RESEARCH NOVA SCOTIA

A Strategic Guide to the

Ear To The Ground (E2G) Expression Of Interest (EOI)

Aligning research with economic prosperity in Nova Scotia



Fall 2026, Round 3

01

SECTION 01

THE E2G INVESTMENT MODEL

ECONOMIC OUTCOMES OVER OUTPUTS

RESEARCH NOVA SCOTIA

The E2G Engine: From Research to Economic Prosperity

A connected system designed to deliver measurable economic outcomes for Nova Scotia

SECTOR-BUILDING FOCUS

Projects strengthen capabilities, create value beyond a single organization, and build a stronger, more innovative sector ecosystem.

PATHWAY TO IMPACT

Clear, credible route from research to real-world use and adoption.

ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

Our ultimate purpose

- Policy or Regulatory Improvement
- Productivity Gains
- Market Creation or Growth

PRIORITY SECTORS

Aligned with Nova Scotia's priority sectors where research can drive the greatest economic impact.

- Natural Resources, Climate Change & Clean Energy
- Life Sciences & Health Sciences
- Construction & Transportation

DEMAND SIGNAL

Evidence that end users need the work and will use the results if successful.

THE FIVE PILLARS OF RESEARCH

The foundation of all E2G-supported work. Proposals must demonstrate that the research is:

NOVEL

Creates new knowledge or approaches.

CREATIVE

Involves original thinking and innovation.

UNCERTAIN

Addresses a question with an unknown outcome.

SYSTEMATIC

Uses a rigorous and reproducible approach.

TRANSFERABLE

Knowledge can be applied, and benefits others, beyond the project.

Research quality is the foundation. Economic impact is the purpose.

THE ACADEMIC GRANT MODEL

Starting Point:
Scientific Curiosity & Knowledge Gap

Driver:
The Researcher's Interest

Endpoint:
Peer-Reviewed Publication & Academic Advancement

THE E2G INVESTMENT MODEL

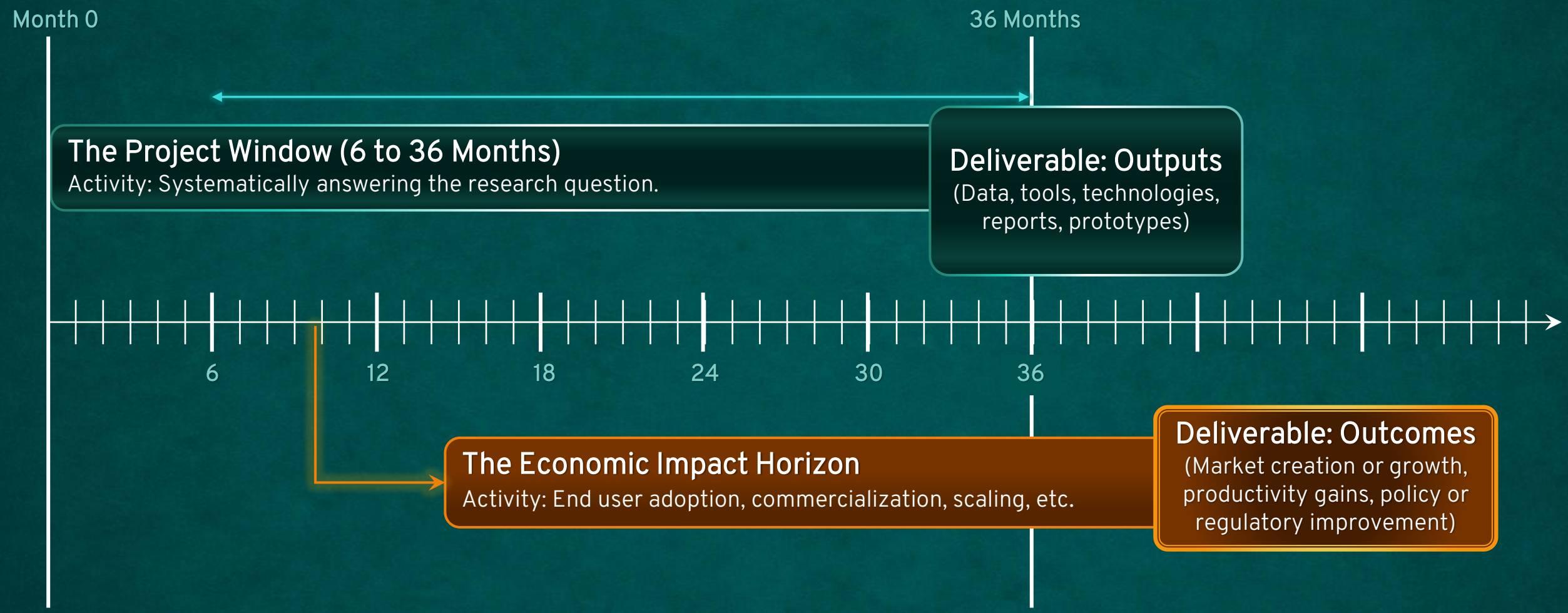
Starting Point:
Sector-Level Economic Problem in Nova Scotia

Driver:
End User Demand Signal

Endpoint:
Real-World Use, Uptake, and Measurable Economic Growth

E2G IS NOT A RESEARCH GRANT.
IT IS AN INVESTMENT IN ECONOMIC GROWTH, WHERE SYSTEMATIC RESEARCH IS THE ENGINE.

The Impact Horizon: Outputs vs. Outcomes



ECONOMIC IMPACT DOES NOT NEED TO OCCUR DURING THE PROJECT, BUT THE PATHWAY TO REALIZING IT MUST BE CLEAR, CREDIBLE, AND DOCUMENTED IN YOUR E2G EOI APPLICATION.

PRIMARY & SECONDARY ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

E2G investments must deliver measurable economic outcomes for Nova Scotia

PRIMARY ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

Projects must identify ONE primary outcome.

MARKET CREATION OR GROWTH

Increased economic value through new products, services, value chains, or market expansion

PRODUCTIVITY GAINS

Improved efficiency, effectiveness, or output relative to the resources required (labour, capital, energy, materials, or time)

POLICY OR REGULATORY IMPROVEMENT

Improved regulation, standards, guidance or policy that lowers uncertainty, reduces compliance cost, and enables market expansion.

OPTIONAL SECONDARY OUTCOMES

These outcomes strengthen impact and drive long-term value.

WORKFORCE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Enduring increases in the skills and organizational capabilities needed to adopt, operate, adapt and improve research-based innovations

FUNDING LEVERAGE

Attraction of co-investment from industry, other levels of government, philanthropy and private financing.

All funded projects must demonstrate a credible pathway to at least ONE primary economic outcome.

MAPPING THE PATHWAY TO IMPACT

1 SECTOR CHALLENGE

A real and significant problem or opportunity facing a sector, system, or community.

What problem matters to the sector?

2 RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Systematic investigation and experimentation to generate new knowledge, solutions and evidence.

What research will address it?

3 OUTPUTS

Tangible products including tools, data, methods, models, technologies, or prototypes.

What tangible outputs will be created?

4 END USER ADOPTION

End users, organizations, or systems integrate and apply the outputs in practice.

How will end users adopt the outputs?

5 ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

Measurable economic benefits such as market growth, productivity gains, or policy/regulatory improvements.

What economic change results?

STRONG E2G PROPOSALS PRESENT A CLEAR, UNBROKEN LINE OF SIGHT FROM THE INITIAL PROBLEM TO ECONOMIC OUTCOMES.

PRIORITY SECTORS: ALIGN TO THE OBJECTIVE, NOT JUST THE TOPIC

E2G investments must advance **specific sector objectives** that drive economic impact for Nova Scotia.

NATURAL RESOURCES, CLIMATE CHANGE & CLEAN ENERGY

OBJECTIVES

- Ensure growth in sustainable and responsible development of Nova Scotia's natural resources
- Strengthen exploration, mining, mid-stream processing of critical minerals, and clean technologies
- Climate change mitigation, adaptation and clean energy solutions

EXAMPLE AREAS (not exhaustive)

- Critical minerals
- Renewable energy technologies
- Carbon capture and storage

LIFE SCIENCES & HEALTH SCIENCES

OBJECTIVES

- Improve health outcomes for humans, animals, and plants
- Advance Healthcare delivery, patient care, and system performance through research and innovation
- Develop new methods to create materials, foods, and other products using bio processes

EXAMPLE AREAS (not exhaustive)

- Medical technology
- AI/digital technologies in healthcare
- Food security and self-sufficiency

CONSTRUCTION & TRANSPORTATION

OBJECTIVES

- Improve infrastructure to support population growth in NS
- Increase efficiency of movement of people and products

EXAMPLE AREAS (not exhaustive)

- Sustainable construction technology
- Innovative building methods
- Urban and rural transportation solutions

SECTOR FIT IS ONLY THE STARTING POINT.
Strong E2G proposals show how the project advances a SPECIFIC PRIORITY SECTOR OBJECTIVE

Alignment to a sector objective is required and will be assessed.

KEY RESOURCES INFORMING THESE SECTORS	Critical Minerals Strategy	Climate Change Plan for Clean Growth	Action for Health	Nova Scotia Food and Beverage	Our Homes, Action for Housing	Regional Transportation Plan

WHO ARE END USERS?

THE BRIDGE BETWEEN RESEARCH AND REAL-WORLD IMPACT

E2G invests in research designed to be used.

END USERS

Organizations or individuals that directly apply or implement research outputs to achieve real-world outcomes.

Research colleagues who use the outputs only for further research are not considered end users.

NOT AUTOMATICALLY END USERS

- Academic collaborators
- Research peers
- Citation audiences
- General public awareness

Unless they are directly applying or implementing the outputs to achieve outcomes.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

OUTPUTS

Tools, technologies, methods, data, etc.

END USER ADOPTION

Outputs are applied or implemented.

ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

Growth, productivity, improvement

EXAMPLES OF END USERS

INDUSTRY / COMPANIES
Using technologies, tools, methods or products to improve performance and create value.

HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS
Implementing diagnostics, clinical technologies or workflows to improve patient outcomes.

GOVERNMENT / REGULATORS
Applying research to inform standards, policy, regulations or procurement frameworks.

SECTOR OPERATORS
Deploying operational improvements, new practices or infrastructure solutions in their organization or across the sector.

COMMUNITY / NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS
Implementing evidence-informed interventions or scalable service models.

END USERS HELP VALIDATE THE PATHWAY TO IMPACT.
They provide the critical link between research outputs and economic outcomes.

Strong proposals clearly identify end users, describe their role, and demonstrate intent or commitment to adopt.

WHAT DOES SECTOR-BUILDING MEAN?

E2G invests in research that strengthens the capacity, competitiveness, resilience, or growth potential of a **broader sector** – not just a single organization.

NOT SECTOR-BUILDING

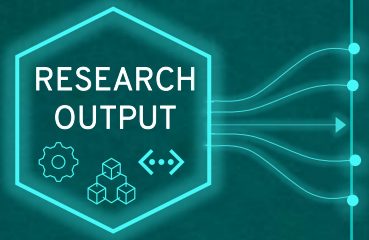
Single-Organization Benefit



- ✕ Internal-only optimization
- ✕ Proprietary solutions with no broader adoption pathway
- ✕ Benefits confined to one entity
- ✕ No meaningful diffusion across the sector

THE RESEARCH OUTPUT

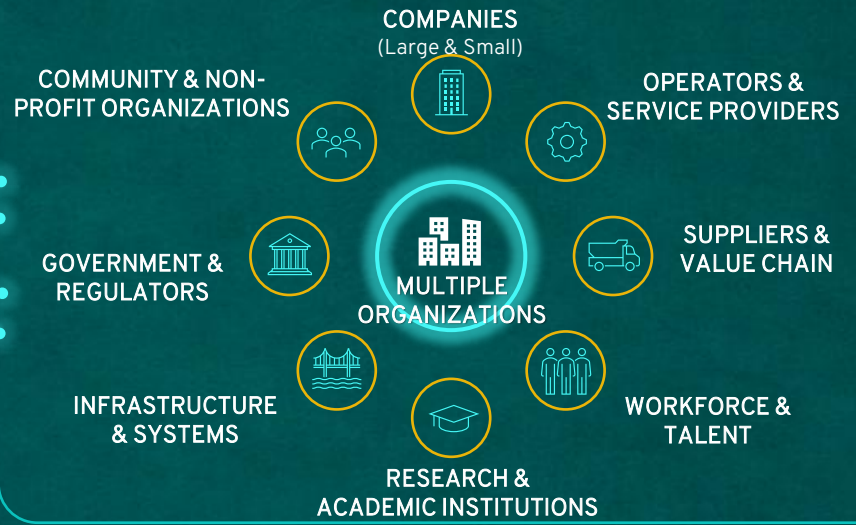
The outputs become a transferable asset that can be adopted, adapted and built upon.



Tools • Technologies • Methods
Data • Standards • Know-how

SECTOR-BUILDING

Sector-Wide Benefit Through Diffusion



- ✓ Wider adoption and use
- ✓ Stronger competitiveness
- ✓ Resilient supply chains
- ✓ Increased productivity
- ✓ Economic growth
- ✓ Greater societal benefit

A PROPOSAL CAN INVOLVE ONE ORGANIZATION – BUT THE BENEFITS MUST EXTEND BEYOND IT.

It's not about how many partners are on the project.
It's about how far the impact will reach.

WHAT SECTOR-BUILDING CAN LOOK LIKE

SHARED PLATFORMS & TECHNOLOGIES
Tools or platforms that multiple organizations can adopt and build on.

STANDARDS & PROTOCOLS
Common approaches that enable consistency, interoperability and trust.

WORKFORCE CAPABILITY
Building skills, training and talent that strengthen the sector's capacity.

NEW SUPPLY CHAINS & VALUE CHAINS
Strengthening connections and creating new economic opportunities across the sector.

SHARED INFRASTRUCTURE OR DATASETS
Foundational assets that enable innovation and decision-making at scale.

TRANSFERABLE METHODS & TOOLS
Approaches that can be applied in different contexts across the sector.

E2G PRIORITIZES SECTOR-WIDE BENEFIT OVER ISOLATED ORGANIZATIONAL GAIN.

Economic impact occurs when research outputs diffuse beyond a single organization

WHAT COUNTS AS RESEARCH?

E2G supports research – not routine implementation or service delivery.

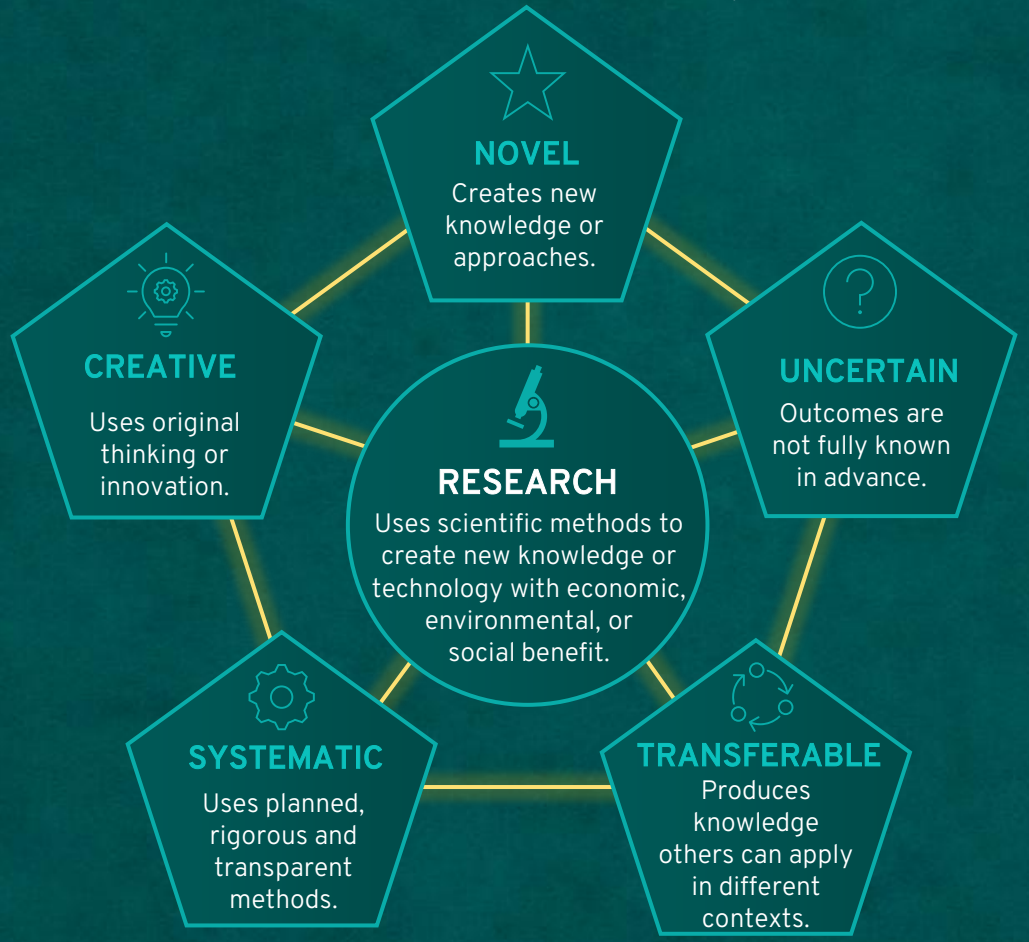
MEETS RNS DEFINITION

Activities that advance new knowledge and reduce uncertainty.

- Developing new methodologies, approaches or technologies that don't exist yet.
- Testing an uncertain approach where the outcomes are not fully known.
- Generating transferable knowledge that others can apply beyond your organization.
- Creating novel datasets, tools, models or frameworks that fill a knowledge gap.
- Investigating unknowns systematically to build evidence and understanding.

THE FIVE PILLARS OF RESEARCH

All five should be visible in your project.



NOT ALIGNED

Important work – but may not meet the definition of research for E2G

- Routine implementation of known solutions or approaches.
- Standard operational delivery or service provision.
- Procurement or purchase of existing products or services.
- Internal process optimization with predictable outcomes.
- Activities with known outcomes or low uncertainty.
- Basic adoption or application of existing methods or technologies.

RESEARCH IS THE ENGINE –
ECONOMIC OUTCOMES ARE THE DESTINATION.

A QUICK CHECK

IF your activity is primarily about doing, delivering, or implementing known solutions, it may not be a fit for E2G.

02

SECTION 02

PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

UNDERSTANDING ELIGIBILITY, ASSESSMENT, AND INVESTMENT EXPECTATIONS

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E2G FALL 2026 PROGRAM PARAMETERS

Key investment parameters and anticipated competition timeline



MAXIMUM FUNDING

≤ $500,000

per project



TOTAL POOL

$2 MILLION



PROJECT DURATION

6-36 months

ANTICIPATED COMPETITION TIMELINE

Oct 26:
Opportunity Launch

Dec 2:
Expression of Interest Due (Stage 1)

Dec:
Invitations to Full Proposal Issued

March:
Final Funding Decisions

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Before you apply: confirm that you and your project meet all eligibility requirements.

1 PROJECT PARAMETERS

PROJECT LENGTH
Project duration must be between

6–36
MONTHS

FUNDING AMOUNT
The amount of funding requested must be less than or equal to

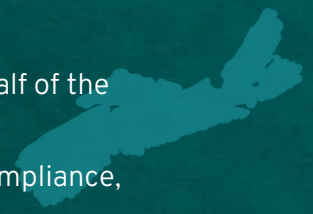
$500,000

2 PROJECT LEAD (PRIMARY APPLICANT)

- ☑ Is based in Nova Scotia at the time of application and for the duration of the project.
- ☑ Has a history of research productivity and demonstrates the ability to lead and deliver high-quality research, based on their training/ education, experience, track record, or past work.
- ☑ Must be supported by a Host Organization.

3 HOST ORGANIZATION

- ☑ Is a Nova Scotia-based entity.
- ☑ Is equipped to administer the funding on behalf of the project.
- ☑ Responsible for managing funds, ensuring compliance, and providing oversight.



4 APPLICATION RESTRICTIONS

- ☑ A Project Lead may submit only one E2G application per intake.
- ☑ A Project Lead may not hold more than one active E2G award at a time.

MEETING ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS DOES NOT GUARANTEE FUNDING.

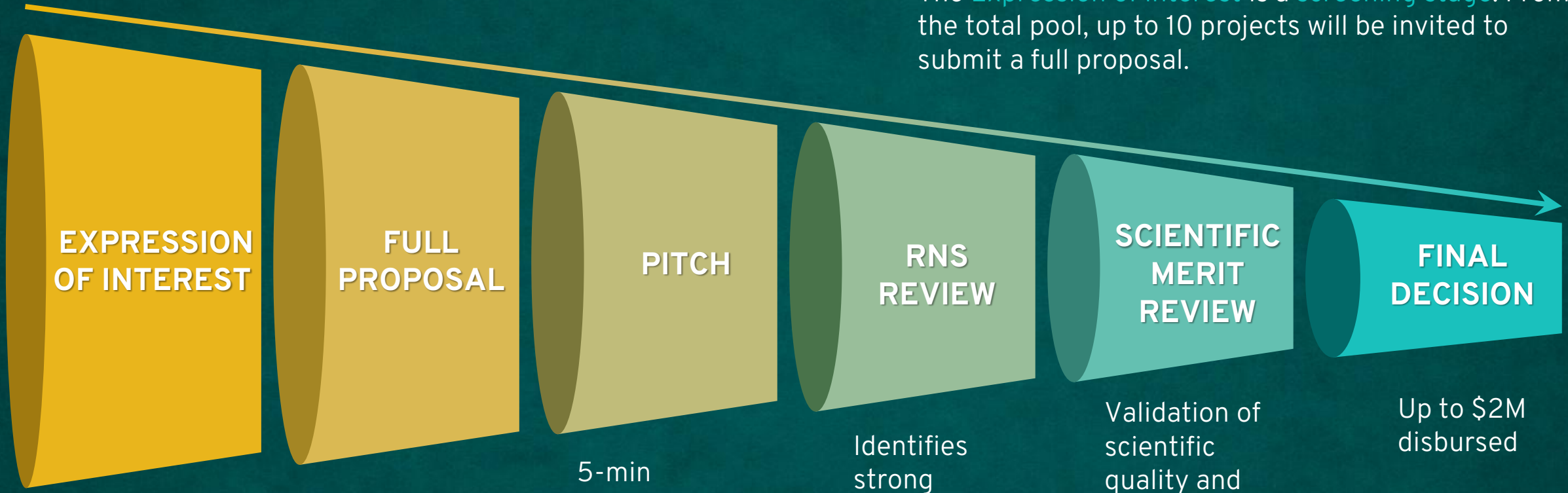
Eligibility confirms whether a proposal can be considered – assessment determines whether it should be funded.

COMMON REASONS APPLICATIONS ARE INELIGIBLE

- Request exceeds funding cap (>$500,000)
- Project duration outside of program limits (<6 months or >36 months)
- Multiple applications submitted by the same Project Lead
- Project Lead not based in Nova Scotia.
- Host Organization not based in Nova Scotia.

THE ASSESSMENT FUNNEL: WHERE STAGE 1 FITS

The Expression of Interest is a screening stage. From the total pool, up to 10 projects will be invited to submit a full proposal.



High-level summary of problem, impact, and relevance

Full written case for value, demand, and feasibility

5-min presentation + 15-min Q&A to test assumptions with RNS and external industry experts

Identifies strong candidates for scientific review

Validation of scientific quality and methodology

Up to $2M disbursed

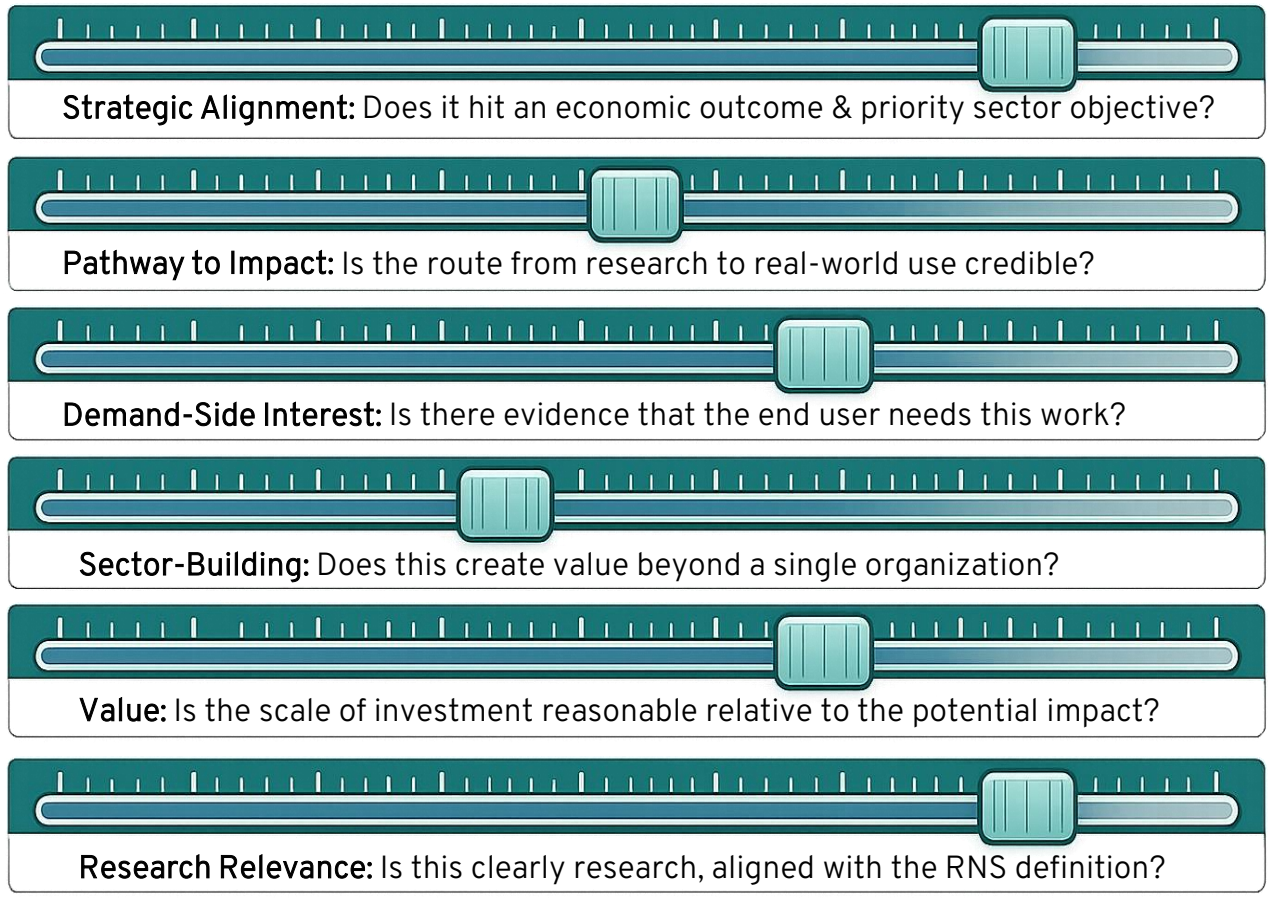
DO NOT FRONT-LOAD YOUR SCIENCE.
WIN THE EARLY STAGES WITH IMPACT, DEMAND, AND VALUE.

Decoding the Stage 1 Expression of Interest Assessment

Part 1: **The Eligibility Gate** (Pass/Fail)

- ☑ Is the Host Organization based in NS?
- ☑ Is the Project Lead based in NS for the full duration?
- ☑ Would this be the only E2G award held by the Project Lead?
- ☑ Does the Project Lead have a proven research track record?
- ☑ Is the request ≤$500,000 and duration 6-36 months?

Part 2: **The Qualitative Sliders** (Judgement-Based)



Remember: Scientific methodology is not assessed in depth here; plausibility is.

SECTION 03

DEVELOPING YOUR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

STRUCTURING A PROPOSAL AROUND IMPACT, DEMAND, AND ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

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CRAFTING THE ELEVATOR PITCH (MAX 30 WORDS)

THE FORMULA

**"We are developing [X: what]
to help [Y: who] achieve [Z: outcome]."**

- **X: WHAT** — Research Output
- **Y: WHO** — End User(s)
- **Z: OUTCOME** — Economic Change

THE RULE: Plain language. No jargon. No acronyms.
Must be understandable to a general audience.

BAD EXAMPLE

We are utilizing multivariance spectroscopic analysis to optimize proprietary lipid-nanoparticle synthesis pathways.

Why it misses: Jargon-heavy, technical, and not audience-focused.

TRANSLATE THE COMPLEX → INTO CLARITY AND IMPACT

GOOD EXAMPLE

We are developing a new monitoring methodology to help Nova Scotia's offshore wind sector increase energy output and expand export capacity.

Why it works: Clear, audience-focused, and tied to an economic outcome.

Strong E2G pitches describe who benefits and what economic change occurs.

ANATOMY OF THE 1500-WORD EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

A strategic pathway from research to real-world economic impact

PRIORITY GUIDE

CORE PRIORITY	Focus your effort here
STRATEGIC NODE	Important connection
SUPPORTING INPUT	Enables delivery



1 Primary Economic Outcome & Purpose Statement

Which primary economic outcome? How does it drive NS growth?



2 Sector Alignment

Which sector and objective?



3 Problem, Opportunity, & Knowledge Gap

What sector and sector objective? Why does this matter to the sector (not just one org)?



4 Research Outputs & Pathway to Impact

How do we get from project completion to real-world economic use?



5 Research Questions & Methodology

High-level workplan.



6 End Users & Demand Signal

Who are they and what is the evidence of their need?



7 Team, Partners, & Capacity

Roles supporting delivery and uptake (supported by max 2-page CVs).

Core Priorities: 1, 3, 4 & 6 These sections should exhibit the most depth and clarity.

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1 **Primary Economic Outcome & Purpose Statement**

Which primary economic outcome? How does it drive NS growth?

Primary Economic Outcome & Purpose Statement

WHAT TO INCLUDE

Applicants should identify the primary economic outcome their project is designed to support:

- Market creation or growth
- Productivity gains
- Policy or regulatory improvement

THEN EXPLAIN

- What is the project trying to achieve?
- How will the research outputs be used?
- What economic change or benefit could this produce in Nova Scotia?

Secondary outcomes (e.g., workforce skills or funding leveraging) are relevant – but they should support the primary pathway to impact.



4 Pathway to Impact

How do we get from project completion to real-world economic use?



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Sector Alignment

WHAT TO INCLUDE

Applicants should identify:

- The priority sector the project aligns with
- The specific sector objective(s) it supports
- Why the work matters in Nova Scotia's sector context

The goal is not just to name a sector. Applicants should explain why the proposed research is timely, relevant, and important for that sector in Nova Scotia.

2 Sector Alignment

Which sector and objective?

3 Problem, Opportunity, & Knowledge Gap

What sector and sector objective? Why does this matter to the sector (not just one org)?

5 Research Questions & Approach

High-level workplan.

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Problem, Opportunity, & Knowledge Gap

WHAT TO INCLUDE

Applicants should explain:

- What sector challenge or opportunity is being addressed?
- Why does it matter beyond one organization?
- What knowledge, evidence, method, tool, technology, or insight is currently missing?

A strong response makes it clear why research is needed — not just implementation, service delivery, or routine application.

3 **Problem, Opportunity, & Knowledge Gap**

What sector and sector objective? Why does this matter to the sector (not just one organization)?

6 **End Users & Demand Signal**

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Research Outputs & Pathway to Impact

WHAT TO INCLUDE

Applicants should describe:

- What the project will produce?
  Examples may include a product, process, method, tool, standard, dataset, evidence base, or insight.
- How will those outputs be used, adopted, applied, commercialized, procured, regulated or otherwise acted on?
- What steps are needed after the project?
  For example: adoption, commercialization, procurement, implementation, regulation, scale-up, or further investment.

This section should make the pathway from research output to economic impact visible and credible.

Core Priorities: 1, 3, 4 & 6 — These sections should receive the most depth and clarity.

ANATOMY OF THE 1500-WORD EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

A strategic pathway from research to real-world economic impact

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Research Questions & Methodology

WHAT TO INCLUDE

Applicants should state:

- The key research questions
- Why those questions matter
- The proposed methodology for answering them
- The high-level sequence of activities

At the EOI stage, this does not need to be a full methodology, but it should show that the project is systematic, plausible, and designed to generate transferable or generalizable insight.

5 Research Questions & Methodology
High-level workplan.

6 End Users & Demand Signal
Who are they and what is the evidence of their need?

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End Users & Demand Signal

WHAT TO INCLUDE

Applicants should identify the key end users who could use, adopt, implement, commercialize, procure, regulate, or otherwise act on the research outputs

They should also explain:
- How end users informed the project
- What evidence shows they need the results
- Why they are positioned to use the outputs if the project succeeds



6 End Users & Demand Signal
Who are they and what is the evidence of their need?

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6 End Users & Demand Signal

Who are they and what is the evidence of their need?

Team, Partners, & Capacity

WHAT TO INCLUDE

Applicants should identify:

- Key team members and their roles
- Relevant partners and their contributions
- How the team and partners support project delivery, uptake, and impact

This section should give RNS confidence that the right people and organizations are involved to complete the work and move results toward use.

7 Team, Partners, & Capacity

Roles supporting delivery and uptake (supported by max 2-page CVs).

Core Priorities: 1, 3, 4 & 6 — These sections should receive the most depth and clarity.

04

SECTION 04

FINAL VALIDATION

SELF-ASSESSMENT, STRATEGIC FIT, AND EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL E2G-ALIGNED INVESTMENTS

RESEARCH NOVA SCOTIA

THE FINAL EXPRESSION OF INTEREST CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to strengthen your proposal and demonstrate alignment with E2G priorities



THE ANCHOR

Are the Project Lead and Host Organization physically based in Nova Scotia?



THE FOCUS

Does the narrative prioritize measurable economic outcomes over pure scientific discovery?



THE MARKET

Are specific end users explicitly identified and engaged in shaping the project?



THE DIFFUSION

Does the resulting knowledge, tech, or talent benefit the broader sector, not just a single organization?



THE HORIZON

Is the pathway to impact plausible and clear?



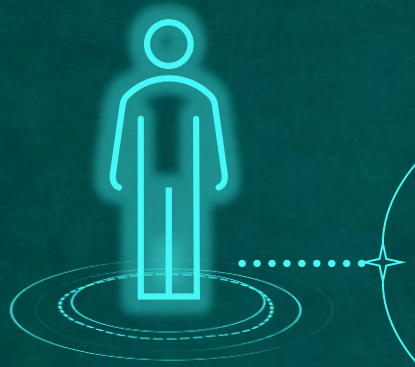
STRONG PROPOSALS TELL A CLEAR STORY:
WHO, WHAT, WHY, FOR WHOM, AND BY WHEN.



Use this checklist to self-assess and strengthen your proposal before submitting.

ASSESSING STRATEGIC FIT: APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITY

Strong proposals demonstrate alignment before submission.



APPLICANT
You are responsible for assessing strategic fit and alignment.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION
RNS Statement of Purpose

Understand our purpose, investment focus, and expected outcomes.

PROGRAM GUIDANCE
Applicant Handbooks

Review eligibility, assessment criteria, and application requirements.



EXPRESSION OF INTEREST SUBMISSION

Aligned. Focused. Ready for Review.

FAIRNESS & CONSISTENCY

To ensure fairness and consistency across all applicants, Research Nova Scotia **does not provide individual pre-assessment** of project ideas.

NEED CLARIFICATION?

RNS can provide clarification on program criteria and interpretation.

apply@researchns.ca

ALIGNMENT IS ASSESSED THROUGH THE WRITTEN PROPOSAL – NOT THROUGH PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS

Proof of Concept: E2G Pilot Round Investments

$2.1M Investment | 8 Targeted Projects

Marine Tech & Carbon Removal

Highlight: Marine-based approaches to carbon removal and atmospheric CO_2 reduction.

Representative Projects:
Dr. Natalya Evans *(Dal)*
Dr. Will Burt *(Planetary)*
Dr. Jiankang Yang *(Dal)*

Life & Health Sciences

Highlight: Drug development imaging and 3D intrasurgical ultrasound innovation.

Representative Projects:
Dr. Kim Brewer *(IWK)*
Dr. Robert Adamson *(NSH)*

Clean Energy & Natural Resources

Highlight: Platforms for solar hydrogen/critical mineral recovery, and sustainable food ingredient innovation.

Representative Projects:
Dr. Mita Dasog *(Dal)*
Dr. H. P. Vasantha Rupasinghe *(Dal)*

Construction & Transportation

Highlight: AI-enabled biofouling image analysis tools supporting low-toxicity antifouling coatings.

Representative Projects:
Dr. Russell Wyeth *(St. FX)*

Every funded project features active end user participation and a clear path to generating economic activity in Nova Scotia.

THANK YOU

APPLY@RESEARCHNS.CA | 902.200.8555

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