

Applicant Guide

Net Zero Emerging Concepts and Technologies (ECT) Research Program

Next Call Opens: 21 June 2023

Proposals due Monday 17 July 2023 (11:59 ADT)

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1. Program Rationale

Nova Scotia won't get to net-zero by 2050 with proven renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies. There are still significant knowledge and technology gaps that must be identified and addressed to tackle the most hard-to-abate greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) in the 2030-2050 period.

Many of the solutions needed to achieve 2050 net-zero goals will need to be invented, proven and scaled up to achieve further reductions in GHG emissions. Bringing critical, emerging technologies and concepts from the laboratory to the market may take decades to achieve. Given the critical importance of action during the next 10 years and the time that it typically takes for emerging technologies to get from the laboratory to market, Nova Scotia cannot afford to wait for market incentives to deliver the level of change required.

The **Net Zero Emerging Concepts and Technologies (ECT) Research Program** will help to expedite this process. The ECT Research Program seeks to identify gaps in carbon-reduction pathways for hard-to-abate emissions and prioritize made-in-Nova Scotia solutions to reduce GHG in the post 2030-period.

The ECT Research Program is a minimum **three-year recurring** Open Call program that will make research and development (R&D) investments in two areas:

1. fostering conceptual, early-stage genesis of novel technologies, concepts and practices in Nova Scotia, and
2. evaluating the suitability of technologies, concepts and practices emerging in other jurisdictions for Nova Scotia.

[Net Zero Atlantic](#), the ECT Research Program administrator, is a leading energy research organization advancing Atlantic Canada's transition to a low-carbon future. We are encouraging growth of a sustainable energy sector by leading applied research in critical topics, including hydrogen, offshore wind, geothermal energy, tidal energy, and energy system modeling. Our focus is on advancing research that will help decarbonize our region's economy, mitigate climate change impacts, and move Atlantic Canada toward net-zero emissions by 2050. As a member of the [50-30 Challenge](#), we are committed to increasing workforce diversity in the energy sector.

[The Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Climate Change](#) (DECC), the Program funder, encourages growth of the clean economy and works to support all Nova Scotians in benefiting from its growth as stipulated in the *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act*. Through Nova Scotia's Climate Change Plan for Clean Growth, DECC has invested \$3,000,000 in the ECT Research Program to support early-stage research needed to develop new clean technologies and practices to help Nova Scotians meet their net-zero by 2050 target.

2. Program Objectives and Expected Outcomes

The primary objective of the ECT Research Program is encourage and fund the Nova Scotia research and innovation community (both private and academic sectors) to identify and develop a suite of promising, emerging clean technologies, approaches and practices that warrant continued funding from Nova Scotia's technology incubation ecosystem.

The ECT Research Program has the following objectives:

1. Identify knowledge gaps to eliminate or offset the final 20% of GHG emissions.
2. Advance promising technologies and approaches that can address the gaps to net zero.
3. Encourage collaborative research among Nova Scotia's universities, NSCC, First Nations-led institutions, the private sector and others.
4. Create intellectual property that has the potential to address global demands for low-carbon solutions, thus creating economic opportunities for Nova Scotians.
5. Build collaborative thematic research networks that can attract national and foreign investment.

Expected ECT Research Program outcomes are:

- A suite of promising made-in-Nova Scotia clean technologies, approaches and practices that can address the gaps to net zero and that warrant continued funding from the province's incubation ecosystem.
- NZA recommendations to the Province to support advanced studies, field work or pilot projects for promising technologies or methods that should be introduced to Nova Scotia from other jurisdictions.
- New knowledge, exportable intellectual property, patents and publications that demonstrate progress in advancing concept level projects to early technology readiness levels that has the potential to address global demands for low-carbon solutions thus creating economic opportunities for Nova Scotians.
- Collaborative research among Nova Scotia's universities and colleges, First Nations-led institutions such as the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM), Mi'kmaq Conservation Group (MCG), and the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR), the private sector and others;
- Collaborative thematic research networks that can attract national and foreign investment.

3. Eligible Applicants

To be eligible to receive funding through the ECT Research Program, the Lead Proponent must be incorporated, registered or based in Nova Scotia. Partner organizations may be registered or based elsewhere in Canada or internationally. Proposals will be accepted from:

- a. For-profit and not-for-profit organizations such as academic institutions, companies including sole proprietors, industry associations, research associations, utilities, electricity system operators, transmission system owners and operators
- b. Indigenous organizations and groups
- c. Community groups

The ECT Research Program encourages collaborative research within and between institutions and between academic, private sector and Indigenous organisations.

The following entities are not eligible to receive this funding: federal, provincial, territorial, regional, and municipal governments and their departments and agencies.

4. Funding by Research Stream

A total of \$3,000,000 is available for the three-year ECT Research Program, not including contributions by Mitacs, which will be approved on a project-by-project basis as described in Section 7.2.

The ECT Research Program has two research streams. Projects within each stream must identify and address knowledge gaps within one or more Priority Research Themes listed below.

Stream 1 Technology & Methods *Development* in Nova Scotia

Stream 1 targets early-stage (pre-commercial) conceptual projects that create made-in-Nova Scotia GHG reduction technology and approaches. Stream 1 funding is intended to support innovation and IP/economic development in Nova Scotia. The objective of this funding stream is to develop and advance novel technologies, methods, and/or practices that target hard-to-abate GHG within the province.

Projects under this stream will be funded to \$50,000¹ for conceptual-level studies of not more than 12 months. The projects must aim to solve an identifiable GHG reduction or mitigation problems in the province and must clearly demonstrate how the target technology, method, and/or practice would be applied in Nova Scotia.

Completed Stream 1 projects that advance Nova Scotia's progress to net zero by 2050 and describe an achievable path to IP and/or economic development will be eligible for follow-on funding up to \$250,000² over an additional 1 to 2 years (provided they finish within the 3-year program funding window) to further advance their proof of concepts to a point where they can attract private sector or additional public sector funding.

Stream 2 Technology & Methods *Adoption* from Elsewhere

Stream 2 projects target emerging GHG reduction technologies and approaches under development outside of Nova Scotia. Stream 2 will fund technoeconomic and/or feasibility type studies that evaluate how technologies, methods, and/or practices demonstrated elsewhere can be imported and deployed, with or without modification, in the Nova Scotia context.

Stream 2 will fund up to \$130,000 per project (not including Mitacs funding) for projects of not longer than 18 months duration. Completed Stream 2 projects must aim to obtain additional funding from Nova Scotia's technology incubation ecosystem for follow on work.

5. Priority Research Themes

Priority Research Themes for the June 2023 Open Call include the subjects listed below. These Themes are described in more detail in **Appendix 1**. The Priority Research Themes will evolve over the course of the three-year Program; subsequent calls in September 2023 and June 2024 may seek research projects under different themes.

Theme 1: Fishing and Ferry Fleets

Theme 2: Nature-Based Solutions for Carbon Sequestration

Theme 3: Agricultural Emissions

Theme 4: Direct Air Capture

Theme 5: Long-Term Energy Storage

¹ Not including Mitacs funding (see Section 7.2).

Theme 6: Electricity System Challenges Post 2030

Applicants will be expected to identify the GHG reduction problem their research is intended to address, then describe project objectives, methodology and outcomes.

6. Eligible Activities

The ECT Research program seeks to identify and develop a suite of promising, emerging clean technologies, approaches and practices that warrant continued funding from Nova Scotia's technology incubation ecosystem. The Program aims to fund early-stage projects that are difficult to fund through other funding sources. Economic development opportunities in Nova Scotia and the creation of intellectual property are related core objectives of the Program.

The following eligible activities may be undertaken during the course of a project.

1. Research, development, assessment, data gathering, testing and integration of novel and innovative equipment, software, methodologies or approaches, for example:
 - a. Proof of concept of technologies where there is a significant technical risk, including field trials, bench-scale testing, pilot plants, and prototypes;
 - b. Research and/or development of new or iterative methodologies;
 - c. Analytical tools and modelling software.
 - d. Other
2. Pre-demonstration field testing – limited duration tests designed to develop the knowledge and understanding of the technology or approach including the development of monitoring and verification technologies and methodologies.
3. The installation of a pre-commercial technology; installation of equipment and/or infrastructure to support a demonstration or multiple demonstrations.
4. Modification of existing processes, equipment, or systems to accommodate an innovative technology or processes.
5. Cost assessments for the engineering, design and permitting of an installation as described above, including engineering and design costs if supported or required as part of a demonstration.
6. Operation, performance testing, and analysis of pre-commercial equipment in its intended environment to assess performance of an innovation.

7. Process and Funding

7.1 Timing

Currently, the Program has three rounds of funding (June 2023, September 2023 and June 2024) but the Program will be extended when additional funding is confirmed.

Stream 1 Technology & Methods Development

- The June 2023 call will fund 12-month projects at \$50,000 each. A subset of these projects will be selected for follow-on funding of up to \$250,000 each.
- The September 2023 call will also fund 12-month projects at \$50,000 each. A subset of these projects will be selected for follow-on funding of up to \$250,000 each.
- The June 2024 call will again fund 12-month projects at \$50,000 each. None will be selected for follow-on funding unless the program is extended past three years.

Stream 2 Technology & Methods Adoption

- The June 2023 call will fund 18-month projects \$130,000 each. No follow-on funding has been allocated to Stream 2 projects.
- The June 2024 call will fund 18-month projects of \$130,000 each.

Selection of Stream 1 Projects for Follow-on Funding

Stream 1 projects must finish within 12 months of contract signature. The Applicant's final project report will describe whether the project outcomes met the project objectives and by extension, whether further funding is warranted. The Research Management Committee will review project outcomes and the Applicant's justification for further funding and select a subset of Stream 1 projects for follow on funding of up to \$250,000 per project. If successful, the Applicant will be asked to submit a scope of work so that a new contract can be executed.

Stream 1 **follow-on funding** is for projects that have:

- Already received funding for the initial Stream 1 project;
- Have successfully met initial project objectives and have demonstrated the potential for further development that will better position the technology or approach for subsequent funding from Nova Scotia's technology incubator ecosystem.
- Have described an achievable path to IP development or other economic benefits to Nova Scotia,
- Can contribute leverage in the form of additional cash or in-kind funding, and
- Have identified opportunities for eventual commercialization, such as establishing a collaboration with a commercial partner, identifying target markets, potential revenue streams, or other steps to commercialization.

Table 1: ECT Research Program Milestone Dates

Item	Date	Duration
June 2023 Research Call Opens	21 June 2023	
Question Period Closes	12 July 2023	22 days
Research Call Closes	17 July 2023	26 days
Proposal Review and Selection	August 2023	
Proponent Debrief Webinar	TBD (by 18 Aug 2023)	
Mitacs Review Period (if applicable)	August 2023	14-21 days
Contracting	Aug-Sept 2023	25 days
September 2023 Research Call Opens	TBD (by 30 Sep 2023)	

7.2 Mitacs Accelerate Umbrella Grant Funding

All submitted proposals are potentially eligible for additional funding through a pre-approved Mitacs Accelerate Umbrella grant established for this Program. Mitacs funding is available for students at the undergraduate, graduate and post-doctoral levels. The Applicant should consider ECT Program timelines (12 months, 18 months) when selecting student grant opportunities. Net Zero Atlantic (NZA) qualifies as a partner organization. Please list NZA as well as any other partner organization who will contribute to the Mitacs sponsorship.

The proposal submission template includes a section related to Mitacs applications. Students must already be secured at the time the proposal is submitted to the ECT Program. Proposals that seek Mitacs funding will go through a two-step approval process: review by the ECT Program Proposal Review Committee with all other proposals, and if selected for funding, two week review by Mitacs (Table 1).

7.3 Eligible Costs

The ECT Research Program will fund up to 100% of eligible projects costs. Eligible project expenditures can begin once the applicant has been notified that they have been selected for funding under the ECT Research Program, but no payments will be made until NZA and the successful proponent have completed the contracting phase.

Eligible costs are described below. Funds can be used for research, proof-of-concept or prototype development, technology design and technology optimization, intellectual property development, and assessment of market potential. Funds can cover cost of researchers, contractors, technicians, students and post-doctoral researchers.

Leverage and in-kind contributions will be evaluated on a project-by-project basis (see below). Equipment and other costs that are difficult to attribute directly to an individual project are generally ineligible but may be considered.

Eligible Expenditures

1. Salaries and Benefits

- For employees on the payroll of the Lead Proponent for the actual time spent by employees on the project
- Labour stipends for students (undergrad, Masters, PhD candidate) or recent graduates.
- A reasonable prorated share of benefits such as the employer's portion of Canada Pension Plan and Employment Insurance, health plan and insurance, Worker's Compensation, sick leave and vacation plus any other employer paid payroll related expenses.

Not Eligible

- Salary bonuses, performance pay, shares, stocks, stock options and the like.
- Incentives such as vehicle use and gym memberships.

2. Contracting Services

- Professional, technical, and scientific contracting services provided by partners, sub-contractors and consultants (i.e. not employees on the Lead Proponent's payroll).

Not Eligible

- Contractual services from a Lead Proponent's inter-related company.
- Items which have no relationship to the project or which have been charged on an indirect basis in Overhead.

3. Capital Expenditures

- Purchase, installation, testing and commissioning of qualifying equipment, materials and products, including diagnostic, testing tools and instruments
- Materials consumed in carrying out the project, including those utilized in the production and operation of models, prototypes and pilot plants.

Not Eligible

- Items which have no relationship to the project or which have been charged on an indirect basis in Overhead.

4. Results Dissemination/Travel

- Expenditures including meals and accommodation
- Reasonable travel costs, including meals and accommodation necessary for project activities e.g. field trials and demonstrations at locations away from the Proponent's usual location.
- Conferences costs including travel, meals and accommodation where project results are presented

Not Eligible

- Alcohol, entertainment and gifts.

5. Other Expenses

- Printing services and translation;
- Data collection services, including processing, analysis and management;
- Elder Honoraria;

Not Eligible

- Education and outreach programs, training, workshops.

6. Overhead

Overhead expenditures which are directly related to the conduct of the project and which can be attributed to it. Overhead expenditures cannot exceed a maximum of 15% of eligible expenditures. Overhead expenditures include:

- Administrative and corporate support provided directly to the project by the Recipient's employee(s), including audit and similar professional fees;
- Routine laboratory and field equipment maintenance, based on the actual expenditure by a Recipient;
- Office operating expenses directly related to the conduct of the project (e.g. faxes, telephone, photocopies, and office equipment);

Not Eligible

- Utilities (electricity, fuel, internet), rent

A predetermined overhead percentage (based on evidence provided by the recipient of expected overhead expenditures at the time of CA negotiation), may be set and subsequently applied to each claim, in order to avoid unnecessary administrative burden to funding recipients.

7. Taxes

GST, PST and HST minus of any tax rebate to which the recipient is entitled.

7.4 Leveraging Funds and In-Kind

Leveraging ECT Program funds with funds obtained elsewhere is encouraged, and will be included among the evaluation criteria. Preference will be given to projects that leverage funding from non-government sources and projects that include participation by or inclusion of Indigenous partner organisations.

Cash and/or in-kind funding from other sources are not required to qualify for ECT Program. In-kind costs are ineligible for reimbursement.

In recognition that both private sector and academic researchers are competing for funding, NZA takes a restrictive view of in-kind contributions. In-kind support must be reportable by the proponent and easily verifiable, directly support the project, and fall into the same cost categories as identified for Eligible Expenditures.

Note that only one contract will be issued per project; it is the Lead Proponent's responsibility to contract with and disburse funds to their research collaborators.

8. How to Apply

The **deadline** for the June 2023 call submissions is **Monday, July 17, 2023, at 11:59 pm ADT**.

Applicants are asked to download our [Proposal Submission](#) and [Budget Submission Templates](#) and complete the project description and budget sections. Submissions are made online by uploading the proposal form to <https://netzeroatlantic.sharefile.com/r-rce7714af006c456dbb46b2a8b4ca289d>. Proponents will receive a return email acknowledging receipt of submission.

9. Questions and Clarifications

Net Zero Atlantic will accept questions from interested Applicants on an ongoing basis until 5 pm ADT, Wednesday July 12, 2023. Questioners will receive a direct email response from NZA and all questions and answers will be posted anonymously on the [NZA website FAQ](#).

Please submit your questions by email (no phone calls please) to the NZA Program Coordinator at info@netzeroatlantic.ca. Please do not contact the DECC with questions.

10. Proposal Contents

As outlined in the Proposal Submission Template, all proposals must include:

1. A statement of the project's research objective(s);
2. A description of how the proposed research will meet one or more of the Program objectives listed in Section 2;
3. A description of how the proposed work address knowledge gaps in one or more of the Priority Research Themes in **Appendix 1** and how addressing the knowledge gaps will result in economic benefits for Nova Scotia . Before starting their applications for subsequent calls, Applicants should always check Appendix 1 for changes or updates to the Priority Research Themes.
4. A work scope: a description of the research methodology by task including the expected time needed to complete each task;
5. A summary of key research team members' expertise and team organisational chart (CVs not required);
6. A budget presented on the template provided;

7. A description of project outcomes and a plan to disseminate outcomes and deliverables to knowledge consumers (e.g., via project reports, theses and publications, presentations at conferences, etc.) to ensure and facilitate the distribution and uptake of ECT Research Program outcomes;
8. A statement regarding how the ECT Research Program's Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) expectations will be met (Section 11).
9. A description of perceived risks to project success, such as risk in securing needed personnel and/or additional funding or leverage, risks to project timing, safety or environmental-related risks, along with how the applicants will manage these risks should they arise.

For new Applicants, please note:

- The project's research *objective* is a description of what the researcher expects to accomplish by project end – the researcher's vision of what new clean technology, approach and/or practice will be developed – and why it is needed.
- The *work scope* is a step-by-step description of how the objective will be achieved;
- The *outcome* is the result that will be produced by achieving the project or task objective(s).
- *Deliverables* are any knowledge product produced during the course of the project or following project closure, that will be submitted to NZA, such as interim and final reports, presentations, webinars, publications, etc. Intellectual Property (IP) may be considered a deliverable but all rights to IP developed during the ECT Program remain with the Applicant.

In fairness to other applicants, a winning proponent is expected to complete the project as proposed in their original application. Once a project commences, NZA reserves the right to decline any modifications to the project budget, schedule or tasks requested. In addition, applicants that commit to securing funds/in-kind leverage from other agencies, programs, etc. are expected to follow through with such plans. NZA reserves the right to cancel the contract in the event pledged funding or leverage cannot be obtained.

11. Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Framework

The ECT Research Program seeks to support an inclusive and equitable transition to net zero emissions. Research carried out under the Program must therefore support the pursuit of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA) in both research practice and in research project design. To support EDIA in research *practice*, proponents must take steps to consider EDIA in the hiring of and management of their research teams. To support EDIA in research *design*, proponents must ensure that they have taken relevant EDIA concerns (i.e., potential impacts of a project on equity-seeking communities) into account in the design of their research projects. Proponents will further be expected to report on EDIA outcomes at project close.

The Program administrators will use the following definitions in the evaluation of proposals.

Equity: the removal of systemic barriers and biases that have contributed and currently contribute to disparities in opportunities and outcomes for diverse communities.

Equity-Seeking Groups: communities that, due to historical and contemporary injustices, experience and seek to address barriers to equal access of resources and opportunities. These communities include Indigenous peoples, racialized minorities, LGBTQ2S+ people, people with disabilities, and women in STEM fields.

Diversity: the presence of individuals, organizations, and communities with varying attributes including, but not limited to, race, ancestry, culture, language, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, and ability.

Inclusion: the creation of an environment in which all individuals, particularly those identifying as belonging to an equity-seeking group, feel valued for their contributions and supported to fully participate.

Accessibility: the provision of conditions required to enable the participation of all individuals, particularly those identifying as belonging to an equity-seeking group.

Within the Proposal Submission Template, proponents will be asked to respond to the following questions, which will be scored during the evaluation process as described in Section 12.

Questions to be completed in the Proposal Submission Template

EDIA in Research Practice

1. Do you or any of your co-applicants identify as belonging to an equity-seeking group?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Do not know
 - Prefer not to answer
2. If you plan to hire additional team members to work on the proposed project, what measures will you take to ensure that a diverse pool of candidates can access and apply for positions?
3. In the management of your team, how will you ensure that all team members have the support needed to fully participate in the research program and to access opportunities for networking and skill development?

EDIA in Research Design

1. If any of your research activities will be carried out at an offsite location and/or will require the participation of community members, what measures will you take to ensure that community needs and/or concerns are accounted for in the design and execution of your research project?
2. Could the outcomes of your research project impact (positively or negatively) equity-seeking groups? If so, what measures will you take to avoid any negative impacts and enhance benefits to those equity-seeking groups?

Note: This Framework assumes that EDIA in Research *Practice* will apply to all projects. However, EDIA in Research *Design* may not apply to all projects (i.e., if the research activities will not be conducted offsite and/or if the research activities and/or outcomes will have no significant impact on equity-seeking groups). In this case, the Proponent will be asked at the proposal submission stage to explain and justify why EDIA in Research Design does not apply to his/her project.

12. Proposal Evaluation

Proposal evaluation panels will be managed by the Program Administrator and will include external subject matter experts as applicable. External reviewers will be asked to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) to protect commercially sensitive information and ideas.

The following criteria will be used to evaluate proposals:

Factor	Weight
1. Project Need and Responsiveness to the Applicant Guide (AG): a. Research objective clearly stated; b. Project will meet one or more of the ECT Program objectives (AG Sec. 2); c. Project aligns with Priority Research Theme and proponent has articulated knowledge gap(s) and economic benefits to Nova Scotia.	30%
2. Approach and Methodology: a. Proponent has outlined a clear and effective workplan that will achieve the stated objectives, and a sound approach in undertaking this project; b. Communication format and frequency are described; c. Proponent describes an achievable schedule with well-defined milestones and deliverables.	30%
3. Qualifications, Capabilities and Management: a. Experience and capabilities of the lead Proponent and delivery team; b. Collaboration, team organisation and scale are appropriate for this project; c. Risks have been sufficiently assessed and managed.	15%
4. Budget, Leverage and Value: a. The budget is clear and complete and well described; b. The Team will offer leverage and good value for the proposed budget.	10%
5. Outcomes Dissemination and EDIA: a. Proposal includes a robust communication plan to disseminate findings; b. Proposal articulates measures to include EDIA in Research Practice; c. Proposal articulates measures to include EDIA in Research Design.	15%
Total:	100%

Confidentiality: All information received from Applicants will be kept strictly confidential. All external reviewers will sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA). However, the successful applicant herein authorizes Net Zero Atlantic to reveal the applicant’s name, title, affiliate institution, title and lay summary of the project, duration of support, and approved funding amount.

Appendix 1: Priority Research Themes

Emerging Concepts and Technologies (ECT) Research Program

Priority Research Themes

vers. 26 May 2023

This document describes current Priority Research Themes of the ECT Research Program. This list is current as of the date given above and may be updated with new or expanded Themes for subsequent calls in September 2023 and June 2024.

The research subjects and example questions listed below are not intended to be exhaustive nor restrict Applicants to consideration of these topics alone; other subjects proposed by the Applicant will be considered as long as they broadly fall within a Priority Research Theme.

All projects submitted to the ECT Research Program must align with one or more of these Themes. Applicants must identify the particular knowledge gap(s) within a Theme that will be addressed by their project. Applicants should consider the following points when designing their projects and address these points, as applicable, in their application:

1. For the 2030-2050 period, what are the expected sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in this sector in Nova Scotia?
2. What are the gaps between what's currently being done and what needs to be done to ensure decarbonization targets are reached in this sector?
3. In what way(s) will your proposed project address these knowledge gap(s) and ultimately reduce GHG emissions in the province?
4. What economic benefits to Nova Scotia will result by addressing the identified knowledge gap(s)?

Fishing and Ferry Fleets

The marine industry is core to the provincial economy, culture, and identity. Net-zero enabling technologies, such as advanced batteries and alternative fuels for marine transportation, remain at an early stage of development.

Some key issues when it comes to managing emissions include:

- Vessel/equipment upgrades to reduce fuel use;
- Adoption of fishing techniques, sensors and other equipment that reduce or replace bottom trawling;
- Adoption of best practices to improve resource harvest efficiency and thus achieve emissions reductions (e.g., better planning, use of science-based decision making, improving rule enforcement, implementing better monitoring programs, etc.)

Nature-Based Solutions for Carbon Sequestration

Nature-based solutions include a variety of approaches to protect, manage and restore forests and timberlands, wetlands, croplands, grasslands and grazing lands so that these ecosystems can store carbon. An understanding of the carbon sequestration potential in Nova Scotia may include collaboration with Mi'kmaw communities so that Indigenous knowledge systems and approaches can be included in any solutions adopted.

Some key issues in this sector include:

- There is a lack of knowledge and quality data regarding soil nutrient cycling and storage within forest, wetland, and agricultural soils and throughout riverine and estuary ecosystems.
- New or improved analytical methods and remote sensing approaches are required to better assess soil quality, evaluate the nutrient cycling potential and monitor trends.
- Proxy indicators are needed for carbon stocks and subsequent sequestration rates. Other indicators for adaptation and mitigation successes and failures are also needed.
- Centralized databases and regional inventories of forest, wetland and agricultural soils are required. These databases must be established with incentives to share data and must be accessible in a barrier-free way to small landowners. Data privacy issues and other impediments to data access must be resolved so that existing, privately owned datasets can be used as for baselines.
- The carbon credits/offsets regime is difficult for most potential users to understand or utilize. Understanding how to assess and value sequestration potential as it relates to offsets, credits, insurance, market access, and the monetization of woodlots and wetlands is a necessary step for incentivising private owners to participate in the carbon market.

Agricultural Emissions

Agricultural emissions, largely generated through non-combustion activities, defy easy abatement using standard mitigation strategies such as electrification and fuel-switching. Research and development are needed to accelerate the development of solutions that prevent and or/capture emissions from agricultural processes and scale-up their adoption in Nova Scotia.

The main sources of emissions in this sector include:

- Enteric (ruminant) fermentation
- Manure management
- Liberation of N₂O from soils
- 'Indirect emissions'

Some of the main issues when it comes to managing emissions in this sector include:

- Development of zero-emissions farm machinery and equipment
- Enhancing carbon sinks (e.g., through reduction in tillage, restoring degraded land, improving pasture management, reducing fallow periods, managing residues, etc.).
- Reducing methane emissions (e.g., through extending lactation periods of dairy cows, using more efficient breeds, feed additives, improving reproductive performance, etc.).
- Reducing nitrous oxide emissions (e.g., through better measurements of N₂O loss, improvements to fertilizer management and application practices; greater use of legumes as a nitrogen source; use of cover crops to remove excess available nitrogen; adjusting tillage intensity, etc.).

Direct Air Capture

There will be certain emissions that cannot be prevented or captured upon point of release. Though nature-based solutions can counteract some of these residual emissions, their scope will be constrained by geographic and ecological boundaries. Direct air capture (DAC) technology will thus likely be required in Nova Scotia and the world at large to reach net-zero emissions. Research on this subject would expand work already undertaken by the province in past years and focus on adapting technologies developed elsewhere for use in Nova Scotia.

Innovation will be central to reducing the cost of DAC technologies and supporting accelerated commercialisation. Priority innovation needs for DAC include:

- Reducing the energy consumption needed to separate CO₂ through emerging sorbent technologies and innovative approaches able to regenerate the solvent at low to medium temperatures.
- Reducing the cost of carbon sorbents and/or making them more durable (increases their lifespans).
- New air contactor designs and processes to reduce energy use.

Long-Term Energy Storage

Nova Scotia is a winter-peaking, cold climate jurisdiction that will transition to a low-carbon electricity generation system powered by variable-output renewable energy (i.e., wind and solar). This makes Nova Scotia vulnerable to supply interruptions during periods of limited solar and wind availability, which in turn necessitates the use of both short-term and long-term energy storage. Cost-effective long-term energy storage solutions are not yet commercially available. In addition, the technical and regulatory integration of long-term energy storage into the province's energy grid is still unexplored.

Some of the main issues with resulting implications for future GHG reduction include:

- Understanding the value that hydrogen storage can provide in energy systems with large penetrations of variable renewables;
- Improving the capacity and longevity of lithium ion and other battery types;

- Assessing the technoeconomic system impacts of adopting compressed air or other gas storage opportunities;
- Understanding the applicability of thermal energy storage in residential, commercial and industrial buildings.

Electricity System Challenges Post 2030

While it is agreed upon that fossil-fuel-based electricity generation capacity will be reduced in Nova Scotia, many questions about the electricity system post 2030 are unanswered. How can variable renewables replace the firm capacity that natural gas provides to the electricity generation system? What are the regulatory barriers (and pathways) for community renewable energy projects? How can the reliability of the electricity grid be maintained with an increased number of severe weather events? What impact does a widespread adoption of heat pumps have on the peak electricity demand and consequently on the required electricity generation capacity? How valuable is peak shaving in Nova Scotia's future energy system? These are a number of example questions that would benefit from further investigation.

Addressing these knowledge gaps would allow Nova Scotia to minimize curtailment, better integrate community and private sector wind and solar power into the grid and strategically upgrade different sectors of the electricity grid in response to emerging projects.

Some of the main issues related to this sector include:

- Resource adequacy and seasonal energy use and energy production imbalances;
- Network adequacy, cost and efficiency;
- Managing system stability and dispatch, and resource adequacy in the face of increased renewable energy coming from rural locations.

END