



## Request for Proposals

### AI for Export Enablement: Curriculum Co-Development & Delivery

**Prepared on:** January 8, 2026

**Deadline for Submission:** February 9, 2026

**Budget Range:** \$28,500 - \$32,500 CAD + HST

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# Request for Proposals

Digital Nova Scotia (DNS), in partnership with the Atlantic Trade & Investment Growth Alliance (ATIGA) and St. Francis Xavier University (StFX), is seeking proposals from qualified industry expert consultant(s) or organizations to co-design and deliver a six-week hybrid AI Bootcamp for Export Enablement.

This initiative is intended to support Atlantic Canadian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in applying AI tools to real export activities, such as international market research, lead generation, localization, and business development, thereby increasing competitiveness, accelerating export growth, and strengthening export capacity across Atlantic Canada.

The program will be delivered as a microcredential, with Module 1 delivered by StFX and the remaining modules delivered by the selected consultant/vendor. The microcredential will be issued by StFX under the [Nova Scotia Microcredential Framework](#).

The chosen organization should be knowledgeable and successful in delivering practical AI training to non-technical business audiences, with demonstrated experience facilitating tool-based learning programs, preferably in a cohort setting. Proponents should bring a strong understanding of export workflows and the real-world needs and constraints of SMEs, along with familiarity with responsible AI principles, data privacy, and tool governance. Above all, the selected vendor must be able to design learning experiences that translate into measurable, real-world adoption and improved export enablement outcomes.

## Program Overview

The AI Bootcamp for Export Enablement is a six-week hybrid training program designed to upskill Atlantic Canadian SMEs in leveraging AI to improve export workflows. The program is designed for participants with low AI adoption and confidence, and focuses on practical adoption rather than deep technical mastery.

The program is intended for Atlantic Canadian SMEs that have low to moderate export activity (under 25% of revenue exported), and are a part of industries that have low AI adoption. The cohort will be represented by owners, founders, or decision-makers responsible for business development, sales, marketing, or export strategy.

By completing the program, participants will be able to:

- Understand how AI applies directly to export workflows
- Build confidence using multiple AI tools responsibly
- Reduce time and cost associated with export activities
- Develop 1–2 AI-powered export use cases ready for implementation
- Leave with a clear, realistic AI Export Enablement Roadmap

## Scope of Work & Timeline

The selected Digital Service Provider (DSP) will be responsible for development and delivery of Modules 2-6 (outlined below), and for supporting associated program components and outcomes.

Cohort size: 20-company pilot (5 per Atlantic province).

Curriculum Schedule: The course will ideally begin the week of March 15, 2026 and conclude 6 weeks later. Below is the draft curriculum and topics; **candidates are encouraged to adjust and edit this draft curriculum for their proposal.**

### Week 1 - AI Foundations for Exporting SMEs

- Purpose: Build AI literacy and confidence, demystify AI, and establish a shared baseline for all participants.
- Export Focus: Understanding how AI is reshaping global trade and identifying where export processes are slow, expensive, or risky.
- Examples of AI concepts Introduced:
  - What AI is vs. is not
  - Overview of: Large Language Models (LLMs), Generative AI, AI agents and automation (high-level)
  - Prompt engineering fundamentals
  - Verifying AI outputs & avoiding hallucinations
  - Human-centered AI mindset
  - Responsible AI

### Week 2 - Market Discovery & Competitive Intelligence with AI

- Purpose: Help participants identify, prioritize, and assess international markets faster and with greater confidence.
- Export Focus: Market research and selection, competitive analysis, early-stage market validation, and regulatory compliance.
- Examples of AI concepts Introduced:
  - AI-assisted research workflows
  - Deep research vs. surface-level answers
  - Validating sources and verifying data
  - Utilizing generative AI to access advanced data analysis
  - Utilizing AI for hypothesis generation

### Week 3 - Lead Prospecting & Qualification at Scale

- Purpose: Show how AI can fill the export sales funnel without increasing headcount.
- Export Focus: identifying international buyers, lead qualification, and reducing manual prospecting.
- Examples of AI concepts Introduced:

- AI for structured data extraction
- Lead scoring logic
- Integrating AI into CRM or lead lists
- Human-in-the-loop validation

#### Week 4 - Global Outreach, Localization & Cultural Adaptation

- Purpose: Enable effective international communication across languages and cultures using AI responsibly.
- Export Focus: multilingual communication, cultural nuance, and outreach personalization
- Examples of AI concepts Introduced:
  - Translation vs. localization
  - Tone, cultural norms, and negotiation styles
  - Avoiding “generic AI output”
  - Reviewing AI-generated communications

#### Week 5 - Sales & Marketing Content for Export Growth

- Purpose: Accelerate export-ready sales and marketing asset creation.
- Export Focus: proposals, pitch decks, marketing collateral, and faster response times to international opportunities.
- Examples of AI concepts Introduced:
  - Structured content generation
  - Custom GPTs / reusable prompt templates
  - Content QA workflows

#### Week 6 - AI Integration Roadmap & Capstone Presentations

- Purpose: Ensure long-term adoption, not short-term experimentation.
- Export Focus: embedding AI into ongoing export strategy, budgeting and tool selection, measuring impact.
- Capstone project

## Budget

Digital Nova Scotia will be accepting proposals upwards of \$32,500CAD + HST. The lowest bid is not guaranteed to be awarded the contract.

## Submission Requirements

To be considered, **all proposals must include the following:**

- A detailed 6-week curriculum aligned to the outline provided
- List various AI tools that will be taught in the course; should include a minimum of 10 unique AI, or AI-related, tools that will address the following:
  - Market research and selection
  - Competitive analysis
  - Early-stage market validation
  - Regulatory compliance
  - Multi-lingual Translation
  - LLMs with “deep research” functionality
  - Marketing and sales
  - Lead prospecting and nurturing
  - Automation
- An outline of capstone project and structure for the participants to validate their learning
- Facilitation outline (subject matter experts, course developers, course facilitators, etc.)
- Candidates are also encouraged to suggest/include export, business, sales, and marketing tools that may not have AI functionality, but can be enhanced with AI, or AI add-ons.

Furthermore, the proposal must demonstrate and showcase how you will teach participants practical AI skills including:

- A clear approach for supporting participants with low AI confidence and low digital maturity
- Data privacy and safe handling of company information
- IP considerations when generating sales/marketing content
- Guidance on appropriate AI use in regulated or compliance-heavy environments
- AI usage to real export workflows (this course is not generic AI training, but specific to utilizing AI to support export efforts)
- Utilization of specific AI tools for export workflows through hands-on tutorials / demos
- “Human-in-the-loop” workflows (what must be checked by a person, and how)
- Output verification methods (source validation, cross-checking, hallucination mitigation)
- How to select appropriate AI tools and build an AI workflow, strategy, and budget
- Export market selection and validation
- Regulatory orientation and compliance scoping (AI as an assistive tool, not legal advice)
- Buyer discovery and lead qualification
- Outreach localization and cultural adaptation
- AI-enabled marketing and content creation
- Repeatable workflows that reduce time/cost and increase capacity

## Proposal Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated according to the following weighted criteria to ensure the selection of highly qualified consultants:

- **Relevant Experience (30%)** - Demonstrated expertise delivering practical AI training for non-technical business audiences; prior curriculum design and workforce training experience; experience working with SMEs and ideally export enablement, sales, market research, or international business development.
- **Proposed Approach and Methodology (25%)** - Quality and practicality of hands-on learning design; clarity, feasibility, and innovation of methodology; curriculum development approach, session structure, and participant engagement model; demonstrated plan for needs assessment and tailoring to cohort realities.
- **SME Export Reality Fit & Adoption Enablement (15%)** - Demonstrated understanding of SME export realities and barriers; ability to support adoption post-program (not just completion); practical strategies that respect SME capacity constraints (time, tools, staffing); relevance and appropriateness of tool selection (and governance).
- **Portfolio / Work Samples & Curriculum Assets (10%)** - Portfolio and work samples from prior curriculum development; quality and relevance of previous materials or similar deliverables.
- **Delivery Plan, Capstone & Implementation Roadmap (10%)** - Clarity and feasibility of delivery plan; strength of capstone design and implementation roadmap; operational readiness for hybrid delivery and cohort facilitation.
- **Interview Performance (10%)** - Communication skills, alignment with AI for Export goals, and ability to collaborate with internal teams and external stakeholders.

## Contract Terms

Digital Nova Scotia will negotiate contract terms upon selection and the project will be awarded upon signing of an agreement or contract, which clearly outlines terms, scope, methodology, budget, and other necessary items.

## Response Submissions

Please submit all RFP responses to the Project Manager, Jordan Audas:  
jordan@digitalnovascotia.com