

Sustainability & Infrastructure Funding Support Resolution

Issue Identification

Numerous funding resources exist for municipalities to make their operations more efficient, strengthen their infrastructure planning initiatives and increase their resiliency to our changing climate. However, despite available programs, a significant number of Nova Scotia's municipalities lack the capacity and/or time to access them.

As a provincial association, NSFAM is well positioned to support municipalities in accessing available funding programs to foster the adoption of innovative and strategic approaches to managing their operations and infrastructure. NSFAM could play a key role in identifying appropriate projects and sources of funding, and opportunities to partner with other municipalities on initiatives that are mutually beneficial.

Background Information

Over the next 10 years, Nova Scotia will receive \$828 million in federal infrastructure funding through the *Investing in Canada Plan*. This program will offer funding for green infrastructure, public transit infrastructure and community, culture and recreation infrastructure. To access the funding, municipalities will have the added requirement of applying a "climate lens" to applications for major infrastructure projects, where they will need to undertake an assessment of how projects will reduce carbon pollution and better withstand the impacts of climate change.

In addition to the *Investing in Canada Plan* opportunities, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) has funding programs to support sustainability, infrastructure and climate change initiatives. They include:

- the *Green Municipal Fund* - for environmental initiatives that improve air, water, soil and reduce GHG emission
- the *Municipal Asset Management Fund* – to provide direct funding to municipalities for asset management initiatives
- the *Municipalities for Climate Innovation Program* - to help municipalities adapt to the impacts of climate change and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Although these programs are available to communities across the country, Nova Scotia's municipalities are often under represented as funding recipients. To position our municipalities are to take advantage of these opportunities, NSFAM could provide municipalities, which may otherwise not have to the capacity, with the support to secure funding for sustainable infrastructure planning, green innovation and climate change initiatives.

NSFM could create an in-house position which would be funded from the Province and NSFM membership dues. NSFM would focus on helping municipalities identify and access funding to support initiatives designed to mitigate current and future climate risks as well as those that lead to the adoption of new and sustainable approaches to infrastructure planning.

Through the development of resources, training opportunities and knowledge sharing events, NSFM could help streamline the application process for municipalities and position them to be successful applicants. Recognizing that local leaders know what is best for their communities, NSFM could work with municipalities to identify innovative solutions to make their communities more sustainable that also fit within the program requirements. To make the most of available resources, NSFM would also look for opportunities for municipalities to partner in circumstances where they would benefit from regional or collaborative applications. This would not only ensure that funding programs are as impactful as possible, but also make limited resources go farther.

Impact on Municipalities

NSFC could play a coordinating role in helping municipalities to accessing funding that they would otherwise not have the capacity to access. This support would help municipalities make the most of programs that mitigate current and future climate risks and enhance infrastructure planning and service delivery.

Proposed Solution

The suggested approach to create this position would be to secure \$125,000 to cover the cost of a staff salary, benefits, travel, and the development of program resources and events. Because this support would provide value to both municipalities and the Province in terms of meeting shared goals relating to environmental and infrastructure sustainability, NSFM would seek half of the funding from the Province of Nova Scotia and the remaining half through membership dues.

The main services that could be provided through this position might include:

- Coordinating knowledge sharing and educational opportunities about existing funding programs and resources
- Assisting municipalities in preparing to apply for eligible funding programs
- Supporting municipalities in seeking innovative project ideas and applications to facilitate strategic infrastructure and sustainability planning
- Facilitating networking opportunities to share best practices and successes among municipalities

- Facilitating collaboration among municipalities where it creates economies of scale and shared benefits to develop regional/collaborative applications
- Liaising with Infrastructure Canada, the Province of Nova Scotia and FCM and other organization to remain current on existing resources and opportunities

To provide these services, NSFM would develop resources, materials, training opportunities and networking events to facilitate the sharing of information and ideas.

Upon securing support for this work , NSFM would seek input from municipalities and the Province of Nova Scotia to identify and agree upon the key services that would be of most benefit to municipalities to access funding resources. NSFM would seek to established this work as an ongoing initiative; however, the position could be reviewed in 3 years to ensure it continues to provide maximum value to both municipalities and the Province.

Infrastructure & Sustainability Funding Support Resolution

WHEREAS the Province of Nova Scotia and NSFM recognize common goals relating to municipal sustainability to make operations more efficient and increase climate resilience; and

WHEREAS the Province of Nova Scotia and NSFM are supportive of wise investments in infrastructure to support sustainable service delivery at the right level and cost to tax payers; and

WHEREAS the Province of Nova Scotia and NSFM recognize the importance of regional cooperation and that the impacts of climate change do not recognize boundaries and enhanced collaboration will support municipalities in making their communities healthier, safer and more prosperous; and

WHEREAS municipalities have direct or indirect influence of close to 50 percent of the nation’s greenhouse gas emissions and are responsible for more than half of Canada’s public infrastructure; and

WHEREAS NSFM recognizes that some municipalities lack the resources to access existing funding opportunities that would allow them to develop innovative and strategic initiatives make their operations and infrastructure more sustainable; and

WHEREAS NSFM is uniquely positioned to support municipalities in making the most of existing funding opportunities and resources;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NSFM write the Province requesting \$62,300 to cost share the funding for a Sustainability & Infrastructure Funding Support position within NSFM; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NSFM increase its membership dues to cover the remaining \$62,500 to support a Sustainability & Infrastructure Funding Support position.

At the 2022 Annual Fall Conference, the NSFM membership voted to integrate a focus on Extended Producer Responsibility into the Sustainability and Infrastructure Resolution. This motion was made in the interest of maintaining the momentum of establishing Extended Producer Responsibility in Nova Scotia and ensuring that this significant development reaches completion. Therefore, NSFM's call for financial support from the Province to create a Sustainability and Infrastructure Funding Support Coordinator includes a call for EPR regulations to be established and implemented.

Both of these advocacy priorities call for resourceful and expanded use of funding to assist municipalities in accomplishing goals of sustainable operations and infrastructure development. EPR will help alleviate municipalities of some of the costs and risks associated with curbside recycling programs. The Sustainability and Infrastructure Funding Support Coordinator position could also provide information on EPR to municipalities and conduct evaluations on how it is working in the interest of municipalities.