Food Security and Agri-Food Sector Briefing

National Food Security Strategy | Domestic Processing | Food Infrastructure | Canadian Procurement

Prepared by

NORTHERN ARC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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CONFIDENTIAL

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> *"We are an agricultural superpower. Yet for most Canadians, it doesn't feel like that at the checkout counter."*
>
> **The Rt. Hon. Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada**
>
> National Food Security Strategy Launch, Toronto | June 11, 2026

$3.2B	$1B	$1B	$130M
Strategy Investment (10 Years)	Agri-food Project Finance Fund	Food Infrastructure	Competition Enforcement

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Executive Summary

On June 11, 2026, Prime Minister Carney launched Canada's first-ever National Food Security Strategy at the Ontario Food Terminal in Toronto. The strategy is backed by more than $3 billion over ten years, a figure CBC reports at $3.2 billion, and it is led by Heath MacDonald, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. It commits a $1 billion Agri-food Project Finance Fund through Farm Credit Canada for processing capacity, $1 billion for new and expanded food terminals and hubs, a $150 million Food Security Fund for equipment, a $100 million Collaborative Food Innovation Fund, and $750 million to expand year-round production of fruits and vegetables. For Canadian companies that grow, process, or move food, this is the most consequential federal moment the sector has seen in a generation.

The strategy rests on an uncomfortable admission. Canada is one of the world's largest agri-food exporters, sending roughly $100 billion abroad each year, yet too much of what Canadian farmers grow is processed in other countries and bought back as finished product at a markup. Limited domestic processing capacity is the gap the government has named, and it has put capital behind closing it. The strategy aims to raise the Canadian-made share of food consumed in Canada from 70 percent to 80 percent and to lift food-processing GDP growth from 1.6 percent a year to 2.75 percent. A company that demonstrably helps close the processing gap is not seeking funding. It is delivering on a mandate Ottawa has set for itself, and that distinction changes how a file is received inside a minister's office.

This briefing maps the federal funding and positioning landscape for Canadian companies in the food and agri-food sector. It outlines a strategic roadmap to capture $3 million to $20 million in non-repayable contributions, repayable financing, and tax credits over 6 to 12 months, plus project financing through the new Agri-food Project Finance Fund. Northern Arc's value is not paperwork. It is the political positioning at the ministerial, Deputy Minister, and PMO level that determines which files are understood as strategic before the decisions are made, and which companies become the ones Ottawa points to when it needs to show that its food strategy is working.

Part One covers the highest-value federal programs for agri-food companies: the Agri-food Project Finance Fund, the Strategic Response Fund, AgriInnovate, the Food Security Fund, the Collaborative Food Innovation Fund, the Year-Round Production Fund, AgriScience and AgriMarketing, regional development funding, BDC capital and advisory, SR&ED, and CanExport. Part Two covers the ministerial portfolios where positioning matters: Agriculture and Agri-Food (MacDonald), Farm Credit Canada, Industry (Joly), Finance (Champagne), and the Regional Development Agencies. Part Three covers provincial stacking programs and international market pathways for processed Canadian food.

WHAT MAKES CANADIAN AGRI-FOOD COMPANIES DIFFERENT

Named in the national strategy. The strategy names domestic processing, year-round production, and supply-chain resilience as federal objectives. Companies working in these areas map directly to a stated national priority rather than a discretionary program.

Government as customer. Food terminals, hubs, and the Buy Canadian policy position public and quasi-public buyers, including hospitals, schools, and procurement vehicles, as anchor customers for Canadian producers and processors.

Capital includes project finance. The $1 billion Agri-food Project Finance Fund provides seed capital for processing expansion that conventional lenders treat as too complex, a financing posture that did not exist before June 2026.

Sovereign foundations. Domestic processing, year-round production, and supply-chain control are treated as national resilience. Companies that strengthen Canadian control of the food system advance the core of the strategy.

CANADA'S FOOD SOVEREIGNTY: THE NATIONAL ARGUMENT

Prime Minister Carney has been explicit that protecting Canadian sovereignty means taking control of the food system. The strategy reflects a recognition that Canada grows enormous volumes of food, processes too little of it at home, and imports nearly 90 percent of its fresh fruit.

The government's answer pairs project finance and processing capital with food infrastructure, year-round production, and a Buy Canadian posture. For a Canadian agri-food company, the strategic logic is direct: a firm that frames its work as a sovereignty solution, keeping production, processing, and jobs in Canada, reaches Ministers differently than a firm seeking a contribution agreement.

THE COMPETITIVE GAP: WHY URGENCY MATTERS

Canadian agri-food companies with real commercial traction, a credible expansion plan, and defensible operations are precisely the profile the National Food Security Strategy was written to accelerate. But validation alone does not capture funding. Most companies engage at the program-administrator level, submit through portals, and wait.

Comparable Canadian companies are securing seven and eight figures through AgriInnovate, the Strategic Response Fund, regional development programs, and project financing through Farm Credit Canada. A national strategy opens a window. In the months after a launch, decision-makers actively decide which firms exemplify the strategy they have just announced.

The question is not whether your company deserves this support. The question is whether your company will be understood as strategic before the window closes.

The National Processing Gap

The processing target is the heart of the strategy and the clearest signal for companies. Raising the Canadian-made share of food consumed in Canada from 70 percent to 80 percent, and lifting food-processing GDP growth from 1.6 percent to 2.75 percent between 2027 and 2035, cannot happen without the government pulling capital into domestic processing, year-round production, and supply-chain infrastructure. A company solving a real problem in one of these areas is solving a problem the government has publicly committed to solving, which is the strongest position from which to engage.

How Federal Decisions Are Actually Made

Before examining specific programs, it is essential to understand how federal decisions actually happen. Program guidelines describe eligibility criteria and application processes. They do not describe how decisions are made. The gap between formal process and actual decision-making is where opportunities are won or lost.

The Three Levels of Federal Decision-Making

Political Level: Ministers and Ministerial Staff. Ministers set strategic priorities for their departments. Minister MacDonald at Agriculture and Agri-Food shapes how the National Food Security Strategy is delivered and which companies represent it. Minister Joly at Industry decides which firms are national champions. Ministerial staff filter what reaches the Minister and shape how issues are framed. When a Minister's office understands that a company represents strategic value, that understanding flows through the department.

Bureaucratic Level: Deputy Ministers and ADMs. Deputy Ministers and Assistant Deputy Ministers manage departmental operations and evaluate technical merit. They assess whether files meet criteria and make recommendations to Ministers. A technically sound file that aligns with departmental priorities receives favourable evaluation. The bureaucratic level ensures that political interest translates into defensible decisions.

Central Agency Level: The Prime Minister's Office. The PMO coordinates across departments and ensures alignment with the government's economic and sovereignty strategy. PM Carney has made food security and domestic industrial capacity centrepieces of his mandate. When the PMO understands that a company is essential to closing the processing gap or to Canadian food sovereignty, that understanding shapes how multiple departments approach the file.

Why Alignment Matters

These three levels must be aligned for significant outcomes. A Minister may express interest, but if Deputy Ministers do not see technical merit, the file stalls. A Deputy Minister may recommend support, but if the Minister's office does not see political value, the file sits. Both may align, but if the PMO holds different priorities, interdepartmental coordination fails. Most companies engage only with program administrators who process applications. Northern Arc ensures that when a file reaches a decision point, the political level has already identified the company as strategically important, the bureaucratic level has assessed it favourably, and the PMO understands how supporting it advances national priorities.

Part One: Federal Funding Programs

The federal government has committed unprecedented resources to domestic processing, production, and food-system resilience. The following programs represent the highest-value opportunities for Canadian agri-food companies, with a combined target of $3 million to $20 million over 6 to 12 months, plus project financing through the new Agri-food Project Finance Fund.

Program	Type	Target Amount	Timeline
Agri-food Project Finance Fund ($1B)	Project finance / seed capital	Project-scaled	Launching 2026
AgriInnovate	Repayable	$250K – $5M	To Mar 31, 2028
Strategic Response Fund (food)	Non-repayable / repayable	$1M – $20M	June and fall 2026
Food Security Fund ($150M)	Non-repayable (equipment)	$100K – $5M	2026
Collaborative Food Innovation Fund	Non-repayable	$500K – $5M	2026

Program	Type	Target Amount	Timeline
($100M)			
Year-Round Production Fund ($750M)	Non-repayable + tax relief	$1M – $10M	2026, ongoing
AgriScience and AgriMarketing	Non-repayable	$50K – $1M	Rolling
Regional Development Agencies	Repayable, interest-free	$250K – $5M	Ongoing
BDC Capital and Lending	Venture / lending	$1M – $10M	Ongoing
SR&ED + Provincial Credits	Tax credit	$200K – $500K/yr	Ongoing
CanExport SMEs	Non-repayable	$30K – $50K	To Aug 31, 2026
COMBINED FUNDING TARGET			**$3M – $20M + project finance**

AGRI-FOOD PROJECT FINANCE FUND: $1 BILLION, SEED CAPITAL FOR PROCESSING

Announced within the National Food Security Strategy and delivered through Farm Credit Canada, the $1 billion Agri-food Project Finance Fund provides seed capital financing for businesses to expand domestic food processing capacity. It targets small and medium projects that conventional lenders treat as too complex or too risky, addressing a financing gap that has held back Canadian processing for years. It is a standalone vehicle, separate from FCC's existing lending, and it is the marquee new instrument of the strategy for processors and manufacturers.

Why Canadian Companies Qualify: Companies expanding domestic processing capacity, strengthening supply chains, and supporting Canadian farmers match the Fund's stated purpose. FCC is consulting the sector now, and eligibility criteria, proposal processes, and timelines are expected in the coming weeks.

What Northern Arc Does: Position the company's file with Farm Credit Canada and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. Frame the project within the processing-capacity and food-sovereignty mandate. The Fund's design is being established now, and engagement during this formation period is how a company is understood as a financing candidate before formal processes are set.

Target: project-scaled seed capital. Timeline: program launching 2026; engage during formation.

Strategic Response Fund

The Strategic Response Fund is the live, near-term federal intake for the food strategy. An early wave of a call for proposals opened in June 2026, with a second wave in the fall of 2026, delivered in collaboration with the Regional Development Agencies. For agri-food companies with a defined project, this is the first door the strategy has opened, and the first files into the queue are the ones positioned ahead of a decision point.

Why Canadian Companies Qualify: Agri-food firms with capital projects that expand production, processing, or supply-chain resilience sit within the Fund's priorities. Shovel-ready projects with engineering, permitting, and quotes complete are favoured in the June wave; earlier-stage projects target the fall wave.

What Northern Arc Does: Engage the relevant Regional Development Agency and the responsible Minister's office, and align the project framing with the National Food Security Strategy so the file is understood as advancing the processing target.

Target: $1 million to $20 million. Timeline: June 2026 wave; fall 2026 wave.

AgriInnovate

AgriInnovate, delivered by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, provides repayable contributions of up to $5 million to commercialize, demonstrate, or adopt innovative agri-food technologies and processes, including building, expanding, or modernizing processing and handling facilities. It is the principal AAFC instrument for value-added processing, and it is the natural complement to the new project finance fund for capital projects.

Why Canadian Companies Qualify: For-profit Canadian agri-food businesses investing in commercialization, demonstration, or adoption of new processing technology match the program profile. Cost-share is typically 50 percent of eligible costs, with an enhanced ratio for under-represented-led organizations.

What Northern Arc Does: Position the file with Minister MacDonald's office and AAFC senior officials, and align the AgriInnovate framing with the company's parallel federal programs so the narrative is consistent. Intake status under Sustainable CAP should be confirmed at the time of engagement.

Target: $250,000 to $5 million, repayable. Timeline: program operates to March 31, 2028.

Food Security Fund and Collaborative Food Innovation Fund

The strategy adds two dedicated processing instruments. The $150 million Food Security Fund helps small and medium-sized businesses upgrade equipment to grow, produce, and process more food in Canada. The $100 million Collaborative Food Innovation Fund helps producers expand into agri-food processing and supports global innovation clusters. Both are aimed squarely at lifting domestic processing capacity, and both pair naturally with AgriInnovate and the project finance fund on a single capital project.

Why Canadian Companies Qualify: Small and medium processors upgrading equipment, and producers moving into value-added processing, are the intended recipients of these two funds.

What Northern Arc Does: Ensure the company's equipment and processing plans are understood within the strategy's processing mandate and connected to the right program officials as the funds deploy.

Target: $100,000 to $5 million combined. Timeline: 2026.

Year-Round Production Fund

The strategy commits $750 million to drastically expand year-round Canadian production of fruits and vegetables, including through greenhouses, vertical farms, and other enclosed growing spaces, with the goal of doubling controlled-environment-agriculture production value by 2032. It is paired with immediate expensing for new or expanded greenhouse construction, providing upfront tax relief for projects breaking ground in 2026. For controlled-environment and fresh-produce companies, this is the single most direct instrument in the package.

Why Canadian Companies Qualify: Greenhouse, vertical-farm, and controlled-environment operators expanding year-round production, particularly in rural and northern communities, sit at the centre of this commitment.

What Northern Arc Does: Position the company's expansion within the year-round production mandate and ensure the capital-cost-allowance treatment and program timing are coordinated with the company's broader federal engagement.

Target: $1 million to $10 million, plus accelerated capital cost allowance. Timeline: 2026, ongoing.

AgriScience and AgriMarketing

AgriScience and AgriMarketing, also under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, provide non-repayable contributions for research and for market and export development. AgriScience supports applied research and innovation; AgriMarketing supports promotion and entry into new markets. For agri-food companies with a research or export dimension, these programs round out the federal stack alongside the larger processing instruments.

What Northern Arc Does: Ensure AgriScience and AgriMarketing project descriptions align with the company's framing across AgriInnovate and the strategy's processing funds, so the federal narrative is consistent rather than fragmented.

Target: $50,000 to $1 million combined. Timeline: rolling intake under Sustainable CAP.

Regional Development Agencies

The Regional Development Agencies deliver the Strategic Response Fund call for proposals and a range of ecosystem and business-scale-up programs relevant to agri-food companies, including regional innovation and investment streams. For-profit recipients typically receive repayable, interest-free contributions. Each agency has regional staff who evaluate files and a regional Minister who sets priorities.

What Northern Arc Does: Introduce the company to the relevant Regional Development Agency's regional leadership and position the file with the RDA Minister's office so it is understood as a regional economic-development and food-security priority.

Target: $250,000 to $5 million. Timeline: ongoing.

BDC Assessment: Lending, Capital, and Advisory

The Business Development Bank of Canada complements the contribution programs above with capital and advisory support, and a BDC engagement also signals federal confidence that reinforces every other file in the pipeline. Three vehicles are most relevant to agri-food companies.

BDC Growth and Transition Capital. Flexible lending and quasi-equity for companies scaling commercial operations, suitable for processors and producers investing in capacity, equipment, and working capital ahead of returns.

BDC Equipment and Working Capital Financing. Asset-based financing for plant, equipment, and the inventory build that processing expansion requires, well suited to manufacturing-stage agri-food companies.

BDC Advisory Services. Advisory support in operations, scaling, and market expansion, which strengthens a company's readiness profile across federal programs.

Northern Arc facilitates introduction to the relevant BDC teams and aligns the engagement with the company's federal narrative. BDC capacity is additional to the combined contribution target stated above.

SR&ED and Provincial R&D Credits

Agri-food companies with active product, process, or formulation development are likely already claiming SR&ED and provincial R&D tax credits. We include this for completeness. The federal program provides a 35 percent refundable credit on the first $6 million in qualifying expenditures, a threshold Budget 2025 doubled from $3 million, and 15 percent beyond that. Provincial credits stack with the federal claim: Ontario offers the OTC at 8 percent on the first $3 million and the ORDTC at 3.5 percent; Quebec offers the CRIC at 30 percent on the first $3 million; Alberta offers the Innovation Employment Grant at 20 percent of qualifying R&D; and British Columbia offers a provincial SR&ED component. Combined, the federal and provincial stack can return roughly 40 to 55 percent of eligible R&D expenditures annually.

Target: $200,000 to $500,000 annually. Timeline: ongoing, claims due 18 months after fiscal year-end.

CanExport SMEs

CanExport SMEs provides up to $50,000 per project at 50 percent cost-share to support Canadian small and medium-sized enterprises entering new international markets. For processed-food and agri-food companies pursuing customers, distributors, or listings in allied markets, CanExport covers eligible market-development costs. The current intake is open until August 31, 2026, at noon Eastern.

What Northern Arc Does: Align the company's international expansion plan with the Trade Commissioner Service in target markets and ensure timing fits the broader federal engagement.

Target: $30,000 to $50,000. Timeline: open until August 31, 2026.

Key Dates and Deadlines

Date	Milestone
Now	National Food Security Strategy deployment underway; program parameters being set
Now	Agri-food Project Finance Fund design being established; engage during formation
June 2026	Strategic Response Fund early call for proposals opens through the RDAs
Fall 2026	Strategic Response Fund second wave
End of 2026	Ontario Food Terminal expansion; CFIA and regulatory backlogs targeted for clearance
August 31, 2026	CanExport SMEs intake closes (noon ET)
By 2028	Two new food terminals and ten regional hubs; Sustainable CAP runs to March 31, 2028
Ongoing	AgriInnovate, AgriScience, AgriMarketing, BDC capital and lending, SR&ED

Part Two: Federal Departments and Positioning

Understanding which federal portfolios hold mandates aligned with your company's capabilities is essential for strategic positioning. The goal is not just to apply for programs, but to ensure that when a file arrives at a decision point, decision-makers already understand why the company matters.

Agriculture and Agri-Food

PRIORITY: HIGH | Minister: Heath MacDonald | Mandate: National Food Security Strategy, AAFC programs, food sovereignty. Minister MacDonald leads delivery of the strategy and the AAFC program suite, including AgriInnovate, AgriScience, and AgriMarketing. The strategy needs visible proof of progress: companies whose investment demonstrably expands domestic processing and production.

What Northern Arc Does: Establish an early relationship with Minister MacDonald's office, position the company for inclusion in strategy delivery, and pursue a ministerial touchpoint on domestic processing where it fits the company's profile.

Farm Credit Canada

PRIORITY: HIGH | Crown corporation | Mandate: Agri-food Project Finance Fund. Farm Credit Canada delivers the $1 billion project finance fund and is the leading lender in Canadian agriculture. The Fund's eligibility and proposal processes are being established now, and the formation period is when a company's project is identified as a financing candidate.

What Northern Arc Does: Engage Farm Credit Canada and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food to frame the company's project within the processing-capacity mandate and connect it to the financing process before formal intake is announced.

Industry

PRIORITY: HIGH | Minister: Mélanie Joly | Mandate: IRAP, Strategic Innovation Fund, NSERC, innovation ecosystem. The Industry portfolio oversees core innovation funding that agri-food processors and food-technology companies draw on for larger commercialization projects. Minister Joly's mandate centres on building Canadian champions and translating industrial strength into economic outcomes.

What Northern Arc Does: Position the company with Minister Joly's office and senior officials as a Canadian processing and food-technology champion, and align innovation-program framing so the company presents one consistent story.

Finance and National Revenue

PRIORITY: HIGH | Minister: François-Philippe Champagne | Mandate: Strategic Response Fund, fiscal levers, capital cost allowance. The Finance portfolio shapes the Strategic Response Fund envelope and the tax measures paired with the strategy, including immediate expensing for greenhouse construction. For capital-intensive processing and production projects, these levers materially change project economics.

What Northern Arc Does: Engage Minister Champagne's office to ensure the company's capital project is understood within the strategy's fiscal and financing framework.

Regional Development Agencies

PRIORITY: HIGH | Each RDA delivers the food call for proposals and ecosystem programs. The Regional Development Agencies deliver the Strategic Response Fund call for proposals and complementary scale-up programs. Each agency has regional staff who evaluate files and a regional Minister who sets priorities.

What Northern Arc Does: Introduce the company to the relevant RDA's regional leadership and position the file with the RDA Minister's office so it is understood as a regional food-security and economic-development priority.

Federal Engagement Summary

Department	Priority	Minister	Key Opportunity
Agriculture and Agri-Food	HIGH	Heath MacDonald	Strategy delivery, AAFC programs
Farm Credit Canada	HIGH	Crown corporation	Agri-food Project Finance Fund
Industry	HIGH	Mélanie Joly	IRAP, Strategic Innovation Fund
Finance	HIGH	FP Champagne	Strategic Response Fund, tax levers
Regional Dev. Agencies	HIGH	Various	Food CFP, scale-up streams

Part Three: Provincial Stacking and International Markets

Provincial programs stack with federal funding and strengthen positioning across multiple streams. Export pathways for processed Canadian food reinforce a domestic federal file.

Sustainable CAP, provincially delivered. Each province delivers cost-share programming under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, with value-added processing, food safety, and market-development streams. Total government funding, federal and provincial stacked, generally cannot exceed 75 to 85 percent of eligible project costs, so sequencing matters.

Alberta. Alberta delivers SCAP cost-share and value-added programming, and the Innovation Employment Grant returns 20 percent on qualifying R&D, stacking with federal SR&ED. The province has a documented shortage of regional processing capacity, which strengthens the case for processing-facility projects.

Ontario and Quebec. Ontario delivers SCAP streams and research credits (OTC and ORDTC) that stack with federal SR&ED. Quebec offers the CRIC refundable research credit and complementary commercialization support, and both provinces coordinate actively with Ottawa on agri-food investment.

International Markets. CanExport, Export Development Canada, and the Trade Commissioner Service support Canadian agri-food firms pursuing allied markets. As a major agri-food exporter, Canada's trade infrastructure creates market pathways that strengthen a company's domestic federal positioning.

Why Canadian Agri-Food Companies Are Positioned to Succeed

The Strategy Names the Sectors. For the first time, the federal government has named domestic processing, year-round production, and supply-chain resilience as the areas where it intends to drive investment. A company working in one of them is aligned with a stated national objective rather than competing for a discretionary program.

Government Has Named Itself a Customer. Food terminals, hubs, and the Buy Canadian policy position public and quasi-public buyers as anchor customers for Canadian producers and processors. Procurement is now part of the national strategy.

Capital Includes Project Finance. The Agri-food Project Finance Fund provides seed capital for processing expansion that conventional lenders avoid, a posture that signals commercial confidence and helps firms attract private investment.

The Funding Ecosystem Is Aligned. The project finance fund, the Food Security Fund, the Collaborative Food Innovation Fund, the Year-Round Production Fund, the Strategic Response Fund, and the AAFC program suite opened or expanded within a single strategy. The coordinated federal investment in food has no recent precedent.

> **POLITICAL VALUE: WHY SUPPORTING CANADIAN AGRI-FOOD COMPANIES IS A WIN FOR GOVERNMENT**
>
> PM Carney has committed to taking control of the food system and to closing the domestic processing gap. Supporting Canadian agri-food companies checks every political box at once: jobs across rural and regional Canada, more affordable and more reliable domestic food, sovereign control of the food supply, and visible proof that the national strategy is working.
>
> When Minister MacDonald needs a domestic processing success story for the strategy, when Minister Joly needs a Canadian champion, and when the PMO needs evidence that more of the food chain is staying in Canada, the companies Northern Arc positions are the ones they should be pointing to.

What Northern Arc Public Affairs Brings

Northern Arc exists to align political will with bureaucratic process. We ensure that when federal decisions are made, our clients are the answer that Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and the PMO have already agreed upon.

Hon. Kent Hehr, P.C., LL.B., Principal. Kent served as a Cabinet Minister in the Government of Canada. He sat at the Cabinet table where funding decisions are approved, policy directions are set, and departmental mandates are shaped. He understands how Ministers think, what they respond to, and how to frame an issue for political support at the highest levels.

Abed Harb, Managing Partner. Abed served in the Prime Minister’s Calgary Regional Office and as Director and Senior Advisor to multiple Ministers. He spent eight years navigating federal decision-making at the highest levels and understands how the PMO coordinates national economic strategy and how to ensure alignment across departments.

What We Do

Ministerial Engagement. We engage directly with the Ministers responsible for the files that matter to our clients: MacDonald at Agriculture and Agri-Food, Joly at Industry, Champagne at Finance, and the relevant Regional Development Agency Minister. We ensure ministerial offices understand why each client represents strategic Canadian capability.

Deputy Minister and ADM Engagement. We engage with the senior officials who evaluate technical merit and make recommendations, ensuring they understand each client’s operations and alignment with departmental priorities.

PMO Engagement. We maintain dialogue with the Prime Minister's Office to frame our clients' growth as essential to national priorities: domestic processing, food sovereignty, and a more affordable and resilient food system.

Positioning and Coordination. We advise on timing and narrative across multiple programs so each client presents one consistent story to federal decision-makers.

> **THE NARRATIVE WE WILL ADVANCE**
>
> *"This is a Canadian company growing or processing food that the National Food Security Strategy was written to support. Canadian farmers, Canadian processing, Canadian jobs. Capacity that keeps more of the value chain at home, closes the processing gap in a priority sector, and puts more Canada on Canadian plates. When the Prime Minister says we have to take control of our food system, this is a company helping Canada do exactly that."*

Engagement Timeline and Deliverables

Months 1 to 2: Foundation and Immediate Priorities. Deliver a tailored federal opportunities briefing identifying every program the company qualifies for, with a sequenced engagement strategy and combined funding target. Initiate ministerial contact across Agriculture and Agri-Food and the relevant Regional Development Agency. Begin positioning for the Strategic Response Fund, AgriInnovate, and the project finance fund, and open the Farm Credit Canada conversation.

Months 3 to 4: Building Momentum. Advance from introduction to substantive engagement with ministerial offices. Position the company for the Strategic Response Fund waves and the processing funds where its project fits, and pursue a cross-departmental touchpoint bringing together Agriculture and Agri-Food, Industry, and the relevant RDA. Deepen relationships at the Deputy Minister and ADM level.

Months 5 to 6: Consolidation. Ensure the company's file is understood across all relevant departments, not just the primary funding department. Build PMO-level understanding of the company's strategic value to the food strategy. Monitor new program parameters and the Next Policy Framework as they take shape.

Investment and Expected Return

Northern Arc Public Affairs works on a monthly retainer of $10,000 plus applicable taxes. The initial engagement period is six months, providing sufficient time to deliver a tailored federal opportunities briefing, establish ministerial relationships across all relevant portfolios, position for priority programs, and begin PMO awareness building.

The agreement includes a 30-day termination clause, meaning either party may cancel at any time with 30 days notice. After six months, the agreement continues month to month. New food-strategy parameters are being set continuously, and ongoing engagement ensures clients capture emerging opportunities as they arise.

ONGOING ENGAGEMENT

Federal engagement is not a one-time event. It is an ongoing relationship. Maintaining ministerial awareness as staff turn over, reinforcing positioning as new program parameters are set, and adapting to policy changes all require sustained presence. The foundational work of the first six months creates relationships. Ongoing engagement maintains and leverages them as funding opportunities crystallize.

A six-month initial engagement totaling $60,000 targets $3 million to $20 million in non-repayable contributions, repayable financing, and tax credits over 6 to 12 months, plus project financing through the new Agri-food Project Finance Fund. Even at the conservative end of this range, the return on engagement is substantial. Beyond direct financial return, federal recognition provides strategic advantages: easier private capital attraction, since a federal engagement signals confidence; credibility with partners and customers; and consideration for opportunities that never reach a formal application process.

Conclusion

The National Food Security Strategy represents the most consequential federal policy shift for Canadian agri-food companies in a generation. The strategy commits more than $3 billion over ten years, aims to raise the Canadian-made share of food from 70 percent to 80 percent, and pairs a $1 billion Agri-food Project Finance Fund with $1 billion for food infrastructure, a $150 million Food Security Fund, a $100 million Collaborative Food Innovation Fund, and $750 million for year-round production. The instruments are new, and their parameters are being set now.

The gap is not eligibility. Canadian agri-food companies qualify for multiple programs at once. The gap is positioning. Companies that submit through portals and wait are competing against companies that have already built ministerial awareness, aligned their narrative with the strategy's priorities, and established the political groundwork that turns a technically sound file into a funded one. Northern Arc provides that positioning across ministerial offices, Farm Credit Canada, the Regional Development Agencies, and the PMO. The target is $3 million to $20 million in non-repayable contributions, repayable financing, and tax credits over 6 to 12 months, plus project financing through the new Agri-food Project Finance Fund. The window is open now.

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