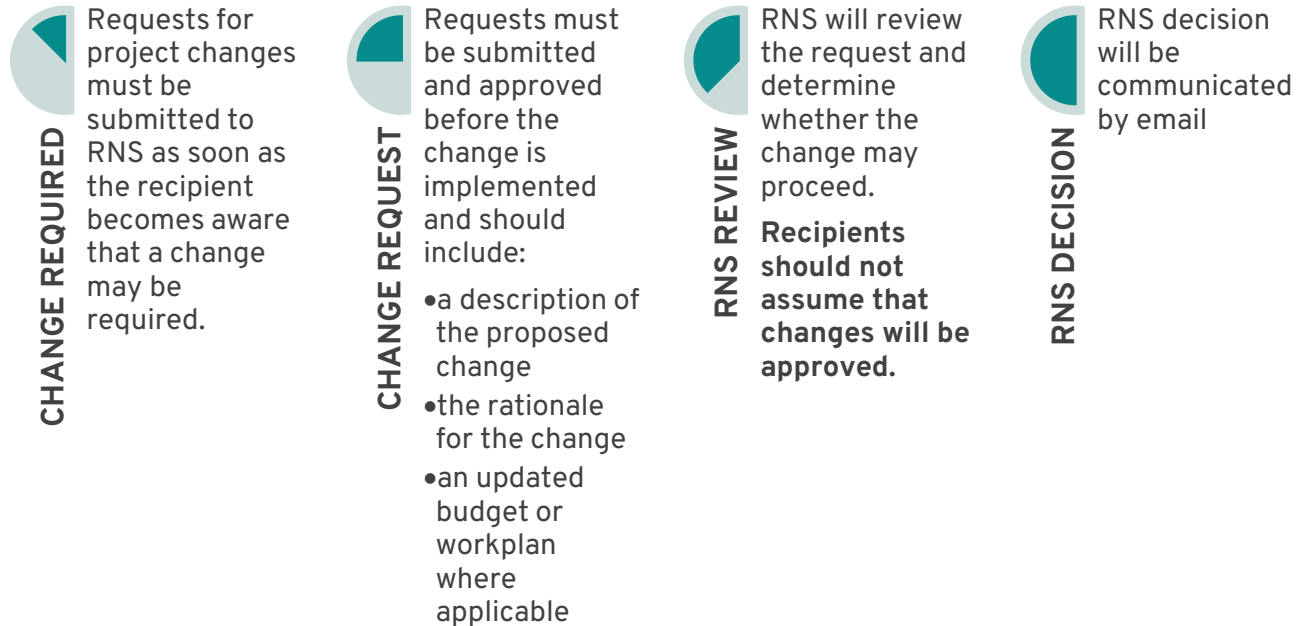
Major operational changes that significantly alter how the project will be delivered. For example:

- Budget changes exceeding 10% of an individual budget line
- Reallocating funds between major cost categories (e.g., personnel to equipment)
- Creating entirely new budget categories
- Purchasing equipment not included in the original budget

Note: The examples above are not exhaustive. If you're unsure how to categorize a variance, please contact RNS.



3.4 REQUESTING BUDGET OR PROJECT CHANGES



3.5 COMMON FINANCIAL PITFALLS TO AVOID

The following issues are among the most common compliance problems encountered during project administration:

1. **Spending Too Early:** Spending funds before the approved project start date
2. **Post-End Spending:** Incurring expenses after the project end date. RNS does not permit a grace period for spending beyond the approved end date.
3. **Silent Shifts:** Failing to notify RNS of budget changes
4. **Unapproved Purchases:** Purchasing equipment not included in the approved budget
5. **Off-Scope Activities:** Redirecting funds to activities outside the approved project scope
6. **Late Requests:** Waiting too long to request project modifications or extensions

Early communication with RNS can help resolve issues before they affect project funding.



Section 4: Payments & Financial Administration

RNS funding is released according to the payment schedule outlined in the RA. Payments are tied to project milestones and are subject to the completion and approval of associated conditions of funding.

Payment Schedule
A document that outlines the timing, amount, and conditions associated with each payment, including the reporting and milestone requirements that must be met prior to the release of funds. The Payment Schedule also specifies the timing of required progress, final, and financial reports.

The payment structure is designed to ensure that projects are progressing as approved and that public funds are administered responsibly.

RNS reserves the right, to modify payment schedules, delay payments, or impose additional conditions where necessary to ensure appropriate use of public funds.



4.1 PAYMENT STRUCTURE

RNS-funded projects typically follow a payment structure consisting of:

- An initial advance payment
- Subsequent milestone-based payments
- A final holdback payment

Payments are released only after the conditions associated with each payment have been satisfied and approved by RNS. The specific payment schedule for each project is provided to the recipient and host organization upon first payment and is updated when each subsequent payment is released.

Holdback
A portion of the RNS funding (typically 10% of the total award) that is withheld until the project has been completed and all reporting and financial requirements have been fulfilled. The holdback represents the final payment under the RA.



4.2 INITIAL PAYMENT

The first payment issued under an RNS-funded project is typically an advance payment.

Before the advance payment can be released, all conditions associated with the first payment must be satisfied. These conditions may include, for example:

- research ethics approval
- scientific merit review
- confirmation of project start
- confirmation of partner funding
- confirmation of workplans or budgets
- completion of research security review

RNS staff will review submitted documentation to confirm that conditions have been met before releasing the payment.

4.3 MILESTONE-BASED PAYMENTS

Milestones

Milestones and deliverables refer to the approved project objectives. These are the key activities, outputs, or results that define what the project is intended to achieve and are used to track progress, inform reporting, and support the release of funding.

Subsequent payments are typically released based on project milestones, which may include:

- completion of specific deliverables
- submission and approval of progress reports
- confirmation of workplans or budgets
- submission of required invoices
- confirmation of account balances related to project spending

Milestones are established in the approved workplan and may vary depending on the nature and duration of the project.

Payments will not be released until the associated conditions of funding have been satisfied and approved by RNS.

4.4 HOLDBACK PAYMENTS

RNS typically retains a **holdback of 10% of the total approved project funding**. The holdback forms part of the approved funding amount and is released upon satisfactory completion of project requirements, as outlined in the payment schedule.

In most cases, the full holdback is withheld until the end of the project and released following final approval of all reporting and project deliverables. In exceptional cases, a phased holdback approach may be applied.



Release of holdback funding is conditional upon:

- ✓ the submission and approval of required reports
- ✓ the completion of project milestones and deliverables
- ✓ the fulfillment of all financial and administrative requirements
- ✓ confirmation that conditions of funding have been met

The specific holdback structure and payment schedule for each project will be outlined in the RA.

The holdback is a standard requirement for all RNS-funded projects and will not be waived.

4.5 CONDITIONS THAT MAY DELAY PAYMENT

Payments may be delayed, or placed on hold, if required conditions have not been satisfied by the scheduled payment date. The table below outlines common reasons for payment delays and how they can be avoided.

REASON FOR DELAY	WHAT THIS MEANS	HOW TO AVOID DELAY
MISSING OR INCOMPLETE REPORTING	Required reports have not been submitted or have been submitted but not approved by RNS due to insufficient information to assess progress.	Submit reports by the required deadlines and ensure all sections are complete.
OUTSTANDING ETHICS APPROVALS OR RENEWALS	Required research ethics approvals have not been provided or have expired.	Ensure ethics approvals are obtained before payment and renewed annually as required.
MISSING FINANCIAL DOCUMENTATION	Required financial documentation or statements of account have not been received.	Work with the host organization's finance office to ensure financial documents are submitted when required.
UNRESOLVED QUESTIONS ABOUT PROJECT EXPENDITURES	RNS requires clarification regarding how project funds have been spent or will be spent.	Maintain clear records of project expenditures and respond promptly to requests for clarification.
INCOMPLETE PARTNER FUNDING DOCUMENTATION	Required documentation confirming partner or leveraged funding has not been provided.	Provide copies of partner funding agreements before payment milestones are reached.

Payments will only be released once all required conditions have been met by the recipient and approved by RNS.



4.6 PROOF OF PURCHASE REQUIREMENTS



Major Purchases: For purchases equal to or greater than \$150,000 - whether a single high-value infrastructure item or a bundled purchase of multiple items under a single procurement - RNS requires proof that the purchase has been made before releasing the associated funding.

Acceptable proof may include:

- purchase orders
- purchase requisitions
- invoices
- delivery confirmations
- documentation confirming the start of renovation or construction work

Documentation must clearly indicate the date of purchase or delivery and must be signed (or provided) by the appropriate financial representative.

If a major purchase is scheduled for later in the project, RNS may release payments associated with earlier milestones. However, the payment associated with the purchase will not be released until proof of purchase has been received and approved by RNS.

4.7 INVOICES FOR PAYMENT

RNS may require the submission of an invoice from the host organization before a scheduled payment can be released. Where an invoice is required, it must be submitted in accordance with the payment schedule and must clearly reference the project title, the RNS award number, the payment milestone associated with the invoice, and the amount requested.

RNS will review the invoice and confirm that all associated conditions of funding have been met before releasing payment.

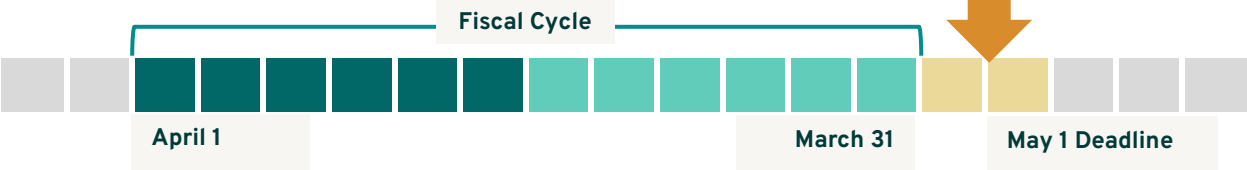
Section 5: Financial Reporting, Monitoring, & Oversight

Recipients and host organizations are responsible for ensuring that RNS funds are administered in accordance with the approved project budget and the terms of the RA. As a steward of public funds, RNS requires financial reporting that allows the organization to monitor how funds are being used and to confirm that expenditures align with the approved project.

Financial oversight of RNS-funded projects includes annual Statements of Account, financial review by RNS staff, current account balance checks, and periodic audits.



5.1 ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT



Statement of Account (SOA)
The financial report prepared by the host organization that summarizes project expenditures and the balance of RNS funds held by the organization. Statements of Account are submitted annually for the previous fiscal year (April 1 – March 31) and must be signed by both the host organization and the recipient. A final Statement of Account showing a \$0 balance is required before a project can be formally closed.

Host organizations must submit an annual Statement of Account for each RNS-funded project. The Statement of Account must:

- follow the RNS Statement of Account template
- be prepared and signed by the host organization
- be reviewed and signed by the recipient
- reflect the financial activity associated with the project during the reporting period


Statements of Account are required for every year that the project account remains open, beginning with the receipt of the first RNS payment and continuing until the final holdback payment has been released.

5.2 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Submitted Statements of Account are reviewed by RNS staff to ensure that financial activity is consistent with the approved project. Financial reviews may include, for example:

- confirming that reported funding received from RNS matches the payment schedule
- confirming that opening balances match the previous year’s closing balance
- reviewing whether spending appears consistent with expected project activity
- identifying potential concerns such as unusually slow spending or no spending

Because project timelines do not always align with the RNS fiscal year, financial reports may not always align perfectly with the approved project budget timeline.

 **Oversight & Audits**
RNS reserves the right to conduct financial audits and site visits at any time



5.3 ONGOING BALANCE CHECKS

RNS conducts ongoing balance checks to support responsible cash flow management and to ensure that payments are aligned with project spending.

Balance checks are typically initiated approximately one month prior to a scheduled payment. As part of this process, RNS will request confirmation from the host organization of the current balance of RNS funds held in the project account.

Each payment schedule establishes a balance threshold (typically 10% of the total RNS award value). Future payments are contingent on the project account balance falling below this threshold.

If the balance remains above the threshold, payment will be delayed until sufficient project spending has occurred. RNS may request additional information where needed to confirm account status or spending progress.

5.4 FINANCIAL AUDITS

RNS reserves the right to conduct financial audits of RNS-funded projects at any time, with advance notice. Audits may involve a detailed review of project expenditures and supporting documentation to confirm that funds were used in accordance with the approved budget and project scope.

Audits will be conducted:

- for large scale projects, particularly those with total investments of \$1 million or more
- on a random basis across other projects

Host organizations and recipients must comply with audit requests and provide any documentation required to support the review.

5.5 SITE VISITS

As part of financial oversight, RNS may conduct site visits to review equipment, infrastructure, or facilities supported by RNS funding. Site visits may include verification that:

- equipment purchased with RNS funding has been received and is in use
- renovations or construction supported by RNS funding have begun or have been completed
- project activities are being carried out as described in the approved proposal

Host organizations and recipients are expected to cooperate with these visits and provide access to relevant facilities where appropriate.



5.6 FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Both the host organization and the recipient share responsibility for ensuring that RNS funds are used appropriately:

- The host organization is responsible for administering funds through its financial systems and ensuring appropriate financial oversight.
- The recipient is responsible for ensuring that expenditures align with the approved project activities and budget.

Failure to comply with financial reporting or audit requirements may result in payment delays, additional oversight measures, or other actions determined by RNS.

5.7 HOST ORGANIZATION POLICIES

Costs related to human resources, procurement, and travel must align with the policies of the host organization administering the RNS funding. All expenditures must also comply with RNS requirements and be directly related to the approved research activities of the project. RNS funding is provided solely to support eligible research expenses and may not be used for non-research purposes, regardless of whether such expenses would otherwise be permitted under host organization policies.

Where differences arise between RNS requirements and host organization policies, RNS requirements will take precedence with respect to the eligibility and use of funds. Host organization policies will apply to the administration of eligible expenses (e.g., procurement processes, travel procedures), but do not expand or override what is considered an allowable expense under RNS funding.

The host organization retains the authority to review and approve project expenditures and may withhold approval of any expenditure that contravenes its internal policies or applicable RNS requirements.

Section 6: Reporting Requirements

Recipients of RNS funding are required to submit progress and final reports describing project activities, outcomes, and progress toward the approved milestones.

Reporting allows RNS to monitor the progress of funded projects and ensure that public investments are delivering the intended outcomes. Information provided in reports also supports RNS's broader accountability to the Province of Nova Scotia and contributes to public reporting on the impact of RNS investments.

Reports must be submitted according to the timelines outlined in the RA and payment schedule and must be approved by RNS before certain payments can be released.



Progress Reports

Required at least every 12 months (or at the midpoint for projects under 20 months).

Summarizes activities to date and confirms spending aligns with the budget.

Must be approved to unlock the next milestone payment.



Final Report

Due within 30 days of the project's end date.

Summarizes final outcomes, deliverables, and lessons learned.

Must be approved to unlock the final holdback



Warning: Late or missing reports will freeze payments. Continued failure to submit reports could result in cancelled funding and affect eligibility for future RNS grants.

6.1 PROGRESS REPORTS

Recipients must submit progress reports throughout the duration of the project, as detailed in the payment schedule. Progress reports provide an update on:

- ✓ project activities completed to date
- ✓ progress toward project milestones and deliverables
- ✓ confirmation that project spending is generally aligned with the approved budget
- ✓ any challenges or changes affecting the project
- ✓ anticipated activities for the next reporting period

Progress reporting is typically aligned with project milestones and the approved workplan.

At a minimum, recipients must submit one progress report for every 12 months of project activity. For shorter projects (generally 20 months or less), a progress report is typically required at the midpoint of the project.

Progress reports must be reviewed and approved by RNS before any associated payments can be released.



6.2 FINAL REPORT

A final report must be submitted once the project has been completed. It provides a summary of:

- ✓ the activities undertaken during the project
- ✓ final progress toward the project's milestones and deliverables
- ✓ the outcomes achieved and end user input
- ✓ lessons learned and future opportunities arising from the work

Final reports must be submitted within 30 days of the project end date.

The final report must be reviewed and approved by RNS before the holdback payment can be released.

6.3 REPORTS REQUIRING REVISION

All reports submitted to RNS are reviewed to assess progress against the approved project milestones, deliverables, and conditions of funding.

If a report does not sufficiently demonstrate progress for the reporting period, or is incomplete, RNS may determine that the report requires revision. In such cases, the report will not be approved, and recipients will be asked to address identified gaps and resubmit or provide supplemental information.

Where a report requires revision:

- the associated payment will not be released until a satisfactory report has been received and approved by RNS
- RNS may request additional information or clarification to support the resubmission
- a revised reporting timeline may be established, as appropriate

RNS will communicate expectations to the recipient to support timely resubmission.

6.4 LATE OR MISSING REPORTS

RNS sends reminders regarding upcoming reports beginning 30-60 days in advance of the due date. If a report is not received by the required deadline, RNS will send a final reminder to the recipient. If the report remains outstanding 30 days after the due date, RNS will contact the host organization to request assistance in obtaining the report.

Payments associated with reporting milestones will not be released until the required report has been received and approved.

If required reports remain outstanding after multiple attempts to obtain them, RNS may determine that the project should be terminated and any remaining funding cancelled. Failure to submit required final reports may also affect eligibility for future RNS funding.



6.5 USE OF REPORTING INFORMATION

Information provided through reports is used by RNS to monitor project progress and assess the outcomes of funded investments. Reporting information may also contribute to:

- RNS reporting to the provincial government, including annual and semi-annual reporting
- public summaries of funded projects published by RNS
- evaluation of sector-level outcomes and economic impact

RNS will contact recipients following the submission of a report if additional clarification or information is required.



Section 7: Ethics, Research Security, & Compliance

Recipients of RNS funding must ensure that their project complies with all applicable research ethics, research security, and regulatory requirements, as appropriate to the nature of the project.

RNS requires that funded research be conducted responsibly and in accordance with applicable organizational, provincial, and federal policies.

Failure to maintain required approvals or comply with applicable requirements may result in payment delays, suspension of funding, or other actions determined by RNS.

Research Ethics Approval

Where required, ethics approval must be maintained for the duration of the project. Approvals and renewals must be provided to RNS.

If ethics approval expires, payments will be suspended immediately.

Research Security Review

All projects hosted at Nova Scotia universities, community colleges, and health authorities are subject to research security review.

Ongoing Disclosure

Recipients must continuously disclose foreign affiliations, new research partnerships, or sensitive technologies. RNS may impose mitigation measures or suspend funding if risks are identified.

7.1 RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL

Projects that involve research requiring ethical review must obtain approval from the appropriate research ethics board (REB) before RNS funding can be released. Where ethics approval is required (and identified in the RA), recipients must provide documentation confirming that the project has received approval from the relevant ethics body.

In some cases, a host organization's ethics office may determine that certain project activities may proceed before full ethics approval is granted. In these cases, the host organization must provide documentation confirming:

- ➔ that limited project activities may proceed prior to full review
- ➔ the scope of activities permitted before full ethics approval
- ➔ the amount of RNS funding that may be released for the above activities before ethics approval is required
- ➔ the expected timeline for completion of the full ethics review



Where ethics approval is not required, documentation from the appropriate ethics authority confirming that ethics approval is not necessary must be provided.

For projects led by organizations that do not have an organizational research ethics board, RNS will work with the recipient to determine an appropriate approach to ethics review.

7.2 MI'KMAW ETHICS REVIEW

Projects involving research with Mi'kmaw communities, lands, knowledge, or data may require review and approval through the Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch.

Where applicable, recipients are responsible for engaging with the Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch and obtaining appropriate approvals in accordance with its requirements. This process is distinct from, and may be required in addition to, organizational research ethics board (REB) approval.

Recipients must provide documentation confirming that Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch requirements have been met, where applicable, prior to the release of funding.

Recipients should ensure that engagement with Mi'kmaw communities is conducted in a respectful, collaborative, and culturally appropriate manner, and that research activities align with applicable community protocols and expectations.

7.3 MAINTAINING ETHICS APPROVAL

Recipients are responsible for ensuring that all required ethics approvals remain in place for the duration of the project. In most cases, ethics approvals must be renewed annually. Recipients must provide RNS with updated ethics approvals as they are renewed. Recipients must also notify RNS if an ethics approval is revoked or updated prior to its established expiry date.

If an ethics approval expires or is revoked during the project, payments will be temporarily suspended until a renewed approval is provided.

Recipients must provide proof of renewed ethics approval within 30 days of the previous approval expiring. If renewal of ethics approval is delayed, recipients must notify RNS within the same 30-day period and provide an update on the expected timeline for renewal.

7.4 RESEARCH SECURITY REVIEW AND DISCLOSURE

All projects hosted at Nova Scotia universities, community colleges, and health authorities are subject to research security review. These reviews help identify potential risks related to research partnerships, sensitive technologies, or other national security considerations.

Recipients are responsible for disclosing any affiliations, partnerships, or sources of support that may be relevant to research security review. This may include, for example, research partnerships, foreign affiliations or appointments, sources of funding, or research areas that may involve sensitive technologies.



Recipients must notify RNS if relevant disclosures change during the course of the project.

If a research security review identifies a potential risk, RNS will assess the situation and determine the appropriate course of action. At its sole discretion, RNS may:

- impose mitigation measures
- require additional documentation or oversight
- suspend funding until concerns are addressed
- cancel funding if risks cannot be appropriately mitigated

Section 8: Partner Funding & Leveraged Funding

Many RNS-funded projects involve partner funding or leveraged support from other organizations. These contributions may include financial support from external funders or in-kind contributions that support the delivery of the project.

Recipients are responsible for ensuring that any partner or leveraged funding identified in the approved application is documented and maintained throughout the project where required.

Cash Contributions

Direct financial payments provided by a partner organization to support project costs. These funds are transferred to the recipient organization and used for eligible expenses in accordance with the approved project budget.

In-Kind Contributions

Non-cash resources provided by a partner organization that support the project, such as staff time, equipment use, materials, facilities, data, or services. These contributions must be necessary for the project and assigned a reasonable, documented value.

Partner Funding

Financial or in-kind contributions provided by organizations other than RNS to support a project.

Leveraged Funding

Additional financial or in-kind contributions that support the project beyond the RNS investment. Leveraged funding may come from industry partners, other funding agencies, or participating organizations.



8.1 PARTNER FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

Partner funding requirements vary depending on the RNS funding program:

- ➔ For projects funded through the **Focused Research Investments (FRI)** program, partner funding is required and forms part of the approved project financing.
- ➔ For projects funded through the **Ear to the Ground (E2G)** program, partner funding is encouraged but not required. Some E2G projects may be funded entirely by RNS.

Where partner funding is included in the approved project budget, recipients must ensure that these contributions are secured and maintained throughout the project.

IMPORTANT: RNS does not provide funding to match Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) awards. While a portion of RNS funding may enable the acquisition of infrastructure in coordination with a CFI-funded initiative, RNS funding is provided in support of a broader research project enabled by that infrastructure.

8.2 CONFIRMATION OF PARTNER FUNDING

Where partner funding is included in the approved project budget, recipients must provide documentation confirming the partner funding agreement before RNS funding can be released.

Documentation typically consists of a copy of the funding partner's agreement or other official documentation confirming the funding commitment.

Partner funding documentation may be required as a condition of funding tied to project payments.

8.3 IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

In-kind contributions are permitted and may form part of the overall project support. Examples of in-kind contributions may include:

- staff time contributed by partner organizations
- access to specialized equipment or facilities
- provision of data or technical resources
- other non-cash contributions supporting project activities

In-kind contributions are described in the original project application and must be reported to RNS during the course of the project.



8.4 CHANGES TO PARTNER FUNDING

Recipients must notify RNS if partner funding included in the approved project budget changes during the course of the project. If partner funding is reduced, withdrawn, or otherwise altered, the recipient must submit a project change request describing the nature of the change, the reason for the change, and how the project will proceed without the original partner funding.

RNS will review the request and determine whether the project may continue under revised circumstances.

Significant changes to partner funding may result in modification or cancellation of the project funding.

8.5 DUPLICATION OF FUNDING

RNS does not provide funding for project activities that are fully funded by another organization; the recipient must clearly demonstrate that there is no duplication or overlap between RNS funding and other sources of funding.

Where multiple funding sources support a project, recipients must ensure that each funding source is used for distinct project expenses or activities.

RNS may request additional information to confirm that there is no duplication of funding.

Section 9: Project Changes

Research projects may evolve over time as new information emerges or circumstances change. RNS recognizes that some adjustments may be necessary to ensure successful project delivery. However, recipients must ensure that the project continues to align with the approved milestones, workplan, and budget.

Recipients must notify RNS as soon as they become aware that a change to the project may be required. Certain changes require prior written approval from RNS before they can be implemented.

9.1 MINOR PROJECT CHANGES

Minor changes are adjustments that do not significantly affect the project's milestones, scope, or delivery. Examples of minor changes may include

- hiring a different individual for an approved project role
- selecting a different supplier for equipment or services
- minor operational adjustments within the approved workplan



Minor changes typically do not require formal approval from RNS, provided that the project milestones, budget categories, and overall scope remain unchanged.

9.2 CHANGES REQUIRING RNS APPROVAL

Certain project changes require prior written approval from RNS before they can be implemented. Recipients must obtain approval from RNS before implementing these types of changes.

BUDGET MODIFICATIONS

- reallocating funds between major cost categories
- creating new budget categories not included in the approved budget
- budget changes exceeding the permitted variance thresholds

KEY PERSONNEL CHANGES

- adding, removing, or replacing a recipient
- significant changes to key members of the project team

PROJECT SCOPE OR MILESTONE CHANGES

- changes to the research milestones or expected outcomes
- significant changes to project activities or methods

WORKPLAN CHANGES

- modifications to timelines, deliverables, or major milestones

LOCATION CHANGES

- moving project activities to a different location or organization

OTHER SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

- changes to the project start date must comply with Section 1.6 of this guide
- any change that may affect the delivery, outcomes, or administration of the project



9.3 SUBMITTING A CHANGE REQUEST

Requests for project changes must be submitted to RNS as soon as the need for a change is identified and before the proposed change is implemented. Requests must include:

- ✓ a description of the proposed change
- ✓ the rationale for the change
- ✓ updated documentation where applicable (e.g., revised budget or workplan)

RNS will review the request and determine whether the proposed change may proceed.



Warning: Recipients should not assume that change requests will automatically be approved.

9.4 TRANSFERS TO ANOTHER HOST ORGANIZATION

As a general rule, RNS funding remains with the originally approved host organization for the duration of the project and is **not transferable**. In rare and exceptional circumstances, RNS may, at its sole discretion, approve a request to transfer funding to another eligible host organization within Nova Scotia. Such requests will only be considered where:

- the recipient has moved to another eligible organization within Nova Scotia;
- the project can continue under appropriate oversight at the proposed host organization;
- both the original and proposed host organizations agree to the transfer.

All transfer requests must receive prior **written approval from RNS**. Approval is not guaranteed.

RNS will assess whether the proposed host organization meets the requirements to administer the funding and may require additional agreements or documentation before approving the transfer.

Funding cannot be transferred to organizations outside of Nova Scotia. Equipment purchased with RNS funding must remain with an eligible Nova Scotia-based organization and may not be transferred outside of the province.

9.5 CHANGE IN PROJECT LEADERSHIP

Recipients must continue to meet the eligibility requirements of the funding program for the duration of the project. If a recipient no longer meets the eligibility requirements, leaves the host organization or is otherwise unable to continue leading the project, the host organization must notify RNS as soon as possible.

Where appropriate, the host organization may propose a new recipient to continue the project. RNS will review the proposed replacement to determine whether the individual meets the eligibility requirements for the funding program.

If a suitable replacement cannot be identified, the project will be terminated, and the host organization will return all unspent funds.



Section 10: Extensions & Leaves

In some cases, recipients may require additional time to complete their project or may experience temporary interruptions that affect project delivery.

RNS recognizes that research projects can evolve and may require adjustments to timelines to achieve the approved milestones. Recipients must notify RNS of any project interruptions or submit requests for extensions as soon as they occur. Supporting documentation may be required, as outlined below.


Changes to the project start date are not considered to be extensions and must comply with Section 1.6.

Extensions and leaves are subject to review and approval by RNS.

10.1 PROJECT EXTENSIONS



Recipients may request an extension to the project timeline of up to one year past the initial end date if additional time is required to complete the approved work, or they have a leave of absence during the award period. All extensions approved by RNS are **no-cost extensions**, meaning that no additional funding will be provided beyond the amount specified in the RA.

 Extension requests must be submitted at least 30 days before the project end date. Requests submitted after this deadline require justification for the late request and may not be considered.

Extension requests must include:

- ✓ a summary of progress made on the project to date
- ✓ confirmation that the project continues to align with the approved milestones
- ✓ confirmation that project spending remains consistent with the approved budget
- ✓ a description of the remaining work to be completed
- ✓ a revised timeline for project completion



If the extension request involves changes to project milestones or budget variances, these must be clearly described and are subject to RNS approval. Supporting documentation (such as a revised budget or workplan) may be required.

Approval of extension requests is not guaranteed. Extensions are intended to address unforeseen circumstances and are not intended to accommodate routine delays or competing priorities.

Where an extension has already been granted, any subsequent requests will be carefully assessed and must be supported by clear and compelling justification. Additional extensions will only be approved in exceptional circumstances.

10.2 IMPACT OF EXTENSIONS ON PAYMENTS

Where an extension is approved, the project timeline and payment schedule will be adjusted to reflect the revised project end date. Any outstanding conditions of funding, reporting requirements, or financial documentation must continue to be satisfied before payments can be released.

The final holdback payment will continue to be withheld until all project requirements have been completed and the final report has been approved by RNS.

10.3 LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Recipients must notify RNS if they will be taking a leave of absence that may affect project delivery and must provide documentation confirming approval of the leave from the host organization. Leave provisions apply only to the recipient and do not apply to other project staff or team members.

Leaves of Absence (Recipient(s) only)



Eligible Leaves

Parental, medical, bereavement leaves.
Project may be temporarily suspended or continue with approved alternate personnel



Ineligible Leaves

Sabbatical, administrative, study, or training leaves.

When a leave occurs, the host organization must work with RNS to determine how, or if, the project will proceed during the leave period.

Project Continuation During Leave

In some cases, the project may continue during the leave of absence if appropriate personnel are available to carry out the project activities. In these situations, RNS may allow project activities and associated spending to continue.



Temporary Suspension of Project Activities

If the project cannot reasonably continue during the leave of absence, RNS may determine that project activities and associated spending should be temporarily suspended. During a suspension, project activities are paused, project funds may be temporarily frozen, and project timelines will be adjusted where appropriate.



PART III:

MONITORING AND IMPACT

QUICK SUMMARY

RNS monitors funded projects to ensure that public investments in research support meaningful outcomes for Nova Scotia.

Key things to know:

- ✓ RNS collects information through progress reports, final reports, financial reports, and project updates.
- ✓ Project information may be used to support public reporting, communications, and evaluation of RNS investments.
- ✓ Recipients may be asked to provide additional information or follow-up updates after a project has ended.
- ✓ RNS funding must be acknowledged in public communications, and recipients must notify RNS before major announcements related to their project.

Section 11: Evaluation & Impact

RNS evaluates funded projects to assess outcomes and ensure the effective use of public funds.

Information collected through reporting and project monitoring is used to measure outcomes, support program evaluation and inform funding decisions and program design.

Funding recipients are required to report on project progress and outcomes in accordance with established requirements. Projects are expected to demonstrate measurable results and contribution to Nova Scotia's economy.

11.1 MONITORING PROJECT PROGRESS

RNS monitors funded projects through progress reports, financial reporting, and other project updates. This information allows RNS to:

- track progress toward approved project objectives and milestones
- monitor the use of RNS funding
- assess how projects contribute to sector priorities and economic outcomes
- identify emerging opportunities or challenges within funded projects

Recipients are expected to provide accurate and timely information to support this monitoring process.



11.2 FOLLOW-UP INFORMATION REQUESTS

In some cases, RNS may request additional information beyond the standard reporting requirements. This may occur when:

- additional clarification is required regarding reported project outcomes
- certain milestones or deliverables require further documentation
- project results are still being finalized after the project end date
- Spending is slower than planned

Follow-up requests may take the form of a short, written update, additional documentation, or a follow-up report. Recipients are expected to respond to these requests in a timely manner.

11.3 POST-PROJECT IMPACT TRACKING

RNS may continue to monitor the outcomes of funded projects after the official project end date. From time to time, RNS may request follow-up information to better understand the longer-term impacts of funded research. This may include information on the adoption or uptake of project results, commercialization or technology development activities, partnerships or collaborations arising from the project, and any economic benefits resulting from the work.

This information helps RNS demonstrate the value of publicly funded research and supports continued investment in Nova Scotia's research and innovation ecosystem.

11.4 PUBLIC REPORTING OF PROJECT OUTCOMES

Information collected through project reporting may be used in public funding announcements, for public reporting and communications purposes. This may include the publication of project summaries on the RNS website, updates included in RNS annual or semi-annual reports, or communications materials highlighting the outcomes of RNS investments.

RNS will not disclose confidential or proprietary information without appropriate authorization. Recipients should ensure that information provided through project reporting is suitable for potential public use.



Section 12: Public Acknowledgment & Communications

RNS investments are supported by public funding from the Province of Nova Scotia. Recipients **must** acknowledge RNS support in communications related to funded projects



The Golden Rule

Do not publicly announce your funded project until RNS has formally announced the funding

The 5-Day Rule

You must notify RNS at least five business days in advance of major public announcements, press releases, major fundings, or commercialization events to ensure coordinated messaging.

12.1 ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RNS FUNDING

Recipients must acknowledge RNS's support in communications related to the funded project. This includes, where applicable:

- publications and reports
- conference presentations
- press releases
- websites and project pages
- social media posts
- public presentations or events

Acknowledgment must include RNS's name and [logo](#).

Equipment purchased with RNS funding must display the RNS logo. Stickers will be provided for this purpose.

12.2 RNS ANNOUNCEMENT OF FUNDING

Recipients must not publicly announce or promote their RNS-funded project until RNS has formally announced. RNS will advise recipients when this announcement will take place.



12.3 ADVANCE NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Recipients must notify RNS **at least five business days** in advance of major public announcements related to their RNS-funded project. Advance notice allows RNS to coordinate communications where appropriate.

12.4 USE OF RNS BRANDING

Recipients must use the current RNS logo when acknowledging RNS support in public materials. Requests for logos or branding guidance may be directed to the RNS Communications Manager.



PART IV:

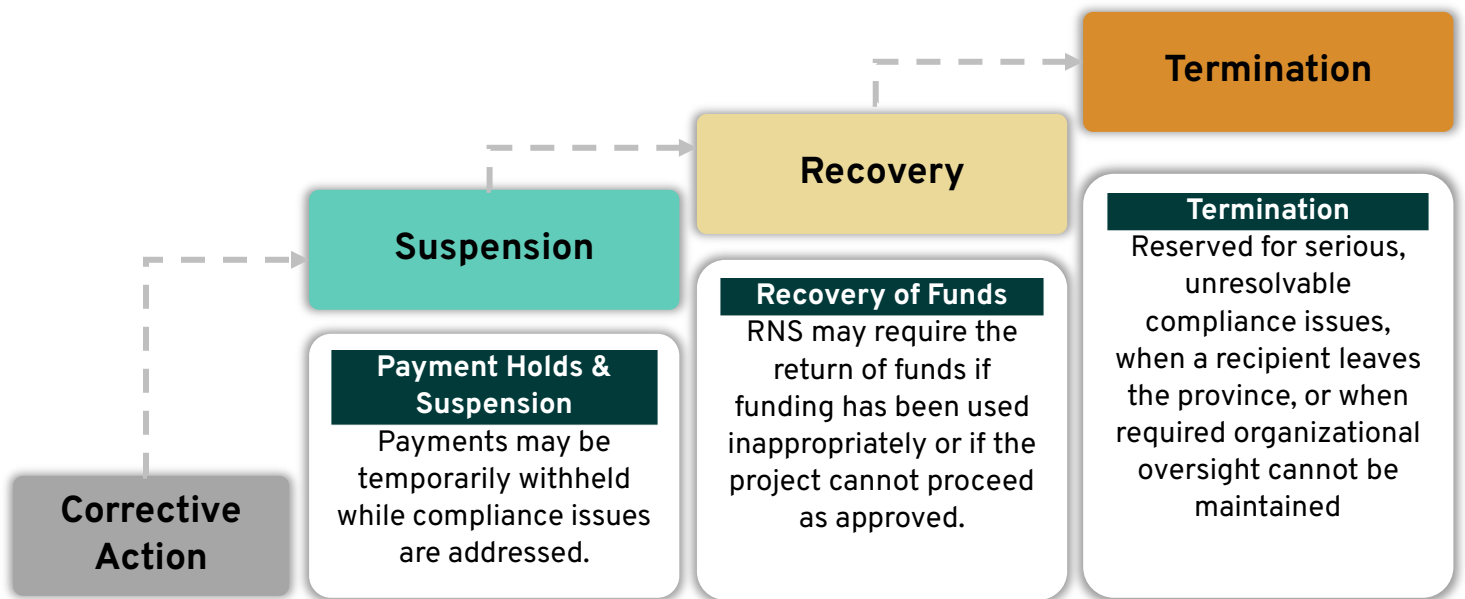
COMPLIANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT

QUICK SUMMARY

Recipients and host organizations must administer RNS funding in accordance with the RA, this guide, and applicable RNS policies.

Key things to know:

- ✓ Non-compliance may include failure to submit reporting, misuse of funds, failure to maintain approvals, or failure to notify RNS of significant project changes.
- ✓ Where issues arise, RNS will work with recipients and host organizations to resolve them where possible.
- ✓ RNS may suspend payments, require corrective action, recover funds, or terminate funding where necessary to protect public investment.





Section 13: Breach, Risk, & Remedies

Recipients and host organizations share responsibility for ensuring that RNS investments are administered in accordance with the RA, this guide, and applicable RNS policies and Organizational Agreements. As a steward of public funds, RNS may take action when projects are not administered in accordance with these requirements. Where possible, RNS will work with recipients and host organizations to address issues and support corrective action. However, RNS retains the authority to take appropriate measures to protect the integrity of its investments.

13.1 NON-COMPLIANCE

Non-compliance may occur when recipients or host organizations do not follow the requirements outlined in the RA, this guide, or other applicable RNS policies or agreements. Examples of non-compliance may include, but are not limited to:

- failure to meet reporting requirements
- failure to maintain required approvals (e.g., ethics approvals)
- use of funds for purposes not aligned with the approved project budget or scope
- use of funds outside of the funding period
- failure to comply with conditions of funding
- providing inaccurate or misleading information to RNS
- failure to notify RNS of significant project changes

Recipients and host organizations are expected to address any compliance issues promptly when identified.

Funding Period

The period during which RNS funds may be used for the approved project, beginning on the project start date and ending on the project end date.

13.2 CORRECTIVE ACTION

When compliance issues arise, RNS will work with recipients and host organizations to identify appropriate corrective actions. These actions may include requesting additional documentation or clarification, requiring specific steps to bring the project back into compliance, or modifying project timelines or reporting requirements as appropriate.

Recipients and host organizations are expected to cooperate fully with RNS to resolve any compliance issues in a timely manner.



13.3 SUSPENSION OF FUNDING

RNS may temporarily suspend funding if concerns arise regarding the administration or progress of a project. This may occur when required reporting has not been submitted, required approvals have lapsed, conditions of funding have not been met, or concerns arise regarding the use of project funds.

During a suspension, additional payments may be withheld until the issue has been addressed to the satisfaction of RNS.

13.4 RECOVERY OF FUNDS

RNS may require the return of funds if it determines that funding has been used inappropriately or that the project cannot proceed as approved. This may occur in circumstances such as project cancellation, misuse of funds, failure to meet key requirements of the RA, or an inability to complete the project as approved.

Where recovery of funds is required, RNS will issue a return-of-funds invoice to the host organization.

13.5 TERMINATION OF FUNDING

In serious cases of non-compliance, or where a project cannot reasonably proceed, RNS may terminate project funding. This may occur where compliance issues cannot be resolved, required approvals cannot be obtained or maintained, project leadership or organizational oversight cannot be maintained, or project activities are no longer aligned with the approved scope.

RNS will notify the recipient and host organization in writing if funding is terminated.

In addition, serious or repeated instances of non-compliance may impact the eligibility of the recipient and/or host organization to receive or hold future RNS funding.



Section 14: Data & Confidentiality

RNS collects information about funded projects to administer its programs, monitor project progress, and report on the outcomes of publicly funded research investments. Recipients are responsible for ensuring that the information they provide to RNS is accurate and complete.

14.1 USE OF PROJECT INFORMATION

Information provided to RNS through applications, reporting, and other project documentation may be used for program administration, evaluation, and reporting purposes. This includes activities such as monitoring project progress, assessing project outcomes and impacts, reporting to the Government of Nova Scotia, preparing program and investment reports, and developing communications materials related to funded projects.

Information collected through project reporting helps RNS demonstrate the value and impact of publicly funded research in Nova Scotia.

14.2 PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF PROJECT INFORMATION

RNS may publicly disclose certain non-confidential information related to funded projects. This may include the project title and summary, the names and affiliations of recipients and participating organizations, the amount of RNS funding awarded, and general descriptions of project outcomes or impacts.

This information may be published on the RNS website, included in public reports, or used in communications materials highlighting RNS investments.

14.3 EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY (EDIA) INFORMATION

As part of the application process, RNS collects voluntary Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) information from recipients through the Jura application system. This information is collected to help RNS monitor the equity of its funding processes, assess the inclusiveness of its investment programs, and support the ongoing improvement of policies and funding practices.

EDIA information is used only for internal monitoring and analysis purposes. Individual-level data is not shared publicly. Data may be aggregated and reported internally to help RNS evaluate program performance and ensure equitable access to funding opportunities.



14.4 CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

RNS will make reasonable efforts to protect confidential or proprietary information provided by recipients. Confidential information will not be publicly disclosed without appropriate authorization, except where disclosure is required for program administration, reporting obligations, or as otherwise required by law.

Recipients should clearly identify any information submitted to RNS that they consider to be confidential.

RNS will store, manage, and securely dispose of confidential information in accordance with its applicable policies and procedures.

COMMON PITFALLS TO AVOID

Managing a funded research project involves many moving parts. The following are some common issues that can delay payments or create administrative challenges for recipients and host organizations.

Being aware of these pitfalls can help ensure that projects proceed smoothly.

Not Reviewing the Research Agreement

Recipients and host organizations are responsible for reviewing the RA and all associated documents before accepting funding.

Many issues arise when project teams are unfamiliar with key requirements related to:

- conditions of funding
- reporting timelines
- eligible use of funds
- project change procedures

Carefully reviewing the RA at the outset can help prevent misunderstandings later in the project.

Delays in Meeting Conditions of Funding

Funding will not be released until all required conditions of funding have been met.

Common delays include:

- ethics approvals not submitted or renewed on time
- partner funding agreements not yet finalized
- missing documentation required for large purchases
- incomplete project planning documents
- waiting too long before setting the start date

Recipients should begin preparing required documentation as early as possible to avoid delays in project start or payment release.

Waiting Too Long to Notify RNS of Changes

Research projects often evolve, but changes must be communicated to RNS before they are implemented.

Common examples include:

- budget reallocations or slow/delayed spending
- changes to project scope or timelines
- changes to project personnel
- partner funding changes

If in doubt about whether prior approval is required, recipients should contact RNS for support before making the change.

Allowing Ethics Approvals to Expire

Projects requiring research ethics approval must maintain active ethics approval for the duration of the project.

Payments may be suspended if ethics approval expires or is revoked.

Recipients should track ethics approval expiry dates carefully and begin renewal processes early to avoid interruptions.

Leaving Reporting Until the Last Minute

Progress and final reports are essential for monitoring project outcomes and releasing payments.

Late or incomplete reports are one of the most common causes of payment delays.

Recipients will receive advance reminders of reporting due dates and are encouraged to begin preparing reports well in advance of the submission deadline.

Forgetting to Notify RNS About Public Announcements

Recipients must notify RNS at least five business days before major public announcements related to their project.

Advance notice allows RNS to coordinate communications and ensure appropriate acknowledgment of RNS funding.

Waiting Too Late to Request an Extension

Extension requests must be submitted at least 30 days before the project end date.

Requests submitted after this deadline may not be considered.

Recipients should monitor project timelines regularly and contact RNS early if additional time may be required.

Forgetting About the Holdback

RNS-funded projects include a holdback (typically 10% of the total funding), which is released once project requirements have been met.

In some cases, recipients and host organizations may plan spending based only on funds received to date and stop spending before the full value of the award has been used.

This can result in a portion of the approved funding remaining unspent and may limit the overall delivery of the project.

Recipients should plan spending based on the total approved funding amount and review the payment schedule to understand when holdback funding will be released.

Continuing Project Activities After Final Report Submission

The final report is intended to reflect the completion of all approved project activities and objectives. Submitting a final report confirms that the project has ended and that all eligible expenses have been incurred within the approved project timeline.

Spending must not continue after the project end date. Any expenses incurred after this date are not eligible.

APPENDIX B:

CONTACT PATHWAYS

Recipients and host organizations may contact RNS with questions related to the administration of their funded project.

To ensure your inquiry is directed to the appropriate staff member, please contact the RNS team member responsible for your program.

E2G Projects

Ear to the Ground (E2G) and legacy projects

Contact: Kirstin Mosher
Research Support Officer
Kirstin.Mosher@researchns.ca

FRI Projects

Focused Research Investments (FRI) projects

Contact: Kelly Hancock
Research Support Officer
Kelly.Hancock@researchns.ca

WHEN IN DOUBT, REACH OUT

If you are unsure which program your project falls under, you may contact RNS using the information below and your inquiry will be directed to the appropriate team member.



Recipients must ensure that contact information associated with their Jura account remains current to receive project-related communications.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can I move funds between budget lines?

Minor reallocations within or between budget categories are generally permitted. However, budget changes greater than 10% of any budget line, the creation of new budget categories, or significant changes to how funds are used require prior approval from RNS.

Recipients must contact RNS before implementing any changes that affect the approved project budget.

Can I start spending funds as soon as I receive my award letter?

No. Project spending may only begin once:

- the RA has been agreed to in writing, and
- all conditions of funding have been met

RNS funding cannot be used for expenses incurred before the established project start date.

What happens if my ethics approval expires during the project?

Projects requiring ethics approval must maintain active ethics approval for the duration of the project.

If ethics approval expires or is revoked, payments will be temporarily suspended until renewed approval is provided.

Recipients must provide renewed ethics approval within 30 days of the previous approval expiring or notify RNS if renewal is delayed.

What if my partner funding changes during the project?

Recipients must notify RNS if partner funding included in the approved project budget is reduced, withdrawn, or otherwise changed.

RNS will review the situation and determine whether the project may continue under revised circumstances.

For FRI projects, where partner funding is required, significant changes to partner funding may affect the continuation of the project.

Can I extend my project timeline?

Recipients may request a no-cost extension of up to one year if additional time is required to complete the project.

Extension requests must be submitted at least 30 days before the project end date and must include:

- a summary of project progress to date
- rationale for the extension request and explanation of cause of delay
- confirmation that the project remains aligned with the approved milestones and budget
- a revised timeline for completion

What happens if I need to change the project team?

Recipients must notify RNS if there are significant changes to project leadership or key personnel, including the recipient.

RNS will review the proposed change and determine whether the project may continue with the revised team.

Can I move my project to another organization?

In exceptional circumstances, projects may be transferred to another eligible host organization within Nova Scotia, with prior approval from RNS.

Projects cannot be transferred to organizations outside of Nova Scotia.

Who owns equipment purchased using RNS funding?

Equipment purchased with RNS funding becomes the property of the host organization.

Equipment must remain in Nova Scotia and should continue to support research or related activities for its expected lifespan, typically five years from the date of purchase.

When will I receive the final payment for my project?

All RNS-funded projects include a holdback (typically 10% of the total funding), which is released in accordance with the approved payment schedule. In most cases, the holdback is issued at the end of the project once all reporting, financial, and project requirements have been completed and approved by RNS.

What happens if there are unused funds at the end of the project?

Any unused funds greater than \$100 must be returned to RNS.

RNS will issue a return-of-funds invoice to the host organization for the amount to be returned.

Can I publicly announce my project after receiving funding?

Recipients must not publicly announce their RNS-funded project until RNS has formally announced the funding.

Recipients must also notify RNS at least five business days in advance of major public announcements related to their project.

What should I do if something changes in my project?

Recipients must contact RNS as soon as possible if changes arise that may affect the project.

Examples include:

- budget changes
- timeline changes
- personnel changes
- partner funding changes
- project scope changes

If in doubt, recipients are encouraged to contact RNS before making the change.

GLOSSARY

The following definitions are provided to clarify key terms used throughout this guide and the RA.

Cash Contributions: Direct financial contributions from a partner organization used to support eligible project expenses.

Conditions of Funding: Requirements that must be met before RNS funding can be released. These may be tied to specific payments in the RA.

End User: An individual or group that directly applies research outputs to achieve real-world outcomes, excluding use for further research.

Funding Period: The approved timeframe during which RNS funds may be used, from the project start date to the project end date.

Holdback: A portion of RNS funding (typically 10%) withheld until project completion and fulfillment of all reporting and financial requirements.

In-Kind Contributions: Non-cash resources provided by a partner organization (e.g., staff time, equipment, materials, or services) that support the project and are assigned a documented value.

Host Organization: The organization responsible for administering RNS funding and overseeing financial management and compliance on behalf of the recipient. Examples may include universities, health authorities, companies, or other eligible organizations.

Leveraged Funding: Additional cash or in-kind contributions that support the project beyond the RNS investment. Leveraged funding is always encouraged and may be required, depending on the funding program.

Milestones: The approved project objectives used to track progress, support reporting, and inform the release of funding.

Partner Funding: Cash or in-kind contributions from external organizations included in the approved project budget. For projects funded through the FRI program, partner funding is a required component of project financing. For projects funded through the E2G, partner funding is encouraged but not required.

Payment Schedule: A document outlining the timing, amount, and conditions of payments, including associated reporting and milestone requirements.

Recipient: The individual or individuals responsible for leading the project and ensuring it is delivered in accordance with the approved scope, milestones, and budget (may also be referred to as the project lead(s)).

Research Agreement (RA): The formal agreement outlining the terms and conditions of RNS funding between RNS, the recipient, and/or the host organization. This may take the form of a Research Project Agreement or a Collaborative Research Agreement.

***Collaborative Research Agreement:** A comprehensive agreement between Research Nova Scotia, the recipient, and the host organization(s) outlining the terms and conditions of RNS funding, used where a more detailed or customized arrangement is required.*

***Research Project Agreement:** An agreement between Research Nova Scotia and the recipient outlining the terms and conditions of RNS funding and the recipient's responsibilities.*

Statement of Account (SOA): A financial report prepared by the host organization summarizing project expenditures and the balance of RNS funds. Submitted annually by fiscal year and at project close-out, with a final SOA showing a \$0 balance required for closure.