

APPLICATION GUIDE

PROGRAMME DE SÉCURITÉ ALIMENTAIRE NORDIQUE
2023-2028

Société du Plan Nord

V. August 2024

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Should you have questions concerning the call for projects, please contact the Société du Plan Nord's advisors at the office closest to your community.

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1. PROGRAMME DE SÉCURITÉ ALIMENTAIRE NORDIQUE

The Société du Plan Nord's (SPN) mission is to contribute to the integrated and holistic development of Québec's northern territory guided by sustainable development practices. It does so according to government orientations and in consultation with relevant regional representatives, Indigenous communities, and the private sector.

As part of its mission, the SPN supports several financial tools that contribute directly to the government's objective of "Living in the North." These financial tools support various projects about entrepreneurship, the environment and conservation of the Territory, strategic infrastructure building, workforce training and food security. You can find more information on the Québec.ca website: <https://www.quebec.ca/en/government/policies-orientations/northern-territory-development/financial-support>

The Programme de sécurité alimentaire nordique is designed to continue to provide government support in building greenhouses tailored to northern communities' climatic conditions. The Program is adapting by supporting various local food initiatives, including the processing and preservation of foodstuff produced by and for northern communities to meet communities' needs better.

1.1. Objectives

The Program aims to promote community food security as part of a sustainable development approach. In keeping with the northern environment, it aims to improve:

- Local residents' health and well-being, with a better supply of fresh local produce of good nutritional quality;
- Revitalizing community life;
- Local food systems.

1.2. Eligibility criteria

1.1.1. Territory

The Program is intended for projects and initiatives in Quebec north of the 49th parallel, north of the St. Lawrence and the north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence (hereinafter « Territory »).

In exceptional cases, projects outside the Territory may be supported if they benefit northern communities and businesses. Where applicable, promoters must demonstrate that the project's location is appropriate.

1.1.2. Eligible clientele

The Program's eligible clientele are:

- Incorporated non-profit organizations (NPOs);
- cooperatives whose activities are similar to those of a non-profit organization;
- municipalities, regional county municipalities and municipal bodies¹;
- Indigenous communities and their band council;
- northern village corporations, northern villages, and Inuit landholding corporations;
- mutual organizations whose activities are like those of a non-profit.

1.1.3. Eligible projects

A project is an initiative of limited duration, of a one-off and non-recurring nature, which is different from the organization's operating activities.

Eligible projects must fall within one of the following categories:

- Community projects to produce fruit and/or vegetables for local and/or regional consumption;
- Projects aimed at preserving and/or processing food produced or harvested locally.

When a project falls under a government department or body's purview, SPN's analysts automatically request a notice of relevance from the appropriate department or body.

¹ In this document, the term regional county municipalities also includes l'Administration régionale Baie-James, the Kativik Regional Government, the Cree Nation Government, and the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government.

1.1.4. Ineligible projects

- Projects that are likely to be repeated, i.e. projects that have already been financed at least once over the three years preceding the application for financial assistance and that do not present any form of innovation or novelty;
- Projects that run counter to government policy;
- Projects that were completed or launched before the application submission date;
- Projects of an individual person;
- Projects of organizations registered in the Registre des entreprises non admissibles aux contrats publics (RENA);
- Projects from applicants who have failed to meet their obligations after having been duly given formal notice in respect of previous financial assistance granted by a ministry or granting agency over the two years preceding the application for financial assistance;
- Projects whose finance package already includes an SPN program.

The SPN reserves the right to reject any application that does not satisfy the criteria and conditions stipulated in the Program's normative framework.

1.1.5. Eligible costs and expenses

Eligible expenses are the costs or expenses directly related to the project, for example:

- Operating costs required to carry out the project, including salaries² and other remuneration, as well as occasional rent;
- Equipment acquisition or rental costs;
- Professional fees;
- Capital expenditures;
- Expenses incurred producing plans and studies;
- Travel and living expenses³;
- Administrative expenses⁴.

The Société du Plan Nord reserves the right to require the promoter to provide contract awarding terms and conditions. When the project calls for activities incurring professional fees, the SPN reserves the right to ask the promoter to submit at least two service offers (bids).

1.1.6. Ineligible costs and expenses

- Representation expenses, gifts and sponsorships;
- Expenses related to the purchase of any motor vehicle that can be registered;
- Expenses relating to a completed project;
- Expenses incurred before the project submission date;
- Reimbursed expenses eligible for another form of reimbursement, such as tax refunds;
- Expenses related to a project that runs counter to established government policy and the legislation and regulations in force;

² For wages, the fringe benefits rate must be equal to or less than 17%.

³ Subject to government rates.

⁴ Must not exceed 15% of the total project cost. Justification may be required.

- Expenses intended to satisfy legislative or regulatory requirements;
- An organization or business' deficit or debt payment;
- Recurrent expenditure⁵;
- Working capital;
- Expenditure planned for after March 31, 2028.

1.1.7. Complementarity with existing programs

The financing offer must be complementary to community contributions and other existing programs. The applicant must demonstrate that a search for complementary funding has been carried out. The term "complementary funding search" refers to a minimum approach to at least one of the relevant federal or provincial departments and agencies offering a program that allows the project to be eligible, as well as to at least one local or regional organization.

2. FUNDS AVAILABLE AND FUNDING LIMIT

2.1. Financial commitments

Financial commitments will be limited to the allotted budget and subject to available annual appropriations.

- A community project to produce fruit and/or vegetables for local consumption can be funded up to \$275,000;
- A project designed to preserve and/or process locally produced or harvested food can be funded up to \$100,000.

2.2. Calculating public funding

Maximum public financial support rate⁶ The maximum public financial rate is:

- 90% of eligible costs.

The applicant or community must contribute at least 10% of eligible costs. Contributions in kind are accepted, subject to submitting a document justifying said contribution.

The organization must pay expenses, excluding salaries, as part of its basic operations, regardless of its activity volume (e.g. rent, Internet, telephone).

⁶ See Appendix A for additional information.

3. PROJECT SELECTION

3.1. Required information for application review

All received projects will first be screened for eligibility. This analysis covers both the applicant and the project. The following criteria must be met:

- Applicant must detail the project's needs and provide all required information for application review;
- All required documents must be included in the application;
- The promoter an eligible clientele;
- The project has never received funding under an SPN program;
- The combined government assistance authorized by the Program is observed;
- The application complies with the maximum financial assistance authorized;
- Applicant provides a three-year operating budget estimating operating costs and projected income (for infrastructure projects only);
- The application must at least provide the following information:
 - Applicant contact details, including the name and number entered in the Quebec Enterprise Register (NEQ) if applicable,
 - The project location, address and contact details of the project contact person,
 - Justification for the project's location if it is taking place outside the Territory,
 - Project costs and funding breakdown, including a detailed explanation of secured funding sources,
 - A copy of the applicant's most recent financial report.

Projects that do not satisfy all the mandatory criteria will be deemed ineligible by the preliminary analysis.

In addition, the applicant must demonstrate that the project will be undertaken and managed by an organization meeting the eligible clientele criteria and that the project's economic benefits will be felt within the community.

3.2. Project selection criteria

A selection committee will assess eligible projects according to the program's analysis criteria and the sustainable development criteria (the economic, social, and environmental sections) stipulated in **Appendix B**.

4. PROJECT PRESENTATION AND SUBMISSION

4.1. Forms

Promoters must complete the financial assistance application form, signed and dated. It is available on Québec.ca : <https://www.quebec.ca/gouvernement/politiques-orientations/developpement-territoire-nordique/aide-financiere/serres-communautaires>.

4.2. Submission of projects

The following documents must be submitted to the SPN:

- Financial assistance form, completed, signed and dated;
- Copy of the applicant organization's most recent financial report;
- A copy of the board of directors resolution authorizing the applicant to submit projects and to sign agreements;
- Applicant provides a three-year operating budget estimating operating costs and projected income (for infrastructure projects only);
- Commitment letters from project partners, when applicable;
- Any other document deemed to be relevant to the project's assessment.

The documents can be submitted:

- By email: psan@spn.gouv.qc.ca
- by fax: 418 643-3660;
- by regular mail:
Programme de sécurité alimentaire nordique
Société du Plan Nord
900 René-Lévesque Boulevard East, suite 720
Québec (Québec) G1R 2B5

The postmark will indicate the submission date.

Required documents may be submitted at any time. Should funds no longer be available, the promoter will be informed that their project application may be postponed to the following fiscal year.

4.3. Call for projects calendar*

Project submission deadline (1 st Phase)	Results announced	Project submission deadline (2 nd Phase)	Results announced
March 27, 2024	May 2024	March 20, 2026	May 2026
June 21, 2024	August 2024	June 19, 2026	August 2026
September 20, 2024	November 2024	September 21, 2026	November 2026
December 20, 2024	March 2025	December 21, 2026	March 2027
March 21, 2025	May 2025	March 22, 2027	May 2027
June 20, 2025	August 2025	June 21, 2027	August 2027
September 19, 2025	November 2025	September 21, 2027	November 2027
December 19, 2025	March 2026		

* This calendar is subject to change. Please refer to the most up-to-date version of this guide on the Québec.ca website.

5. AGREEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

A financial assistance agreement between the SPN and the promoter will detail obligations created by the Act. The agreement will detail disbursement procedures, financial assistance grant terms and conditions, and the accountability process.

For each payment, the promoter must produce an activity and utilization report regarding the financial assistance in keeping with the deadlines stipulated in the financing agreement.

To receive the final payment, a report must be submitted containing at least the following:

- A detailed description of the project and the activities carried out through the financial assistance;
- Project total cost, including each of its activities;
- An outline of funding sources, including amounts received from each source;
- Total jobs created, when applicable;
- An appendix containing supporting documents for authorized expenses and a detailed financial report on project expenses;
- An annual production balance sheet for community fruit and/or vegetable production projects;
- A report on the project's impact vis-à-vis the Program's sustainable development criteria.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The SPN is subject to the Act respecting access to documents held by public bodies and protecting personal information (CQLR, chapter A-2.1).

The financial assistance agreement between the SPN and the promoter will specify the obligations created by the Act.

The SPN may use all provided information for research, evaluation, study, inquiry, statistical or cost forecasting purposes.

APPENDIX A: Calculating public funding

The total financial assistance amount, whether direct or indirect, received from Québec and Canadian government departments, agencies and Crown corporations, including tax credits, as well as from municipal entities that are not direct beneficiaries of the Program, must not exceed 90% of eligible expenses for public projects and 50% for private projects.

To calculate the public financial assistance stacking rate, the term "municipal entities" refers to municipal bodies listed in section 5 of the *Act respecting access to documents held by public bodies and protecting personal information* (CQLR, chapter A-2.1).

The assets referred to in subparagraph 1 of the first paragraph of section 89 of the *Act to establish the regional government of Eeyou Istchee Baie-James* (R.S.Q., chapter G 1.04) are not considered in this standard's cumulative rule.

For aggregation calculation purposes, all financial assistance granted by a public body must be calculated at 100% of its value, whether repayable or not.

When the public financial assistance's cumulative rate amounts to less than 100% of eligible expenditure, a minimum contribution from the beneficiary or a non-public partner is required to ensure that the government's financial assistance does not cover the project's entire eligible expenditure.

In addition, financial assistance from the Business Development Bank of Canada, Farm Credit Canada and the Financière agricole du Québec will be considered private contributions if they offer no advantage, i.e., when agreed on market terms.

APPENDIX B: Sustainable development criteria

Possible initiatives are provided for each sustainable development criterion for information purposes and to help you target those that apply to your project. Please contact the Société du Plan Nord's advisors if you have questions concerning the criteria.

Economic Section	
Criterion 1: Generates economic returns for northern communities	
Possible initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhances collective wealth and promotes commercial businesses as well as local services creation and maintenance Supports local procurement and sound business relationships Enhances job quality or promotes job creation
Criterion 2: Supports entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship	
Possible initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involves stakeholders in project governance Encourages entrepreneurial action within the organization Promotes an entrepreneurial culture within the organization and at the regional level Promotes organizational improvement in terms of management and administration capacity Promotes innovation as well as local and regional economic diversification
Criterion 3: Promotes innovation and local and regional economic diversification	
Possible initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimizes the innovation potential, diversifies options and promotes innovative solution implementation Allows for the development of an area of activity that is promising for the community Aims to diversify, modernize and innovate Enables the region, the organization, or the business to access or develop new markets Supports emerging, innovative and sustainable economic models, such as circular economy, green economy, low-carbon economy, fair trade and social economy Demonstrates the project's or the concept's novelty
Criterion 4: Demonstrates economic viability and sustainability	
Possible initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates budget control and control of project-related risks Considers costs and impacts throughout the product life cycle (e.g. manufacturing, processing, transport, sale, disposal) Demonstrates the project's long-term profitability and viability and, where appropriate, the revenue that it will generate
Criterion 5: Makes provision for partner and funding complementarity from a financial leverage perspective	
Possible initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enables the pooling of available financial resources and optimizes their utilization Limits the project's repercussions on competing local businesses by fostering complementarity in terms of activities, industries, circuits, or businesses

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Social Section	
Criterion 6: Improving northern communities' health and quality of life	
Possible initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads to a change in lifestyle habits and behaviour • Helps improve communities' quality of life by reducing poverty, improving health and increasing access to local services • Improves individual and community safety by mitigating risks
Criterion 7: Includes targeted public engagement and involvement and support from local, regional or government bodies	
Possible initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complies with local planning documents, territorial orientations, or needs expressed and the community's distinctive nature • Enhances collaboration and the development of regional strengths • Relies on community adherence to the project or enhances its social acceptability • Fosters stakeholder participation by clearly determining when participation must and can occur • Demonstrates local governance
Criterion 8: Promotes equity, inclusion and social solidarity and meets a local need	
Possible initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates means to foster newcomers' cultural integration • Reduces repercussions on certain vulnerable social groups, mainly by providing broader access to certain services • Promotes involvement and highlights personal and collective achievement • Fosters social cohesion by bolstering the values of respect, solidarity, and openness through group activities in developing collective projects • Is designed to promote intra- and inter-generational equity
Criterion 9: Preserves or highlights cultural heritage	
Possible initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes the North's diversity in terms of cultures and attractions, such as cultural sites and built heritage • Considers repercussions on local cultures and, where appropriate, proposes mitigation measures • Promotes availability, accessibility, diversity, or development of cultural heritage, such as heritage and natural sites, traditions, and ancestral knowledge • Highlights cultural practices • Promotes cultural expression and the use of traditional languages • Promotes cultural contact for as many people as possible
Criterion 10: Fosters knowledge through research, experimentation and knowledge acquisition and sharing	
Possible initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans to make available to other organizations knowledge acquired throughout the projects • Integrates monitoring and research activities to continuously improve projects • Bolsters knowledge and skills acquisition by involved stakeholders • Disseminates outcomes in plain language • Improves access to quality educational processes

Environmental Section	
Criterion 11: Reduce waste production and manage reusable consumption	
Possible initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes pooling for optimal resource utilization • Apply the 4-R approach (reduce, reuse, recycle, recover) • Reduces landfill waste • Limits pollutants (land, air, water, light, noise) • Utilizes environmentally-friendly resources
Criterion 12: Promotes environmental protection and biodiversity conservation	
Possible initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes the project's impact on land, agricultural, forest, maritime, and riparian environments • Preserves essential life-sustaining resources without damaging the ecosystem (carrying capacity of the environment) • Positively impacts local ecosystems • Promotes environmental and biodiversity conservation • Protects rare, threatened, endangered and symbolic species • Uses a methodology that is tailored to northern environments (research projects)
Criterion 13: Provides for mitigation measures and monitoring mechanisms to offset repercussions on biodiversity and ecosystems	
Possible initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implements remedial or risk and impact mitigation measures • Includes a project environmental risk management plan • Possesses the organizational reaction capacity to reduce risks or remediate damage • Takes preventive action in the event of a known or potential risk • Applies the polluter pays principle • Makes provision for rehabilitating and preventative measures costs
Criterion 14: Incorporates climate adaptation and mitigation measures	
Possible initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopts the best short-, medium- and long-term climate change adaptation practices • Strengthens community resilience to climate change • Quantifies and reduces greenhouse gases (GHGs) • Offsets GHGs by increasing carbon sinks through voluntary or regulatory action, such as tree planting, buying emission credits on carbon markets, etc. • Adopts energy sources, technologies, processes, and logistics chains that generate the least pollution and GHG • Favours wood materials
Criterion 15: Carries activities according to the best environmental practices and promotes sustainable development initiatives	
Possible initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhances formal sustainable development initiatives • Purchases goods and services that improve employees' working conditions • Reduces energy consumption • Improves waste management • Introduce organic farming, agroforestry and/or permaculture techniques • Raises awareness and educates the public on the critical relationship between people and the environment