International Qualification Recognition (IQR)
Funding Program Guidelines

Nova Scotia Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration
Skills and Learning Branch
Adult Education Division

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1   International Qualification Recognition Funding Program Introduction

Please read the entire document. This information will become part of an agreement with the Province of Nova Scotia for the delivery of the International Qualification Recognition Program.

The purpose of this guide is to inform applicants about the goals and application process of the International Qualification Recognition (IQR) Funding Program, along with the terms and conditions of associated funding applications and agreements. The guide will cover all eligibility requirements along with assessment criteria that will be used in assessing applications to the IQR Funding Program. Note that for IQR projects, applying for funding starts with an organization submitting a project proposal. If the proposal meets review criteria, the organization may proceed to submitting an application in LaMPSS.

1.1   What is IQR?

International Qualification Recognition (IQR) is defined, according to the Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications, as "the process of verifying that the knowledge, skills, work experience and education obtained in another country is comparable to the standards established for Canadian professionals and tradespersons." (Forum of Labour Market Ministers, 2009, p. 1).

Internationally trained individuals (ITI's) must first undergo an assessment to determine their pathway to qualification recognition. By working with stakeholders to develop tools, programs, and resources that assess international qualifications, IQR projects can support pathways to qualification recognition and improve the integration of ITI's into the Nova Scotia labour market.

1.2   The IQR Funding Program Goals

The purpose of the Funding Program is to:

1. Fund eligible organizations to develop and enhance IQR tools, programs and resources.
2. Create awareness of the IQR Funding Program and share information surrounding support services for international qualification recognition.
3. Support eligible organizations to help Internationally Trained Individuals (ITI's) navigate pathways for international qualification recognition and improve attachment to the Nova Scotia labour market in their chosen field.

4. Promote the diversity, equity and inclusion of all Nova Scotians in the recognition of international qualifications and labour market attachment in the Province.

All proposals will be considered; however, the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration (LSI) is under no obligation to fund every application submitted.

Please note that prior government support does not guarantee funding for the same or similar project. LSI will not provide deficit funding (expenditures exceeding total approved funding allocation) for an organization resulting from projects delivered.

Unless you receive a vetted notification from the Labour Mobility Coordinator at LSI, or via the Labour Market Programs Support System (LaMPSS), your application is not considered to be approved and any work that may proceed is to be completed at the risk of the applicant.

1.3   Our Commitment

On behalf of the Government of Nova Scotia, the Adult Education Division (AED) of the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration is committed to assessing applications from eligible organizations in a fair and transparent manner based on IQR Funding Program criteria. For proposals to be supported, they must align with the IQR Funding Program Framework and be relevant and responsive to the qualification assessment and recognition needs of International Trained Individuals (ITI's). Eligible organizations will demonstrate suitability for funding by providing evidence of a demonstrated ability to deliver similar projects. Clear guidelines will be published to provide all eligible organizations with an equal opportunity to apply for funding.

1.4   Roles and Responsibilities

All partners in the funding process are responsible to share responsibility for outcomes. Organizations submitting proposals are expected to:

1. Follow the IQR Funding Program Guidelines and IQR Project Proposal template instructions in preparing the project proposal;
2. Where appropriate, collaborate and form partnerships with other appropriate and eligible partners and, where applicable, submit joint proposals that would further develop IQR capacity in Nova Scotia.

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3. Subject to the recommendation of the IQR Coordinator, transfer the information in the proposal document to the online application, and submit this along with other supporting documentation in LaMPSS;

4. Obtain agreement signatures on approved applications in a timely manner;

5. Complete all required reporting templates and meet all deadlines;

6. Be accountable for using the funding for its intended purpose by providing required documentation (i.e., Activity/Accountability and Financial Reports) and to ensure all expenditures reflect eligible costs; and

7. Submit final project deliverables to LSI in an electronic format (**note: these materials are the property of LSI unless otherwise agreed upon by both LSI and the funded organization**).

LSI will:

1. Establish and communicate criteria for project review and assessment;

2. Provide the necessary templates, supporting documents and other information required to submit an application for funding;

3. Lead a fair and an open review and assessment process;

4. Finalize and communicate decisions in a timely manner;

5. Support the applicant throughout the application process;

6. Distribute funding;

7. Monitor and evaluate projects; and

8. Ensure accountability in relation to the contractual obligations of the IQR Funding Program.

2   Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility criteria are requirements that are mandatory. Applications that do not conform to the mandatory requirements will not be considered for funding.

2.1 Eligible Organizations

- Nova Scotia self-regulatory bodies[1];
- Established non-profit community organizations, charities (registered under the Societies Act) or other public or non-governmental organizations, including immigrant-serving agencies;
- Unions;
- Employer Associations;
- Sector Councils;
- Professional Associations;
- Post-secondary Institutions; and
- Career Development Centres.

2.2 Ineligible Organizations

- Individuals, including sole proprietorships;
- For-profit corporations; and
- Funding bodies whose sole mandate is to award grants or funding.

2.3 Eligible Participants

- Canadian citizens;
- Permanent residents; and
- Protected persons within the meaning of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Canada), S.C. 2001, c. 27 entitled to work in Canada.

Note: Individuals who are temporary residents with a 900 series Social Insurance Number are not eligible participants.

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[1] A body with authority delegated by law (i.e. provincial or federal legislation) to set or implement measures related to: the establishment of occupational standards or certification requirements, the assessment of the qualifications of workers against established occupational standards or certification requirements and the official recognition that an individual meets established occupational standards or certification requirements.

2.4   Eligible Project Categories

There are four IQR project categories, determined by LSI, that will be considered as eligible categories for program funding. These categories support the IQR Funding Program goals and align with IQR best practices.

The following is an overview of the eligible project categories. All proposals must align with one or more of the categories listed in the following section:

1. **Research and Evaluation** - This project category focuses on conducting research and program evaluation activities which result in recommendations related to IQR processes in Nova Scotia.
2. **Information Access** - This project category focuses on improving information and services on pathways to qualification recognition, labour market access, and academic and skills upgrading for Internationally Trained Individuals.
3. **Qualification Assessment** - This project category focuses on developing support tools that assess qualifications in a fair, transparent and consistent manner.
4. **Program Development** - This project category focuses on developing, implementing and/or expanding IQR programming to reduce barriers, for Internationally Trained Individuals, to obtain licensure, have qualifications recognized and attach to the labour market in the Province. This is not intended to provide core or ongoing operational funding.

2.5   Assessment Criteria Definitions

The following section defines the criteria for which project proposals will be assessed. Defining the criteria supports the commitment of LSI to have a fair and transparent assessment process. Criteria definitions and levels of compliance are detailed in the criteria tables below. The tables also include additional information and examples to provide guidance on how to provide supporting evidence for each criterion.

Provide a clear rationale for the project (what is the problem to be addressed? what is the labour market or learning/qualification recognition need?) and outline how the project will leverage IQR practice to address this. **(20%)**

Briefly describe the problem that the project will address. How will the project leverage IQR practice to address this need? If possible, provide evidence of the need. Evidence could include:
1. Letters attesting to labour or skills shortage (industry, sector councils, employers).
2. Demographic or statistical data (case studies, Nova Scotia Labour Market Bulletin, StatsCan etc.).
3. Primary research (community/stakeholder consultation, focus groups, etc.)

Score	Levels	Description of expectation levels
0-5	Does not meet expectations	The applicant has not provided a clear rationale for the project or described the problem to be addressed. The applicant has not outlined how the project will leverage IQR practice.
6-15	Partially meets expectations	The applicant provided a rationale for the project and described the problem to be addressed but only partially indicated how the project will leverage IQR practice to address needs.
16-20	Meets expectations	The applicant has provided a clear rationale for the project, described the problem to be addressed, and has clearly outlined how the project will leverage IQR practices to address needs.

Identify clear project objectives that are defined and measurable. **(20%)**

Project objectives should be presented in the form of objective statements. Objective statements must show correlation with expected results. Objective statements must be clearly defined, measurable and timebound.

Score	Levels	Descriptions of expectation levels
0-5	Does not meet expectations	Objectives are not clear and defined. Objectives do not describe how they are connected to expected results. Objectives are not measurable and timebound in such a way that progress towards deliverables and project completion can be validated.
6-15	Partially meets expectations	Objectives are clearly defined but are deficient in one or more of the other required components.
16-20	Meets expectations	Objectives are clearly defined and linked to project deliverables. Objectives are timebound and provide an ability to measure progress of deliverables and overall project completion.

Define activities that clearly align with objectives and deliverables. (10%)

1. Provide a description of all activities that support project objectives and deliverables.
2. Include activities in a project timeline throughout the duration of the project.
3. Activities define specific steps or actions that support accomplishment of objectives.

Score	Levels	Descriptions of expectation levels
0-3	Does not meet expectations	Activities are not clearly defined. Activity description does not include a timeline or specific steps that support accomplishing deliverables.
4-6	Partially meets expectations	Activities define specific steps or actions that support accomplishing objectives. Activities are timebound.
7-10	Meets expectations	Activities define specific steps or actions that support accomplishing objectives. Activities are described in a project timeline. All activities are listed that support all objectives and project deliverables.

List the expected results (outputs, outcomes, deliverables) at project completion. Expected results should align with project objectives and activities. (10%)

Provide a description of all expected results. Expected results should be supported by project objectives and achievable within the project timeframe.

Score	Levels	Descriptions of expectation levels
0-3	Does not meet expectations	Expected results are not clearly defined, do not fully align with objectives, and may not be achievable within the project timeframe.
4-6	Partially meets expectations	Expected results are somewhat defined, aligned with objectives, and mostly achievable within the project timeframe.
7-10	Meets expectations	Expected results are well defined, clearly aligned with objectives and activities, and achievable within the project timeframe.

Describe how your organization is able to manage the project by providing information related to experience successfully leading other projects i.e. sufficient resources, capacity, knowledge, innovation, leadership etc. (10%)

1. Provide examples of successful projects. Outline any previous projects with the Province of Nova Scotia and/or other funding organizations.
2. Identify any risks to the project and how you will mitigate or eliminate the risks.
3. Demonstrate applicant's capacity for leadership, innovation, ability to respond to current challenges and opportunities.

Score	Levels	Descriptions of expectation levels
0-3	Does not meet expectations	Applicant has not provided adequate evidence of delivering projects successfully. Risks and/or risk mitigation measures not identified.
4-6	Partially meets expectations	Applicant provides adequate evidence of delivering other projects successfully. Risks and/or risk mitigation measures are somewhat identified.
7-10	Meets expectations	Applicant provides evidence of delivering projects which have resulted in successful outcomes. Risks identified, and mitigation measures are planned. Low risk to project completion.

Describe how project deliverables can be adapted, shared, and/or used by others to maximize benefit and impact of the project. (10%)

Outline how the project deliverables could be adapted and/or utilized by others for maximum impact and benefit of the project.

Score	Levels	Descriptions of expectation levels
0-3	Does not meet expectations	Project deliverables are not easily adaptable, shareable, or usable in other situations and/or other organizations.
4-6	Partially meets expectations	Applicant partially demonstrates how project deliverables can be adapted, shared and leveraged by others.
7-10	Meets expectations	Applicant clearly demonstrates with examples how project deliverables can be adapted, shared and leveraged by others.

Demonstrate collaboration and partnerships with industry, organizations and/or government to bring value to the project (i.e., leverage resources and/or expertise, strengthen collaboration or partnerships, promote equity, diversity, and inclusion). (10%)		

Provide description of existing or planned partnerships or collaborations, letters of support or documentation from all partners outlining intent, roles and responsibilities and commitments (i.e. provide resources such as staff, expertise, funding etc.)

Score	Levels	Descriptions of expectation levels
0-3	Does not meet expectations	Does not clearly define partnerships or collaboration.
4-6	Meets expectations	Defines partnerships or collaboration. Outlines partners involved and contributions.
7-10	Exceeds expectations	Clearly defines and/or provides evidence (i.e. letters of support) of partnerships. Identifies partners involved, responsibilities of each partner and shared resources (funding and/or project team members etc.).

Describe how the project promotes and contributes to qualification recognition, navigating certification pathways, labour market attachment, and orientation to the Canadian workplace for Internationally Trained Individuals (ITIs) from diverse or underrepresented groups. Indicate how organizations serving ITIs will be consulted and included in the planning, design or delivery of the project. (10%)		

Demonstrate the benefit and impact of the project for Internationally Trained Individuals (ITIs) from diverse and underrepresented groups.

Score	Levels	Descriptions of expectation levels
0-3	Does not meet expectations	Project has a generalized focus that could benefit ITIs from diverse or underrepresented groups but has no specific design or focus on these individuals.
4-6	Meets expectations	Project includes defined and measurable objectives and expected results that address identified needs of diverse or underrepresented ITIs. Organizations serving these individuals will be involved in the planning and delivery of the project.
7-10	Exceeds expectations	Project includes defined and measurable objectives and expected results that address identified needs of ITIs specifically from diverse or underrepresented groups. Organizations serving these individuals and/or ITIs themselves will be consulted and involved in the planning and delivery of the project.

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Added Value / Additional Assessment Criteria

Note: The following criterion for self-sustainability provide added value. While not mandatory, proposals that incorporate a self-sustainability plan will be given extra weight and additional consideration.

Provide a sustainability plan to maintain the project beyond funding period. (10%)

1. Provide a sustainability plan – resources (expertise, staff, funds, partnerships etc.), timeline, promotion, and product/service delivery etc.
2. Letters of support or partnership acknowledging commitments post project/funding.
3. Include timeline – short, medium, and long-term of product and/or service delivery.
4. Evaluation and maintenance plan. How will the program be monitored, evaluated and sustained beyond the funding project?

Score	Levels	Descriptions of expectation levels
0-5	Does not meet expectations	No clear plan to allocate resources (expertise, staff, funds, partnerships etc.) after project completion to promote and/or continue to offer the program or service developed from the project. Uncertainty on how the program or service will be sustained beyond the funding project.
6-10	Meets expectations	Applicant has plan to assume responsibility of maintaining program and/or services after project completion. The plan describes how the latter will be promoted and used. Applicant's plan includes sufficient resources to sustain program and indicates how this will be accomplished in the interim and long-term.

3   Application Process

The first step in applying for funding is to complete an IQR Project Proposal template. The purpose of the project proposal is to help applicants clearly articulate the project objectives and outcomes, as well as, to indicate how the project will align with the requirements of the Funding Program.

3.1   Completing and Submitting a Project Proposal

Applicants will be required to complete a project proposal, using the IQR Project Proposal template and instructions available on the International Qualifications Recognition website, https://novascotia.ca/lae/RplLabourMobility/IQR.asp.

Instructions for completing the IQR Project Proposal are included within the IQR Project Proposal template. It is important to also have an understanding of the IQR Funding Program guidelines, eligible project categories and eligibility criteria when completing the proposal. **Once complete,**

save your proposal document with a filename that uniquely identifies your project or organization. Submit your IQR Project Proposal with all required documents (including the Itemized Budget Breakdown, Section 3.2) by email to the Labour Mobility Coordinator (labourmobility@novascotia.ca).

Note: The IQR Proposal and budget documents must be submitted in English.

3.2   Completing your Itemized Budget Breakdown (IBB)

When completing the proposal template there is a requirement to include an "Itemized Budget Breakdown (IBB)" which includes a complete description of all associated costs. The IBB can be found on the website at: https://novascotia.ca/lae/RplLabourMobility/IQR.asp.

Note: Ensure all associated costs are included in the IBB as no new costs are to be added after the proposal has been reviewed by the Labour Mobility Coordinator.

3.3   What Happens Next

Once the IQR Project Proposal template and IBB has been received, it will be assessed by the AED team. The project proposal will be reviewed against eligibility and assessment criteria and a decision will be made whether to proceed to the next stage of application submission in LaMPSS.

3.4   Application in LaMPSS

Once the IQR Project Proposal template has been assessed, and a recommendation to proceed to application communicated to the applicant, an online application will need to be completed in LaMPSS. LaMPSS is a common system and set of business processes developed for administering labour market programs in Nova Scotia and is focused on providing consistency in processes and improving services to labour market agreement holders. At this stage, the Labour Mobility Coordinator will send a link for the LaMPSS application process and advise on the next steps. If the organization is not already registered with LaMPSS, organizations will need to register with LaMPSS to obtain an organization ID, to submit an application. The LaMPSS application is required to create a contract with LSI for the funding agreement.

Note: Not all proposals will be recommended to proceed to the online application, however, all organizations will be contacted and informed of decisions. An application can only be submitted

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in LaMPSS after the proposal has been vetted by the AED team. Submissions in LaMPSS made before receiving authorization will not be assessed or reviewed.

3.5 Service Registration

Any projects that have a participant component will be required to complete Service Registration for those individuals. Service Registration is a term used in LaMPSS for the set of functions to help an organization manage the services delivered under their agreement(s) with government. It includes the ability to register uniquely identified clients, indicate what services they receive, capture key client characteristics, and generate reports. Personal information is required, from individuals, to verify their eligibility as participants as well as to enable government to understand the effectiveness of the services being delivered. All information about participants that is collected or compiled should be done so confidentially, and all necessary measures should be in place to protect against unauthorized release or disclosure of that personal information.

Service Registration is accessed through LaMPSS and will require an Intake Form to be completed. Information on Service Registration will be provided by the Labour Mobility Coordinator but can also be found on the LaMPSS resource website, https://novascotia.ca/lae/LaMPSS/LaMPSS.asp.

4 IQR Funding Program Reporting Requirements

After receiving a funding agreement, it is important to remain in contact with the Labour Mobility Coordinator throughout the lifecycle of the agreement. LaMPSS Activity/Accountability, and Financial Reports are required throughout the funding agreement to ensure compliance with the funding agreement.

During the course of the project, the agreement holder will be notified through the LaMPSS self-serve system when Activity/Accountability and Financial Reports are required. Due date(s) for reports are also indicated in the funding agreement for the project. The number of reporting periods for projects, supported by the IQR Funding Program, is set by the Labour Mobility Coordinator at the beginning of each agreement.

Organizations with projects funded through the IQR Funding Program will be required to submit reports on at least two occasions during the life of the project.

It is important to note that failure to complete and submit any of the required reports according to the agreement schedule, will result in delays to continued funding support.

4.1 Activity/Accountability Reports

For the duration that the agreement is Active, there is a requirement to submit Activity/Accountability Reports. Activity/Accountability Reports provide agreement holders with the opportunity to report on what has been accomplished and the progress made towards achieving project objectives. A final Activity/Accountability Report is used to document project successes, lessons learned, evidence of the impact of the project as well as recommendations for future delivery.

The Accountability Update section allows for an organization to report the overall progress towards achieving the project's objectives and outcomes for the funded agreement as well as identify possible issues which could affect the project's success.

Within the Activity Report, the organization will be able to select either Interim or Final from a drop-down menu for the Accountability Update.

Interim can include the following sections:

- **Project Progress** - This field indicates if the project on track to meet the expected results in the Agreement.

- **Objective Progress** - This field indicates if the status toward the stated objectives/ activities outlined in the project description of the Agreement.

- **Timeline Detail** - This field provides a rationale adjusting timelines if the project is delayed or ahead of schedule. *It will be displayed as a required field if Objective Progress is indicated to be "Delayed" or "Ahead of schedule".*

- **Activity/Budget Changes** - This field indicates if changes are expected for activities or budget of the agreement.

- **Activity/Budget Change Detail** - This field provides detail on the changes to activities or budget of the agreement. *It is hidden initially and displayed as a required field if the Activity / Budget Changes field indicates there are changes expected.*

- **Success Stories/Lessons Learned** - This field indicates if there are any success stories or lessons learned with the Project.

If the Accountability Report Type selected is "Interim" and the Agreement End Date has passed LaMPSS will display a warning message, "An Interim accountability update should not be provided after an Agreement has ended. Please update Accountability Report Type if it is a Final update."

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Final can include the following sections:

- **Partnerships -** This field indicates the partnerships leveraged throughout the project.

- **Success Stories/Lessons Learned -** This field indicates if there are any success stories or lessons learned with the Project.

The final accountability report should be provided once the agreement has reached its end date. If selected sooner, a warning will display, "A Final accountability update should be provided at the end or termination of an Agreement. Please update Accountability Report Type if it is an Interim update."

4.2   Financial Reports

It is also a requirement of the funding agreement to provide Financial Reports according to the reporting schedule outlined in the funding agreement. Organizations will be asked to submit actual costs/expenditures for each eligible budget category that was defined in the Itemized Budget Breakdown during the IQR Project Proposal.

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5 IQR Funding Program Terms & Conditions

The following terms and conditions form part of IQR Funding Program agreement in addition to the "General Terms and Conditions" outlined in the agreement.

5.1 Communications Requirements

The Province of Nova Scotia must be acknowledged in all communications related to the project. Any public communication of the project via news release or any other event must be coordinated with LSI. Organizations shall notify the LSI's Labour Mobility Coordinator (see section 6 for contact information) at least 15 working days in advance.

Communications activities can be generally defined as, but not limited to, the following:
- News releases;
- Public events such as funding announcements, official openings, press conferences;
- Written or electronic communications material;
- Project products such as brochures, program descriptions, forms for the use of clients, annual plans and reports; and
- Advertising in all forms.

At offices or kiosks where information is provided to the public, or transactions are conducted with the public pertaining to this project, signage is required indicating that the products/services provided are funded in whole or in part by the Province of Nova Scotia. Bilingual notices are required in designated bilingual offices. Please note that the project will be made public on the Department's website.

Logos can be obtained from LSI. Organizations are responsible for creating their own materials i.e. watermarks, wordmarks, signage etc.

5.2 Funding Announcements

Contact the Labour Mobility Coordinator (see section 6) if you are contacted by the media about a project or as soon as your organization starts to discuss:

- A funding announcement or event;
- A news release or feature;
- A radio or television spot;
- An advertisement; and
- A poster or brochure.

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6   Contact Information

Information about the IQR Funding Program can be obtained through LSI by contacting the Labour Mobility Coordinator, via e-mail labourmobility@novascotia.ca, phone (902) 424-3968, fax (902) 424-1171 or mail:

Mailing Address

> Labour Mobility Coordinator
> Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration
> PO Box 697
> Halifax, NS B3J 2T8

Civic Address

> Labour Mobility Coordinator
> Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration
> Maritime Centre, 4N
> 1505 Barrington Street
> Halifax, NS B3J 3K5