



Northern Ontario Defence Opportunities

Information Package

Program facilitated by:



In partnership with:



Funded by:



Federal Economic Development
Agency for Northern Ontario

Agence fédérale de développement
économique pour le Nord de l'Ontario



Please **ensure you have reviewed the information package** and understand the program requirements and eligibility **before submitting an application.**

Program Description:

The Northern Ontario Defence Opportunities (NODO) Program supports small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Northern Ontario by building their capacity to serve Canada's defence industry. The program supports SMEs to diversify operations, increase competitiveness, and enter the defence sector through targeted financial assistance.

Through this program, businesses may:

- Secure a non-repayable financial contribution covering up to 75% of eligible project costs (up to \$50,000) per business.
- Offset major costs associated with obtaining essential industry certifications and gating requirements.
- De-risk capital or technical transitions required to enter high-value defence procurement pipelines.
- Help better position the business for future contracts with Tier 1 & 2 suppliers, prime contractors, and the broader defence economic ecosystem.

Business Eligibility:

To be considered for selection by the Steering Committee, applicants must meet the following minimum criteria:

Business Size: Must be a Small-to-Medium Enterprise (SME) with 499 employees or less.

Business Structure: Must be for-profit incorporated SME.

Location: Must actively operate within Northern Ontario (with a strategic focus on firms ready to scale into national or international supply chains).

Business Stage: Must be established and beyond the "exploratory" phase, possessing a clear value proposition for the defence sector.

Demonstrated Readiness: Must provide clear evidence of proactive industry engagement, such as past or current discussions with primes or Tier 1 & 2 suppliers; attendance at official defence procurement briefings or trade shows; documented steps toward achieving supplier qualification or regulatory compliance; and/or proof of concept through prototype development & testing.

Funding Stacking Limits: Federal funding cannot be stacked with other federal sources for the same project activities. However, provincial funding can be combined with federal support, within the applicable stacking limits (for RDII, the stacking limit is 75%). Even for larger projects, the stacking limits still apply, meaning these thresholds cannot be exceeded simply based on project size. It is also required that no costs are being supported by more than one federal program.

Note: Not for profits, charities, educational institutions and public sector organizations are not eligible.

Eligible Sector Focus:

The business must operate in or directly support defence related or dual-use sectors, including:

- Specialized and Advanced Manufacturing (including Aerospace and Space-Tech).
- Digital Systems (including AI, Secure Cloud and Quantum Computing).
- Sensors, Cybersecurity, and Data-Driven systems.
- In service support and supply chain enabling services.

Note: The Business Centre Nipissing Parry Sound (TBC) and the Steering Committee reserve the right, at their sole discretion, to determine if a particular business or project is not suitable for the program.

Potential Eligible Activities:

Certifications: Controlled Goods, ISO standards, Cybersecurity (ex. CMMC Level 1, AS9100), Gating requirements for defence supply chains or others as required. Includes third-party contractor services to undertake certification process.

Market Exposure: Participation in defence related conferences, procurement briefings and industry showcases. (Note: Travel costs and wages are not eligible.)

Supplier Qualification: Compliance requirements and qualification processes to enter established supply chains.

Market Diversification: Diagnostics, commercialization strategies, defence specific market entry, and tech demonstrations for dual-use products.

Equipment & Technology Upgrades: Investments that enable businesses to meet defence sector technical requirements.

Application Process:

- 1 Review:** Thoroughly read this Information Package to verify the business size, location, and sector alignment meet the NODO eligibility criteria.
- 2 Apply:** Complete and submit the NODO Program Application, ensuring that all supporting documents are included such as evidence of readiness and project cost breakdowns.
- 3 Eligibility Clarification:** Applicants may be contacted by the NODO Program Coordinator to clarify application details or confirm program eligibility.
- 4 Application Review:** The Steering Committee reviews and assesses the applications to determine the funding eligibility.

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Notification: Applicants will be formally notified by the NODO Program Coordinator of the Steering Committee's decision. Approved participants must read and sign a Contribution Agreement as well as a Release and Consent & Enrollment Agreement form before commencing the project.

Application Review Process:

Assessment: All applications are reviewed and assessed by an external, independent Steering Committee which is comprised of representatives from various northern communities. The NODO Steering Committee reserves the right, at their sole discretion, to determine if a particular business or project receives program funding. Meeting the minimum eligibility requirements does not guarantee acceptance or funding.

Timing: Applications will be reviewed periodically and funding will be provided to eligible, approved applicants until program funds are exhausted.

Priority consideration: priority consideration will be given to projects that demonstrate a clear defence or dual-use application, a defined path towards commercialization or deployment, and activities that support readiness such as certifications, technology and equipment upgrades or market entry.

Funding Model & Milestone Reimbursement Process:

Conditional Contributions: Funding is not provided upfront.

Verified Expenditures: Participants must first independently incur and pay for all eligible project costs. Expenses incurred on or after January 16, 2026, may be eligible.

Cost-Sharing Framework: The program will reimburse up to 75% of eligible expenditures, up to a maximum of \$50,000 per business. The remaining balance (minimum 25%) is the sole responsibility of the business.

Completion: All approved projects must be completed within six (6) months of funding approval or by February 2028, whichever occurs first, unless discussed & agreed upon with the Program Coordinator. A final report will be required upon 30 days of project completion.

Reimbursement Requirements:

To claim the approved cost-shared funding, selected businesses must:

- Sign a formal Contribution Agreement outlining project milestones, eligible cost categories, and mutual cost sharing responsibilities.
- Provide Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) details.
- Provide verified receipts, invoices, and bank statements proving that 100% of the project costs have been fully paid for by the business.
- Report on project progress as requested by the NODO Program Coordinator.
- Submit a final program report and outcome survey which covers project outcomes and milestones on the completion of the project

Questions?

If you have any questions about the NODO program application, eligibility criteria or guidelines, please contact The Business Centre Nipissing Parry Sound.

NODO Program Coordinator: Uphar

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