RTRI Application Guide

Purpose of this guide

The guide helps you complete the online application form for the Regional Tariff Response Initiative (RTRI). Before starting the form, carefully review the RTRI website to ensure your business is eligible to apply for funding and that your proposed activities meet the program objective and criteria.

Tariff Impact

- **In question 1,** enter the fiscal year-end date and annual revenue for each of your two most recently completed fiscal years. The amounts must match the financial statements you attach with this application. Eligibility for this initiative will normally be restricted to those firms that generated at least $1 million in annual revenue in at least one of the last two of the firm's fiscal years.
- In **question 2**, select the impact(s) that best describe how U.S. tariffs, Chinese tariffs and Canadian counter-tariffs, or the uncertainty created by these tariffs, affect your business. Select only impacts that you can explain in the next question, supported with evidence.
- In **question 3**, based on your selection to the previous question, describe how tariffs have negatively affected your business, or how they are threatening it. Describe what changed and when; which products, materials, customers, suppliers, or markets were affected; the financial or operational impact on your business; how the impact affects your ability to maintain operations or employment in Canada; and the evidence you can provide.
    - Evidence may include export sales records showing reduced volumes; invoices, supplier notices, purchase orders or similar showing increased costs for the purchase of production materials; addition of an import or export tax on your products; customs documents; revenue decline from loss of customers or contracts; layoffs, hiring freezes or uptake of the EI Work-Sharing Program at your business; and other relevant business records.
    - You do not need to attach every business record. Provide enough information for us to understand and verify the tariff-related impact.
- **In question 4,** indicate the current number of full-time employees in Canada, as of the date of application. Do not include people employed by suppliers or contracted services.

  - **Full-time employees (FTEs) working in Canada** are those who work in Canada a minimum of a 35-hour work week.

- **In question 5,** select the sector that represents the largest share of your business's revenue or activities. If none are applicable, select Other and identify your primary sector.
- **In question 6,** select the support you are requesting. The online form will display the sections that apply to your selection.

Liquidity Assistance Information (Q7-13)

Complete this section only if you are applying for liquidity assistance.

Liquidity assistance is intended to address a demonstrated, temporary need resulting from tariffs and to help maintain Canadian operations and employment.

What is liquidity assistance, and how is it calculated?

Liquidity assistance is temporary, non-repayable funding for tariff-affected businesses that need short-term support to maintain Canadian operations and employment.

Eligible businesses may receive liquidity assistance equal to 50% of their average eligible monthly payroll, for a period of up to 12 months but no later than March 31, 2028, to a maximum non-repayable contribution of $2 million.

If the payroll-based amount does not meet a business's demonstrated liquidity need because of high essential operating expenses, up to 50% of eligible operating costs may also be considered, on an exceptional basis.

Further details are provided in this guide.

The assessment of liquidity need to help determine the amount that may be authorized, capped at $2 million, takes into account the information provided and attested to in this section.

- **In question 7**, enter your average eligible monthly payroll for the most recent 12-month period using amounts that can be supported by payroll records and CRA payroll remittance reports. To calculate this amount, add your eligible payroll expenses for the most recent 12 completed months and divide the total by 12.
  - Eligible payroll generally includes only salaries and wages paid to employees working in the region of Canada to which you are applying. Do not include:

        - Payments to contractors or contracted service providers;
        - Dividends or shareholder distributions;
        - Owner withdrawals;
        - Employee bonuses, including retention bonuses;
        - Employee severance costs;
        - Payments to employees working outside Canada; or
        - The portion of payroll costs covered by another government program, including support provided through EI Work-Sharing.

- In **question 8**, enter the total eligible operating costs incurred and paid during the most recent 12 months.
    - Include only:
        - Rent or commercial lease payments;
        - Utilities;
        - Business insurance; and
        - Property taxes.
    - In this category, do not include:
        - tariffs, customs duties or export taxes, penalties or similar government charges. While these costs may help demonstrate how tariffs have impacted your business, these are not eligible operating costs for liquidity assistance; and
        - other types of operating costs or lease payments, raw materials, inventory and other direct production inputs, capital purchases, debt principal repayments, interest expenses and other financial costs, dividends, shareholder distributions, or costs unrelated to ongoing operations.
- In **question 9**, explain why your business needs liquidity assistance to meet its financial obligations during the proposed funding period. Be specific. Consider the following in your response:
    - As demonstrated by your cash flow forecast, explain your cash flow position over the requested funding period as it relates to issues caused by trade barriers compared to pre-tariff baselines.

    - How will liquidity assistance help your business meet payroll obligations, cover short-term cash flow shortages, manage seasonal fluctuations or fund working capital needs to maintain Canadian operations?
    - What could happen without the assistance? Where possible, connect the amount requested to specific payroll periods and jobs, availability of working capital, cash flow forecasts, loan agreements or similar evidence of need.

- In **question 10**, enter the number of jobs in the region of Canada in which you are applying that you expect to maintain with the assistance. The number should be current as of the date of your application. The number should be reasonable and consistent with the payroll information in your application and cannot exceed the value entered in question 4. Do not include:
    - Contractors;
    - Vacant positions;
    - Future hires;
    - Employees working elsewhere in Canada (i.e., if you have operations in more than one RDA catchment area, you will be required to submit separate funding requests for those employees ;
    - Employees working outside of Canada; or
    - Payroll costs covered by another government program or initiative, including any jobs maintained as a result of an RTRI pivot project.

- In **question 11**, enter the total liquidity assistance requested, up to $2 million. Base your request on your demonstrated liquidity shortfall over the next 12 months and the amount required to maintain operations and employment in Canada. Your request should be supported by eligible payroll and, where necessary, essential operating costs, after accounting for forecasted revenue, available financing, working capital, and other government assistance. Any amounts approved may be less than the amount requested.

- In **question 12**, list all federal, provincial, territorial, municipal, or other public funding received or requested that relates to your liquidity need.
    - This includes programs such as:
        - EI Work-Sharing;
        - Wage or employment supports;
        - Provincial liquidity programs;
        - Other federal business assistance; and

        - Funding received from your Regional Development Agency for another project.
    - For each source, provide the program name, amount, status, and costs or period covered, where known. Other government funding does not automatically make your business ineligible. However, the same cost cannot be funded twice, and RTRI payments will be adjusted when other assistance becomes available.

- In **question 13**, read the full attestation before selecting I agree.
    - By agreeing, you confirm the need for the assistance and accept that, if approved, payments may be reduced, discontinued, and/or subject to repayment if terms of the contribution agreement are not met.

Pivot Project Support Information (Q14-23)

Complete this section only if you are applying to undertake a pivot project.

- **In questions 14-15,** the start date may be up to 12 months before the date the application is submitted. The end date cannot be later than March 31, 2029.
- **In question 16,** enter the location where the largest portion of the project will occur. This location must be within the catchment area of the Regional Development Agency to which you are applying.
- **In question 17,** indicate whether any activities may occur on federal lands. Activities on federal lands could be subject to additional requirements under the *Impact Assessment Act*, 2019.
- **In question 18,** select the option that most accurately reflects your business.
- **In question 19,** please describe your project plan, including milestones and activities, and include the detailed steps required to successfully achieve your expected outcomes, including reducing trade-related risks.
- **In question 20,** describe the change your project will deliver and how you will measure its success. Explain how the anticipated results will advance the program's objectives, such as improving productivity, strengthening resilience, expanding markets, and economic diversification.
- **In question 21,** indicate key risks associated with the project (e.g., financial, trade, regulatory, implementation, any risks that may impact a successful project outcome) and potential risk to the broader economy (e.g., cybersecurity, privacy). Also, please identify risk mitigation measures for the project.

- **In question 22,** provide realistic and measurable results expected between the project start and end dates. You will be required to report on these results and other key performance indicators if funding is approved. Refer to Annex A for definitions.
- **In question 23,** provide a realistic project budget. This information is needed to assess whether the resources requested are appropriate, incremental and eligible for support. Include:
  - estimated total project costs, how much funding you are requesting, and a breakdown of this funding by federal fiscal year and cost category;
  - whether you have secured your portion of the financing, and the source(s) and status of any other funding.

  Important note: if you are also requesting liquidity assistance, labour costs included in the pivot project budget must be directly related to delivering the project and must not also be included in your liquidity request. The same labour cost cannot be funded under both types of support.

Important notes:

- All eligible costs must be reasonable, incremental and directly related to eligible project activities.
- Enter all costs in Canadian dollars (CAD). Enter "0" for cost categories that do not apply.
- The federal fiscal year runs from April 1 to March 31.
- For pivot projects, costs may be considered eligible up to 12 months prior to the date your application is submitted. All activities and costs must be completed by the project end date, no later than March 31, 2029.
- For pivot projects, combined government assistance from all sources (municipal, provincial, and federal, including the RDA contribution) will normally not exceed 90% of total eligible project costs, but may be up to 100% for projects led by Indigenous applicants.
- Where repayable pivot project funding is included, aggregate RTRI funding cannot exceed $20 million per applicant across all RTRI project components. This maximum includes any liquidity assistance provided to the applicant, which would be capped at up to $2 million.
- A business may receive no more than $3 million in combined non-repayable RTRI funding, consisting of up to $2 million in liquidity assistance and up to $1 million for a non-repayable pivot project.

Mandatory Documentation & Certification

Please ensure the certification section is completed by a member of your organization with signing authority to enter into a legally binding agreement with the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA).

Note:

- Applicants should also review the Mandatory Documentation section of the application form and ensure all required supporting documents are provided, including financial statements, evidence supporting tariff impacts, payroll documentation (for liquidity assistance requests), and project schedules (for pivot project requests), as applicable.
- You must select Yes or No to each of the **disclosure questions (1-6)** in order to submit your form. If you answered 'Yes' to **disclosure question 1**, or 'No' any of the **disclosures 2-6,** you must complete **question 26**. Otherwise, leave **question 26** blank.
- Certification is the act of signing a formal document to confirm that you are bound by its contents. You must check each certification box, thereby certifying both the information provided on the application and that you are duly authorized to submit the application on the organization's behalf.
- Making a false statement or providing misleading information may result in the Minister exercising any remedy available to them at law.

Other

The Government of Canada reserves the right to modify these guidelines at any time without notice and may waive certain requirements on an exceptional basis.

Annex A – Pivot Project Indicator Definitions

In the Indicator table, targets should represent the incremental results expected as a result of the project, over the period from the proposed funding start date to a date up to one year following the project completion. If the project does not have a value to report for a listed indicator, input “0” and enter a target date.

Increased domestic revenues	The total value of increased revenues within Canada for your business as a direct result of the project activities.
Increase in export revenue outside of the United States of America	Total value of increased revenue outside of Canada and the United States of America for your business as a direct result of the project activities.
Increase in export revenues to the United States of America	Total value of increased revenue to the United States of America for your business as a direct result of the project activities.
Value of Canadian materials used in project	Canadian materials refer only to steel, wood products, and aluminum that are produced and manufactured in Canada. Produced in Canada means materials that have undergone primary manufacturing and fabrication in Canada.
Value of Canadian content used in project	Canadian content refers to Canadian value-added in goods, services or labour, including both goods and services. Only the Canadian portion of each good or service is counted. • For services: Canadian content reflects work performed by people based in Canada. • For goods: Canadian content reflects value added in Canada, such as assembly, customization, installation, integration, training, commissioning, or support carried out in Canada.
Number of jobs created	A job created refers to a full-time equivalent (FTE) job that did not exist prior to the project, but which was created as a result of the project. Refer to the guidance in **question 4** to calculate FTEs.
Number of jobs maintained	A job maintained refers to employment that existed prior to the project, but which would not have continued or would have been unlikely to continue, if the project had not been funded. For pivot projects, do not include all jobs at the company but rather only those impacted by the funding

	request (this can be zero). Do not count jobs maintained as a result of liquidity assistance as recorded in **question 10**, if applicable.