

Small Firm Assistance Program (SFAP) Program Info Sheet for 2017-2018

Program Objective:

The program is funded by National Research Council Canada (NRC) through its Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP). The objective of the program is to support any qualified technology SME developing its own products or services to access technical or business services from qualified professionals that can assist them with their growth and competitiveness.

Eligibility:

A growth oriented Canadian incorporated technology SME (< 100 employees) developing its own products or services located within the Algoma region.

Eligible Activities:

As a guide, eligible activities can include any new strategic activities (have not been approved in prior year funding programs) that are critical to support the SME's growth and competitiveness. Examples of technical and business services that are eligible under the program will include but not limited to:

- Product/process engineering/design, optimization, development, analysis or testing
- Market research and strategy development including competitive analysis
- Business strategy development
- Development of strategic legal/commercial agreements
- Productivity enhancement analysis
- Technical feasibility analysis
- Intellectual property (IP) protection and product certification related work, but not including related filing fees
- Development of sales and distribution systems but not including standard website development which is considered marketing overhead
- Advanced software coding/network security/architect design etc. beyond the present internal capability of the applicant.

Examples of deliverables under the program would include engineering results, strategy reports, customized legal agreements etc.

Eligible and Ineligible Costs:

The program will support professional labor costs only and will exclude cost of capital, travel expenses, materials, inventory, taxes, filing fees and any on-going operational costs.

Maximum Assistance:

The Small Firm Assistance Program (SFAP) will provide financial assistance up to \$5,000 per SME in any given fiscal year funding period to support professional labor costs only. Project value can exceed IRAP's maximum \$5,000 contribution but ineligible or additional costs beyond the threshold will be the applicant's responsibility.

Contributory Requirement:

Applicants will be required to pay a non-refundable administrative fee in the amount of 15% of the total funds requested plus HST. Contribution must be received before any payment funds are advanced to contractors.

Other Program Conditions:

- Except for Intellectual Property(IP) services, applicant to submit at least 2 quotes/estimates clearly stating proposed scope of work, rate per hour and number of hours required to complete the project.
- The approved project contractor must invoice (and be paid by) SSMIC directly for the amount approved under the program.
- No more than 1 SFAP per SME in any given fiscal year funding period.
- No repeat engagement with the same professional or work in the same vein of expertise.
- If merited, an SFAP recipient could potentially also be approved to receive a single PSP engagement provided it is in a different field of expertise and provided by a professional they have not formerly been supported in engaging via an IRAP CTO.
- It should not be used to continually subsidize a company's recurring professional needs or typical overhead costs such as:
 - Developing marketing materials (including basic web sites)
 - Filing additional patents
 - Creating on-going legal documents
 - Doing a second market strategy
 - Developing more software modules of similar complexity to those previously supported etc.
- SFAP applications should be reviewed by the local IRAP Industrial Technology Advisor (ITA) prior to approval to ensure eligibility.
- Approved recipients will have up to three (3) months to complete the project from date of approval or no later than February 15, 2018, whichever is earlier.
- Applicant to sign the Reporting Requirements for NRC-IRAP Funded Services document upon approval of application and submit the mandatory end-of-project report within ten (10) days from project completion date. Please refer to copies of document and reporting templates attached.

Other Program Requirements:

1. An Applicant who is not a registered SSMIC client is required to undergo the SSMIC client intake process and submit a completed client intake form and a copy of their Articles of Incorporation.
2. The same intake process will apply to all existing clients who have not been active for more than 12 months.

Program Application Date:

- We are now accepting applications on a first come, first served basis.

Contact Information:

For further information, please contact:

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