



# 2025-2028 STRATEGIC PLAN

Building Communities, Driving Transformation  
& Accelerating Potential

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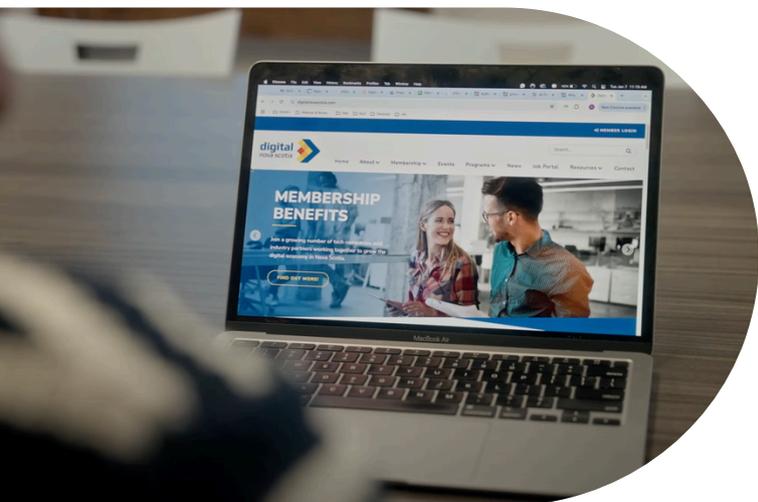
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# Introduction

## Building Communities, Driving Transformation & Accelerating Potential

As we look ahead to 2025-2028, the world stands at the precipice of an even more interconnected, digitally-driven future. The rapid acceleration of technological transformation has already reshaped industries, communities, and economies. From the lessons learned during the global pandemic to the continued evolution of emerging technologies, the pace of change is only set to increase. Today, digital adoption is no longer just an option, but a necessity for organizations striving for growth, resilience, and innovation.

In this new era, our role is clearer than ever: to build robust communities that not only embrace transformation but also drive it. By empowering collaboration, fostering innovation, and providing the tools for success, we can accelerate the potential of the digital technology sector. Together, we can create environments where ideas flourish, connections are strengthened, and technologies are harnessed to unlock unprecedented opportunities.



Nova Scotia is entering a new phase in its digital technology journey—one where we no longer solely rely on our strong pipeline of entry-level talent, but also welcome and nurture mid- and senior-level professionals who bring expertise, leadership, and strategic vision. This shift will be essential to meeting the growing demand for specialized skills and to fostering a dynamic, competitive, and sustainable digital sector.

Our commitment is to ensure that the digital sector continues to be a force that propels economic progress, social change, and technological advancement. As we navigate the next chapter, the focus will be on building lasting partnerships, advancing inclusive innovation, and accelerating the potential of every individual and organization within our community.

We have put in the groundwork and are now positioned to focus and drive results.

## Strategic Opportunities

- **Build Talent Pipelines:** Strengthening mid-level and senior talent pipelines through collaborations with academic institutions and reskilling programs is critical to addressing the current talent shortage, alongside educating employers on the benefits of alternative career paths and investing in growing employees' skillsets.
- **Regional Expansion:** Continue expanding digital services and training to rural areas ensures that regions outside of Halifax benefit from the growth of the ICT sector. Regional development will help create equitable access to digital jobs.
- **Support Digital Transformation in Key Sectors:** There is significant potential for Nova Scotia to drive digital adoption in non-ICT sectors like healthcare, manufacturing, tourism, and agriculture. The ICT sector can help industries adopt AI, automation, and data analytics to improve productivity and efficiency.
- **Targeted Programs for Underrepresented Groups:** Developing programs specifically designed for women, Indigenous people, newcomers, and other equity-deserving groups in the ICT sector can increase diversity and inclusivity.
- **A Global Workforce:** Nova Scotia is primed to welcome a global workforce through leading immigration programs and the growing demand for talent.
- **Sharing our Stories:** Technology has become so integrated into every aspect of our lives, and there is an opportunity for DNS to highlight the impact of that technology and the people behind it.

Over the last number of years, the ICT sector has seen tremendous progress, and it's not gone unnoticed, but our potential has yet to be reached. We are poised for continued growth; we can and will have more impact. To see that, our sector must address critical challenges, particularly in talent attraction and retention. Expanding training programs, embracing non-traditional education, and fostering stronger collaborations will be key to addressing these challenges and sustained growth. If we have the skilled workforce, there's no stopping us.

Looking forward, the ICT sector must continue to leverage its strengths while addressing talent shortages to maintain its competitive edge. By supporting digital transformation across all sectors and enhancing workforce capabilities, Nova Scotia's multi-billion-dollar ICT industry is well-positioned to remain a driver of economic growth in the region.

# Uniquely Nova Scotian

While our geography is certainly unique, what truly sets Nova Scotians apart is our strong sense of community. This spirit of togetherness gives us a distinct advantage — one that positions us as leaders, ready to drive growth and seize new opportunities within the digital technology sector.

Nova Scotia's tech ecosystem is central to the province's economic success, playing a key role in driving productivity, innovation, and digital transformation across all sectors. Our digital community is deeply interconnected, fueling progress and working to put digital solutions and their providers at the forefront of every industry.

For over 35 years, we've worked tirelessly to build and strengthen our tech ecosystem. Today, we are seeing the fruits of that labor, as Nova Scotia's digital economy continues to grow. Collaboratively, alongside our partners and stakeholders, opportunities have become successes, and the potential our province holds should not be underestimated.



# About Us

Digital Nova Scotia (DNS) is the leading organization dedicated to advancing the growth and development of Nova Scotia's information and communications technology (ICT) sector. For over 35 years, DNS has been fostering innovation, talent development, and technology adoption across the province. As a non-profit, we support the growth of the digital economy through industry-relevant programs, events, and partnerships, and approach initiatives with a provincial and DEI lens - addressing the needs of our growing membership base and tech sector as a whole.

Through strategic initiatives, DNS drives workforce development, strengthens the talent pipeline, shines a spotlight on the sector, and promotes the adoption of emerging technologies across various industries, ensuring Nova Scotia stays competitive globally. Our impact is evident through the millions of dollars leveraged through government and private partners to advance the digital sector and fuel economic growth within our province.

With over 275 members and 8,000 people in our immediate network, including start-ups, small businesses, and multinational corporations, DNS works closely with the tech community to ensure our initiatives align with sectoral needs. We foster collaboration among industry leaders, policymakers, academic institutions, and organizations, and work closely with our members and industry partners to ensure our programming, projects and various supports are reflective of industry feedback, and in alignment with current sectoral needs and opportunities.

Digital Nova Scotia is a key connector within the province's digital community, staying informed on industry trends by participating in leading industry events, helping identify opportunities and anticipating changes that benefit local businesses and the community. DNS also promotes knowledge-sharing through events, encouraging collaboration and ensuring the provincial tech sector remains competitive and agile in a changing global landscape.

## MEMBERSHIP DRIVEN

As Digital Nova Scotia's membership continues to grow, we further strengthen our sector's collective voice, which is intertwined with everything we do, including our strategic focus areas. It remains fundamental to our organization, allows us to stay connected with industry, drives two-way communication, and meet the needs of our members. Our members collaborate, connect, and support one another and the overall growth of our province's digital technologies sector. Our members are representative of the sector, their feedback allows us to be strategic with what we do and how we do it, and it allows us to deepen our impact. It is important we continue to grow our membership alongside industry growth, to strengthen our value and effectively and accurately represent our sector.

# Our Mission & Vision

**Mission:** To accelerate technology adoption and innovation throughout Nova Scotia, boosting productivity, job creation and economic growth.

**Vision:** Digital Nova Scotia is the catalyst for a vibrant ICT ecosystem, where industry gaps are bridged, communities are connected, successes are known, and a collective voice drives innovation and growth.

**Values:** Our values reflect the operating philosophies that drive our organization:

## COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

In everything that we do, we are committed to surpassing expectations. Our aim is to continuously improve and excel, ensuring that we consistently raise our standards and strive for progress.

## CURIOSITY

We embrace a growth mindset and are dedicated to continuous learning and improvement. Our goal is to be at the cutting edge of our industry, fostering innovation and thought leadership.

## COLLABORATION

We believe the best outcomes are achieved by working together. By building a strong sense of community and bringing together diverse perspectives, we leverage the strengths within Digital Nova Scotia and our wider ecosystem to create opportunities for greater success.

## TRUSTWORTHINESS

We recognize that the trust of our members, employees and funders is paramount. That's why we pledge to always act with honesty and integrity, ensuring we are an organization that our stakeholders can depend on.

## IMPACT

Through an unwavering commitment to our mission, we work hard to deliver results that matter. By building a strong community and actively engaging with industry, we enhance our ability to drive meaningful progress and achieve our mission.

## INCLUSIVITY

We are committed to engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, including industry leaders, educators, underrepresented communities, policymakers and grassroots organizations because diversity fuels innovation. Our aim is to authentically represent the diversity of Nova Scotia's tech landscape and address our community's multifaceted needs.

# Our Strategic Priorities

A strong tech sector is a key enabler for our province's economic future and growth, from increasing productivity to creating a highly skilled workforce. Our strategic priorities for 2025-2028 will allow Digital Nova Scotia to have the greatest impact and progression towards our mission and vision as an organization.

## Talent and Workforce Development Building a Diverse and Future-Ready Workforce

Talent continues to be a priority focus for Digital Nova Scotia, with a growing need to develop, attract and retain mid- and senior-level talent. We will support the sustainable growth of Nova Scotia's ICT sector by addressing the critical shortage of skilled labor through strategic workforce development initiatives. Collaborating with partners to help employers build a future-ready workforce, addressing the evolving needs of the digital economy and developing programs that prioritize the inclusion of underrepresented groups. DNS will actively work to fuel a diverse and adaptable talent pool that drives innovation, global competitiveness, and economic growth across Nova Scotia.

FOCUS	OUTCOME	MEASUREMENT
Labour & Workforce Growth	Our sector is able to grow to meet demands by promoting recruitment efforts and talent retention, allowing employers to compete globally for talent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieve 4,500 jobs posted, 180,000 job board views, and 24,000 clicks to job applications</li> <li>Implement automation to the DNS job portal</li> <li>Host 12 sessions to enhance industry knowledge of DEI and highlight the benefits of a diverse and inclusive workforce</li> </ul>
Responding to industry needs	Provide actionable insights to inform workforce strategies, ensuring responsiveness to labor market needs, enabling employers to compete for talent and create welcoming and inclusive workplaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish 24 employer roundtable discussions/peer network groups to facilitate discussions on challenges and opportunities within the sector</li> <li>Execute 6 industry surveys</li> <li>Publish 3 annual reviews of the sector for employers, partners and funders</li> </ul>
Ensuring a skilled & prepared workforce	Equip Nova Scotia's workforce with both the technical and non-technical competencies needed to thrive in emerging technology roles and support sustained career growth in the evolving tech industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1,500 participants engage in DNS' career and skill-building programs within 3 years, via 90 training and networking opportunities, with 15 mid-senior level sessions</li> <li>Facilitate connections pan-provincially by engaging partners in projects, working to apply a DEI lens for project excellence</li> <li>30% of skill-building opportunities are accessed by those identifying as from an underrepresented community</li> </ul>

## Community and Partner Engagement Fostering a Connected and Inclusive Tech Ecosystem

Collectively, we have the greatest impact. We will expand and strengthen partnerships to create a more integrated approach to technology sector development. We are well-positioned, and have been playing a key leadership role in connecting provincial and federal government partners with industry stakeholders, equity-deserving groups and community partners. We will leverage the success of the sector to contribute to the province's target of attracting new residents, fostering economic development, and supporting the long-term sustainability of our ICT sector. Collaborations with local DEI experts and community organizations will be a priority, enhancing DNS's ability to provide accessible, inclusive digital skills training.

FOCUS	OUTCOME	MEASUREMENT
Driving Membership & Industry Growth	Strengthen the community of employers within the tech sector, fuelling a collaborative network, talent development and attraction, innovation, and a deep understanding of industry needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect with 360 employers and engage 600 in events</li> <li>• Facilitate 15 employer engagement initiatives and 18 networking events</li> <li>• Grow DNS' paid membership base by 40% over 3 years (385 members), and maintain 80% member retention</li> </ul>
Driving provincial engagement	Ensure that rural businesses and employees have equal access to growth and innovation opportunities in the tech sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Validate that 25% of total program participants are outside HRM, and host 12 networking opportunities in rural areas</li> <li>• Research and report on the unique tech needs in rural communities and ideate new opportunities based on the results</li> <li>• Strengthen partnerships with leaders across the province, including RENS, innovation hubs, and Chambers of Commerce</li> </ul>
Building a connected ecosystem	Create collaborations that address productivity, workforce planning, and technology adoption challenges, leveraging connections and networks that are well-established.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with 6 different partners on industry events that focus on the advancement of the technology economy, engaging 900 industry members</li> <li>• Target 6 collaborations beyond traditional ICT, such as Agri-tech, HealthTech, CleanTech or FinTech, leveraging relationships with the AISC</li> <li>• Confirm that 80% of community partners and/or funders view DNS as a valued and collaborative partner</li> </ul>

## Sector Promotion and Advocacy

### Positioning Nova Scotia as a Global Tech Leader

Being a voice for the sector has been a pivotal role for DNS, and we will continue to promote and advocate for the ICT sector. DNS will continue to act as an amplifier, not only sharing member and industry successes, but highlighting opportunities in the sector and proactively promoting the impact our sector has on the province and country. We act as a collective voice, listening to our members and industry, and leveraging our networks to ensure they are heard.

FOCUS	OUTCOME	MEASUREMENT
Celebrating and highlighting the ICT sector	Raise awareness of the ICT sector's contributions to economic growth and elevate Nova Scotia's reputation as a top destination for tech talent and investment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acknowledge 24 leaders through the Tech Forward Awards, who are leading the digital sector</li> <li>30% increase in social media impressions and followers, website traffic, and newsletter subscribers</li> <li>9 media features, 54 podcasts, 18 video features, and 72 employer profiles</li> </ul>
Strengthen the talent pipeline for tomorrow's future workforce	Strengthen the interest in STEM and encourage youths to explore career opportunities in and exposure to Nova Scotia's ICT industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 employers engage with youth-focused organizations to build and establish talent pipelines</li> <li>Host 24 Digital Discovery Camps across the province, engaging 360 youth in STEM education and engaging directly with 20 Nova Scotian employers</li> <li>Collaborate with post-secondary institutions and facilitate connections to industry to support a strong talent pipeline</li> </ul>
Acting as a centralized hub	Provide a comprehensive view of the tech landscape, inform stakeholders on trends and gaps, and support tech sector growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gather and distribute relevant sector-specific labor market information (LMI) data annually, and expand the interactive industry ecosystem map</li> <li>Send 144 weekly newsletters to the ICT community</li> <li>Communicate key policy changes, industry trends, and workforce development efforts</li> </ul>

## Technology Adoption and Digital Transformation Empowering Organizations for Growth and Productivity

We will accelerate technology adoption and digital transformation across Nova Scotia. Driving accessible technology adoption programs, DNS will help businesses integrate emerging technologies such as AI into their operations to drive productivity and competitiveness across the province and beyond. We will work with government, academic, and industry partners to provide the necessary tools, training, and financial support to overcome barriers to tech adoption, and facilitate more connections throughout the local tech sector for continued economic growth.

FOCUS	OUTCOME	MEASUREMENT
Spearheading digital adoption and transformation	Deliver targeted initiatives to drive innovation and productivity, while creating opportunities for member business development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop 2 cross-industry partnerships to address challenges in productivity, workforce planning, skills development, and technology adoption</li> <li>• Facilitate training for over 300 attendees outside of the tech sector, leveraging our industry experts to lead skills development</li> <li>• Over 100 businesses engage in some degree of digital adoption or digital transformation</li> </ul>
Connecting local innovative businesses	Facilitate connections for government and community partners to local tech companies and members to enhance local procurement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 local tech companies are exposed to government and partner procurement contacts</li> <li>• DNS establishes partnerships with procurement departments provincially and federally, in addition to the Nova Scotia Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions</li> </ul>
Advance knowledge of the benefits of digital adoption	Overcome barriers to technology adoption, enhance SME productivity, and enable global competitiveness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform bi-annual industry reviews to understand and share emerging priorities</li> <li>• Support the advancement of productivity in Nova Scotia by demystifying tech adoption</li> <li>• Publish 3 blogs addressing common barriers to tech adoption and highlighting successes in applying technologies to support business growth and advancement</li> </ul>

## Operational Sustainability Driving Organizational Excellence

Digital Nova Scotia (DNS) will operate with an adaptable business model that prioritizes flexibility, scalability, and sustainability. We will focus our efforts on diversifying revenue streams, building a collaborative ecosystem, delivering outcome-driven programming, expanding our reach, and advocating for our sector needs.

FOCUS	OUTCOME	MEASUREMENT
Operational governance	Scale our financial and operational governance and our resources appropriately to enable us to effectively deliver against our mission, managing allocation of costs and service delivery expectations to our stakeholders as the business scales.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an operating plan and budget annually, aligning strategies with this strategic plan</li> <li>• Implement an “FTE-light” model, leveraging contracts for junior roles to align with funding and time tracking to reduce risk and enhance reporting to funders</li> <li>• Enhance procurement oversight and update procedures to reflect industry best practices</li> </ul>
Sustained and diversified funding	Secure sustainable and predictable funding partnerships while driving innovation and collaboration with new funders, and drive unrestricted revenue through alternative funding sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a diverse portfolio of funders, with no funder representing more than 30% of total revenue</li> <li>• Over 70% of DNS project/program funders are retained during 2025-2028</li> <li>• Increase unrestricted revenue to account for 10% of total revenue (currently 5%)</li> </ul>
An engaged team	Create a culture that values, engages and invests in their people, encouraging diversity, collaboration, and innovation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A minimum 75% engagement score is achieved on annual DNS employee surveys, and 80% of employees can see the connection between their role and the organization's strategy</li> <li>• Maintain 70% employee retention year over year among full time employees</li> <li>• Actively embed DEI into the recruitment, onboarding, and employee development process.</li> <li>• 100% of employees engage in a minimum of 2 professional development opportunities annually</li> </ul>

# Conclusion

As Digital Nova Scotia looks toward 2025–2028, its strategic priorities focus on workforce development, community engagement, sector promotion, and technology adoption. By expanding successful programs, launching new initiatives, and deepening partnerships with industry, government, and educational institutions, DNS is poised to lead Nova Scotia’s digital economy into the future.

By 2028, Digital Nova Scotia aims to be a primary catalyst for a future-proofed workforce, digital transformation and economic development in the province. We will be the force behind recognizing Nova Scotia’s ICT sector, its talent pool, innovative businesses and digital adoption efforts. We will be positioned as a place to thrive and grow, to collaborate and connect, and to innovate.

Our members and industry leaders will have access to training and skill-building needed to fuel their diverse workforce and help close the digital talent gap. The profile of Nova Scotia will be raised globally, as we will work to support sustainable economic growth, accelerate digital adoption, and strengthen community engagement.

Through this plan, and with well-defined goals, targeted action plans, and a clear strategic vision, DNS will continue to drive growth, innovation, and inclusiveness in Nova Scotia’s ICT sector, positioning the province as a digital leader.



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