

SEAFOOD ACCELERATOR

Program Guidelines

SEAFOOD ACCELERATOR PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Perennia's Seafood Accelerator Program (SAP) was launched in 2019 with funding from the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture (NSDFA). The funding program supports Nova Scotia based seafood companies adapt to the changing demands of today's markets by developing new value-added products, overcoming technical challenges with existing products, updating food safety programs to comply with regulatory requirements and gaining access to new markets.

TIMELINE

The Program is scheduled to run from Nov 15, 2024 to July 30, 2026. Intake is ongoing until funds are fully subscribed.

FUNDING

Funding is available to a maximum of \$15,000 per fiscal year per applicant based on project scope and deliverables. The fiscal year is April 1st to March 31st. Due to caps on funding, not all applications may be funded.

Projects are cost-shared to a maximum of 50/50 with applicants (for example, a \$30,000 project would receive \$15,000 in funding).

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications are found online at: [Seafood Accelerator – Perennia](#)

Applications are submitted online or directly to: seafood@perennia.ca

Questions regarding the program can be directed to Ashley Sprague, Manager of Seafood Services at 902-955-0248 or asprague@perennia.ca

Complete applications will be reviewed and presented to the Seafood Accelerator Program Review Committee which includes representation from the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture and Perennia. The Committee will make a recommendation to accept, deny or revise the application. All recommendations for acceptance by the Committee under the Program will be subject to due diligence checks for good standing with the provincial government.

Applicants may be contacted by a Perennia specialist if they require further clarification before an application is sent to the review committee. If an application is approved, the successful applicant will receive an emailed letter of approval and will be contacted by a designated specialist to discuss your project so a quote can be created. The applicant will be required to pay a 20% down-payment prior to the work being scheduled. For some Quality and Food Safety projects, a Gap Assessment may be required before program development and implementation can commence.

FUNDING ELIGIBILITY

All relevant information must be completed on the appropriate application form when applying to allow program administrators to verify that the following requirements have been met. Applicants must:

- Be registered with Nova Scotia Joint Stocks
- If applicable, be in good standing with the Provincial Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture; and
- Hold at least one valid:
 - » Nova Scotia Fish Buyers License
 - » Nova Scotia Fish Processors License
 - » Nova Scotia Aquaculture License
 - » Nova Scotia Aquaculture Lease
 - » Nova Scotia Rockweed Lease
 - » Rockweed Harvester Permit Card
 - » Fisheries and Oceans Canada Fishing License
- If the company does not hold a license above but intends to develop a seafood product, the processing must be done in a Nova Scotia-based facility
- For Market Access Quality and Food Safety projects, companies must have a designated quality and food safety manager in place.

FUNDING STREAMS

FUNDING STREAM 1: QUALITY AND FOOD SAFETY

The Quality and Food Safety stream assists companies in overcoming specific quality and food safety requirements or obstacles that are preventing them from entering a new market or in keeping markets open when requirements change.

This program component will support companies with:

- Developing and implementing food safety programs
- Meeting the food safety and regulatory requirements for CFIA's Safe Food For Canadians
- Obtaining Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) certification to open more export markets
- Training to build knowledge required to produce safe, high-quality products by maintaining and reassessing quality and food safety management system

Eligible Services under the Quality and Food Safety funding stream include:

- Gap assessments for specific food safety program requirements to assess what needs to be done for compliance with a specific standard. This is a mandatory first step if seeking funding for Program Coaching.
- Program coaching of a company's quality and food safety program manager or quality assurance staff on plan development or revisions and implementation.
- Pre-audit assessment in preparation for a third-party audit to meet a specific food safety program standard.
- Training for all relevant personnel performing tasks that directly impact quality and food safety.
- Internal Audit of a company's quality and food safety management system to confirm that it continues to be effective in controlling hazards through a food safety plan, implements prerequisite programs and meets customer, regulatory, and third-party requirements.
- Consultation of a company's quality and food safety management system in meeting requirements and overcoming challenges.

FUNDING STREAM 2: PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

The Product Development and Technical Support stream assists companies in developing new products, improving upon existing ones and overcoming challenges impeding the production of high-quality seafood products.

This program component will support companies with:

- Accelerating the commercialization of new seafood products
- Adapting to and overcome challenges in the production of seafood products
- Gaining the knowledge required to produce high-quality seafood products
- Post-Harvest handling practices
- Fish processing techniques and technologies
- Fisheries by-product utilization

Eligible Services under the Product Development funding stream include:

Perennia offers support throughout the commercialization cycle, from idea to commercialization, with the following services:

- Market Assessment
- Recipe Development and Optimization
- Food Safety/Regulatory Review
- Process Development and Optimization
- Analytical Testing Supporting Product Development
- Packaging Optimization
- Prototype Development
- Label Review and Nutrition Facts Table Development
- Shelf Life Evaluation
- Technical Support for companies experiencing challenges related to product quality, process efficiency and innovation. This can include:
 - » Post-Harvest Handling Practices of Fish and Seafood
 - » Fish Processing Techniques and Technologies
 - » Seafood Product Development
 - » Fisheries Bioresource Utilization

SERVICE DEFINITIONS

Analytical Testing Supporting Product Development involves performing analyses required to develop new products or to comply with regulatory requirements.

Consultation: on or offsite one-on-one access to our quality and food safety specialists for all your quality and food safety questions, concerns and challenges.

Fisheries Bioresource Utilization includes providing education, expert advice and research services to support 100% fish utilization.

Fish Processing Techniques and Technologies includes providing education, expert advice and applied research capabilities on the practices adopted in the processing of fish and seafood from raw materials to value-added products.

Food Safety/Regulatory Review involves assessing food formulations and production steps to verify if products adequately control food hazards.

Gap Assessment: on and offsite assessment and report to a predetermined standard supplied by the individual company involved; facility inspection (onsite) and written food safety program review; written food safety program review only (onsite or offsite); facility inspection onsite only.

Internal Audit: independent onsite audit and report to a predetermined standard/regulation at least 6-8 weeks prior to a scheduled third-party audit. The objective is to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the written quality and food safety program.

Label Review and NFt Development involves assistance in ensuring that product labels comply with regulatory requirements of your target market.

Market Assessment involves performing a global market survey of product formats, attributes of differentiation, costing and marketing strategies.

Packaging Optimization involves assessing the performance of existing packaging and evaluating the impacts of adopting different packaging solutions.

Post-Harvest Handling Practices of Fish and Seafood includes providing education, expert advice and applied research capabilities for the strategies adopted in the handling of fish and seafood from boat to plate.

Pre-Audit Assessment is conducted at a facility or offsite based on the company's written quality and food safety program at least 6 weeks in advance of a third-party audit that is already booked. The individual company must consider itself to be audit ready, have a quality and food safety program in place and implemented with a history of completed records.

Process Development and Optimization involves developing, assessing, improving, or verifying step-by-step procedures to produce seafood products.

Program Coaching: assistance with the development and/or implementation of a quality and food safety program. This can be done on or offsite, depending on the aspects the individual company needs assistance with. This may or may not include employee/individual training.

Prototype Development involves the creation of bench-scale prototypes of finished products for preliminary evaluations.

Recipe Development and Optimization involves developing product formulations or improving upon existing ones, to meet defined product specifications. This work is performed at the Perennia Innovation Centre.

Seafood Product Development includes providing education, expert advice and product development-related services to support the commercialization activities of bringing new and existing seafood products to market.

Shelf Life Evaluation involves determining the durable life of seafood products using a suite of analytical methods, including sensory evaluation, chemical testing and microbial enumeration.

Training: customized training tailored to fit your business, ensuring that relevant personnel performing tasks that directly impact quality and food safety are confident and capable of performing their role and managing your business' quality and food safety management systems. In-person and virtual options are available.