

B. NOOs received vs NOOs reviewed on a monthly basis

April 1 to September 30, 2018

NOOs received vs NOOs reviewed on a monthly basis

Received vs Reviewed	2018-04- 30	2018-05- 31	2018-06- 30	2018-07- 31	2018-08- 31	2018-09- 30
NOOs received	20	38	15	23	3	6
NOOs reviewed	10	18	11	17	12	12

C. Results

NOO review results

Recommendation	Number of NOOs reviewed first half of 2018-2019	% of total
Correct	71	88.7%
Partially correct	3	3.8%
Not correct	2	2.5%
Other Footnote 1	4	5.0%
Total for period	80	100%

Of the 80 NOOs reviewed during the first half of fiscal year 2018-2019, 88.7% were found to be correct where the NOO advisor agreed with the eligibility determinations. Also, during the reporting period, 3.8% of the NOOs reviewed were found to be only partially correct, where the NOO advisor did not fully agree with the eligibility determinations, and 2 of the NOOs reviewed (2.5%) were found to have incorrect eligibility decisions.

D. General information

Claim and claimant information

Claim and claimant information	Number of <u>NOOs</u> reviewed during reporting period	% of total <u>NOOs</u> reviewed during reporting period
NOOs – Refundable	62	77.5%
NOOs – Non-refundable	18	22.5%
First-time claimant	15	18.8%
First-time technical review	26	32.5%
Tax preparer involved in technical review/objection	59	73.8%
English	54	67.4%
French	13	16.3%
Bilingual	13	16.3%

ITCs in dispute

ITC value in dispute (\$)	Number of NOOs reviewed during reporting period	% of total NOOs reviewed during reporting period
ITC < \$50,000	33	41.3%

\$50,000 < ITC < \$250,000	29	36.2%
ITC > \$250,000	18	22.5%

The majority of NOOs reviewed were refundable SR&ED claims that involved investment tax credits (ITC) under \$250,000. Only 18.8% of the NOOs reviewed were first-time claimants and one third of the objections (32.5%) reviewed were claims where it was the first technical review for the claimant. The majority of the claimants (73.8%) used claim preparers in the preparation of their SR&ED claims and in filing their objections, which is in line with previous findings. And 67.4% of the objections were in English, 16.3% in French, and 16.3% were bilingual.

E. Industry sector information

Industry sector information for NOOs reviewed

Industry sector	Number of NOOs reviewed during reporting period	% of total NOOs reviewed during reporting period
Agriculture	2	2.5%
Applied Mathematics	1	1.2%
Chemical engineering/sciences	4	5.0%
Civil/architectural engineering	3	3.8%
Computer sciences and information technology/software engineering/hardware automation/control systems/bioinformatics	19	23.7%
Electrical/electronic engineering/telecommunications	6	7.5%
Environmental/petroleum/mining and mineral processing/geological engineering	6	7.5%
Food and beverage	3	3.8%
Industrial biotechnology	2	2.5%
Mechanical engineering/tooling machinery and equipment/automation/automotive and transportation engineering	21	26.3%
Materials engineering, plastics, pulp and paper/textiles/metallurgy	8	10.0%
Medical sciences/biotechnology/nutrition and dietetics	3	3.8%
Natural and formal sciences	1	1.2%
Other engineering and technologies	1	1.2%
Total	80	100.0%

During this reporting period, it was observed that almost two thirds (61.3%) of the NOOs reviewed involved various fields of engineering: chemical, civil, electrical/electronic, environmental, mining, mechanical, materials and engineering technologies. There were also a significant number (23.7%) of computer sciences, software engineering and information technology NOOs reviewed.

F. Regional breakdown of NOOs

NOOs reviewed by region

Region	Number of NOOs reviewed during reporting period	% of total NOOs reviewed during reporting period
Nova Scotia	4	5.0%
Laval	10	12.5%
Quebec	9	11.2%
Montreal	6	7.5%
Ottawa	4	5.0%
Toronto Centre	6	7.5%
Toronto West	16	20.0%
Hamilton	1	1.2%
Calgary	17	21.3%
Vancouver	7	8.8%
Total	80	100%

Approximately one third of the NOOs reviewed came from each of these three regional areas: Toronto West and Toronto Centre Tax Services Offices (TSO) (27.5%); Calgary and Vancouver TSOs (30.1%); and the Montreal, Laval, and Quebec TSOs (31.2%).

2. Technical information

The information presented in the following tables shows the frequency of various issues under dispute that were noted in the 80 NOOs reviewed.

A. Issues in dispute involving eligibility criteria

Eligibility criteria

Criteria	Number of NOOs reviewed during reporting period	% of total NOOs reviewed during reporting period
1. Scientific/technological advancement	64	80.0%
2. Scientific/technological uncertainty	70	87.5%
3. Scientific/technological content – Hypothesis	16	20.0%
4. Scientific/technological content – Scientific method	25	31.3%
5. Scientific/technological content – Records/evidence	20	25.0%

From the NOOs reviewed during this reporting period, 87.5% of the files involved the eligibility criteria of scientific/technological uncertainty (S/TU) and over three quarters of the files involved the eligibility criteria of scientific/technological advancement (S/TA) (80.0%). As well, a quarter (25.0%) of the files involved records/evidence (documentation) as issues under dispute.

B. Issues in dispute involving subsection 248(1)(a-k) of the Income Tax Act

Subsection 248(1)(a-k)

Subsection 248(1)	Number of NOOs reviewed during reporting period	% of total NOOs reviewed during reporting period
(a) Basic research	3	3.8%
(b) Applied research	3	3.8%
(c) Experimental development	42	52.5%
(d) Support work	9	11.2%
(e) Market research	0	0%
(f) Quality assurance	0	0%
(g) Social science	0	0%
(h) Oil and gas	0	0%
(i) Commercial production	2	2.5%
(j) Style changes	1	1.2%
(k) Routine data collection	0	0%

For this reporting period, the issues in dispute that involved subsection 248(1)(a-k) of the Income Tax Act pertained mainly to the interpretation of experimental development work (52.5%).

C. Issues in dispute involving "other" issues

Other issues in dispute

Issue	Number of NOOs reviewed during reporting period	% of total NOOs reviewed during reporting period
Routine engineering	30	37.5%
Standard practice	31	38.8%
Experimental production vs commercial production	2	2.5%
Prototype/pilot plant/custom product, etc.	1	1.2%
All or substantially all consumed in / all or substantially all intended	0	0%

Work outside Canada	0	0%
Research and Technology Advisor (RTA) expertise	5	6.3%
Regulatory environment	0	0%
Shared-use equipment	0	0%
Contract payments	3	3.8%
Materials consumed	1	1.2%
Material transformed	0	0%
Claim not reviewed at appropriate level	6	7.5%
No specific reason given by objector	12	15.0%
No rationale (or weak rationale) given by RTA	5	6.3%
Duration of project: Start date	0	0%
Duration of project: Finish date	1	1.2%
Other: Gross penalty issue	0	0%
Other: Misinterpretation of CRA policies/tax case law	0	0%
Other: Technology base or knowledge level	4	5.0%
Other: Business context of claimant not considered	4	5.0%
Other: Sample size	0	0%
Other: Financial issue	2	2.5%
Other: Salaries/wages	2	2.5%
Other: Service-related issues (due process/review procedure issues)	11	13.8%

The above table indicates that during this reporting period the principal issues in dispute, as noted by the claimant or their preparer in their NOOs, involved the interpretation and understanding of what was routine engineering (37.5%) and standard practice (38.8%).

Regarding service and procedural related issues, of the 80 NOOs reviewed, 7.5% believed their claim was not reviewed at the appropriate level, and 10.0% believed their technology base, knowledge level or business context was not taken into account by the RTA. Over 10% (13.8%) of the objections reviewed noted service related issues involving due process and the technical review procedure and in 15.0% of the NOOs reviewed, the claimant or their representative provided no specific reason for their objection.

Trends/conclusions

Below are some of the main reasons the SR&ED NOO Advisors found the RTAs' technical eligibility decisions to be incorrect/partially incorrect:

- The RTA was unclear and confusing in their rationale for disallowing the work, stating that the work was not eligible but then also stating that the work was unsubstantiated;
- the RTA erred in determining the end date of the eligible work and that an additional portion of the work should be allowed;

- the concept development work contained technological uncertainties and technological advancements and was eligible as support work for the overall project;
- the production runs claimed were not experimental development in conjunction with commercial production, but rather experimental development within experimental production;
- the work disallowed was analytical work based on actual physical measurements and should have been allowed as SR&ED.

Footnote 1 For these four NOOs: In three cases the claimant went directly to tax court. In one case the claimant withdrew their NOO. (Return to footnote 1 source paragraph)

Last updated: 2018-11-26

Terms and conditions

Top of Page

SR&ED notices of objection, trends and issues, report #32: October 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018

Table of contents

- <u>1. Statistical/general information</u>
 - o A. NOO intake October 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018
 - o B. NOOs received vs NOOs reviewed on a monthly basis
 - o <u>C. Results</u>
 - o D. General information
 - o E. Industry sector information
 - o F. Regional breakdown of NOOs
- <u>2. Technical information</u>
 - o A. Issues in dispute involving eligibility criteria
 - o B. Issues in dispute involving subsection 248(1)(a-k) of the Income Tax Act
 - o <u>C. Issues in dispute involving "other" issues</u>
- <u>Trends/conclusions</u>

This report covers the period from October 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018. The report only involves mandatory referrals of notices of objections (NOOs) with technical issues from the Tax Charities and Appeals Directorate to the Notice of Objection Section, Scientific Research and Experimental Development (SR&ED) Directorate. It outlines the trends that we observed during this period.

1. Statistical/general information

A. NOO intake October 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018

NOO intake – NOOs reviewed				
NOO intake – NOOs reviewed	Number of files			
Number of NOOs received during reporting period	89			
Number of NOOs (company years) received during the reporting period	109			
Number of NOOs reviewed during the reporting period	96			
Number of NOOs (company years) reviewed during the reporting period	121			

B. NOOs received vs NOOs reviewed on a monthly basis

October 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018

NOOs received vs NOOs reviewed on a monthly basis

-	2017-10-31	2017-11-30	2017-12-31	2018-01-31	2018-02-28	2018-03-31
NOOs received	14	17	15	6	17	20
NOOs reviewed	18	17	18	15	16	12

C. Results

NOO review results			
Recommendation	Number of NOOs reviewed second half 2017-2018	% of total	
Correct	76	79.2%	
Partially correct	6	6.3%	
Not correct	9	9.3%	

......

NOO review results			
Recommendation	Number of NOOs reviewed second half 2017-2018	% of total	
Other Footnote 1	5	5.2%	
Total for period	96	100%	

Of the 96 NOOs reviewed during the second half of fiscal year 2017-2018, 79.2% were found to be correct where the NOO advisor agreed with the eligibility determinations. Also, during the reporting period, 6.3% of the NOOs reviewed were found to be only partially correct, where the NOO advisor did not fully agree with the eligibility determinations, and 9 of the NOOs reviewed (9.3%) were found to have incorrect eligibility decisions.

D. General information

Claim and claimant information			
Claim and claimant information	Number of NOOs reviewed during reporting period	% of total NOOs reviewed during reporting period	
NOOs – Refundable	82	85.4%	
NOOs – Non-refundable	14	14.6%	
First-time claimant	16	16.7%	
First-time technical review	30	31.3%	
Tax preparer involved in technical review/objection	80	83.3%	
English	73	76.0%	
French	13	13.6%	
Bilingual	10	10.4%	

	ITCs in dispute	
ITC value in dispute (\$)	Number of NOOs reviewed during reporting period	% of total NOOs reviewed during reporting period
ITC < \$50,000	30	31.3%
\$50,000 < ITC < \$250,000	52	54.1%
ITC > \$250,000	14	14.6%

The majority of NOOs reviewed were refundable SR&ED claims that involved investment tax credits (ITC) under \$250,000. Only 16.7% of the NOOs reviewed were first-time claimants and one third of the objections reviewed were claims where it was the first technical review for the claimant. The majority of the claimants (83.3%) used claim preparers in the preparation of their SR&ED claims and in filing their objections, which is in line with previous findings. And 76.0% of the objections were in English, 13.6% in French, and 10.4% were bilingual.

E. Industry sector information

Industry sector	Number of NOOs reviewed during reporting period	% of total NOOs reviewed during reporting period
Agriculture	3	3.2%
Chemical engineering/sciences	1	1.0%
Civil engineering	1	1.0%
Computer sciences and information technology/software engineering/hardware automation/control systems	32	33.3%
Electrical/electronic engineering/telecommunications	6	6.3%

Industry sector information for NOOs reviewed

Industry sector information for NOOs reviewed			
Industry sector	Number of NOOs reviewed during reporting period	% of total NOOs reviewed during reporting period	
Environmental/marine/petroleum/mining/energy and fuels engineering	8	8.3%	
Food and beverage	1	1.0%	
Industrial biotechnology	1	1.0%	
Information technology and bioinformatics	2	2.1%	
Mechanical engineering/tooling machinery and equipment/automation/automotive and transportation engineering	28	29.2%	
Materials engineering, plastics, pulp and paper/textiles	7	7.3%	
Medical sciences and health sciences/biomedical engineering	3	3.2%	
Natural and formal sciences (chemistry)	1	1.0%	
Other engineering and technologies	2	2.1%	
Total	96	100.0%	

During this reporting period, it was observed that over half (55.2%) of the NOOs reviewed involved various fields of engineering: chemical, civil, electrical/electronic, environmental, mining, mechanical, materials and engineering technologies. There were also a significant number (33.3%) of computer sciences, software engineering and information technology NOOs reviewed.

F. Regional breakdown of NOOs

Region	Number of NOOs reviewed during reporting period	% of total NOOs reviewed during reporting period
Nova Scotia	4	4.2%
Laval	7	7.3%
Quebec	5	5.2%
Montreal	11	11.5%
Ottawa	3	3.2%
Toronto Centre	12	12.5%
Toronto West	25	26.0%
Hamilton	1	1.0%
Calgary	20	20.8%
Vancouver	8	8.3%
Total	96	100%

NOOs reviewed by regic

The majority of the NOOs reviewed came from the Toronto West and Toronto Centre Tax Services Offices (TSO) (38.5%), and from the Calgary and Vancouver TSOs (29.1%). The Montreal, Laval, and Quebec TSOs made up 24.0% of the NOOs reviewed, similar to the previous reporting period.

2. Technical information

The information presented in the following tables shows the frequency of various issues under dispute that were noted in the 96 NOOs reviewed.

A. Issues in dispute involving eligibility criteria

Eligibility criteria			
Criteria	Number of NOOs reviewed during reporting period	% of total NOOs reviewed during reporting period	
1. Scientific/technological advancement	69	71.9%	
2. Scientific/technological uncertainty	81	84.4%	
3. Scientific/technological content – Hypothesis	28	29.2%	
4. Scientific/technological content – Scientific method	40	41.7%	
5. Scientific/technological content – Records/evidence	31	32.3%	
To support scientific method	6	6.3%	

From the NOOs reviewed during this reporting period, 84.4% of the files involved the eligibility criteria of scientific/technological uncertainty (S/TU) and three quarters of the files involved the eligibility criteria of scientific/technological advancement (S/TA) (71.9%). As well, a third (32.3%) of the files involved records/evidence (documentation) as issues under dispute.

B. Issues in dispute involving subsection 248(1)(a-k) of the Income Tax Act

Subsection 248(1)(a-k)			
Subsection 248(1)	Number of NOOs reviewed during reporting period	% of total NOOs reviewed during reporting period	
(a) Basic research	2	2.1%	
(b) Applied research	2	2.1%	
(c) Experimental development	51	53.1%	
(d) Support work	10	10.4%	
commensurate with the needs	1	1.0%	
(e) Market research	0	0%	
(f) Quality assurance	0	0%	
(g) Social science	2	2.1%	
(h) Oil and gas	0	0%	
(i) Commercial production	2	2.1%	
(j) Style changes	0	0%	
(k) Routine data collection	0	0%	

For this reporting period, the issues in dispute that involved subsection 248(1)(a-k) of the *Income Tax Act* pertained mainly to the interpretation of experimental development work (53.1%).

C. Issues in dispute involving "other" issues

Other issues in dispute			
Issue	Number of NOOs reviewed during reporting period	% of total NOOs reviewed during reporting period	
Routine engineering	37	38.5%	
Standard practice	46	47.9%	

Issue	Number of NOOs reviewed	% of total NOOs reviewed
Issue	during reporting period	during reporting period
Experimental production vs commercial production	2	2.1%
Prototype/pilot plant/custom product, etc.	4	4.2%
All or substantially all consumed in / all or substantially all intended	1	1.0%
Work outside Canada	1	1.0%
Research and Technology Advisor (RTA) expertise	3	3.2%
Regulatory environment	1	1.0%
Shared-use equipment	0	0%
Contract payments	3	3.2%
Materials consumed	0	0%
Material transformed	0	0%
Claim not reviewed at appropriate level	14	14.6%
No specific reason given by objector	13	13.5%
No rationale (or weak rationale) given by RTA	6	6.3%
Duration of project: Start date	0	0%
Duration of project: Finish date	0	0%
Other: Gross penalty issue	1	1.0%
Other: Misinterpretation of CRA policies/tax case law	5	5.2%
Other: Technology base or knowledge level	9	9.3%
Other: Business context of claimant not considered	4	4.2%
Other: Sample size	0	0%
Other: Financial issue	2	2.1%
Other: Salaries/wages	1	1.0%
Other: Service-related issues (due process/review procedure issues)	12	12.5%

Other issues in dispute

The above table indicates that during this reporting period the principal issues in dispute, as noted by the claimant or their preparer in their NOOs, involved the interpretation and understanding of what was routine engineering (38.5%) and standard practice (47.9%).

Regarding service and procedural related issues, of the 96 NOOs reviewed, 14.6% believed their claim was not reviewed at the appropriate level, and 9.3% believed their technology base or knowledge level was not taken into account by the RTA. Over 10% (12.5%) of the objections reviewed noted service related issues involving due process and the technical review procedure and in 13.5% of the NOOs reviewed, the claimant or their representative provided no specific reason for their objection.

Trends/conclusions

Below are some of the main reasons the SR&ED NOO Advisors found the RTAs' technical eligibility decisions to be incorrect/partially incorrect:

- The RTA's rationale for disallowing the work was weak and incomplete, some work was eligible;
- the RTA incorrectly applied the *Income Tax Act* (ITA) and Eligibility of Work for SR&ED ITCs policy and eligible work was perfomed;

- the whole of the work claimed, in conjunction with a higher system uncertainty, was not considered;
- the work claimed was a continuation of eligible work from the previous year and there were still unresolved technological uncertainties, therefore, the contract work should be allowed;
- the work was not reviewed at the appropriate technological level (the RTA incorrectly broke the work down into a series of ineligible deconstructed activities);
- the RTA did not request from the claimant all available technical documentation that could have been reviewed;
- some of the work involved valid technological uncertainties, and valid technological advancements were being attempted, this work was therefore eligible;
- materials consumed, contracting work performed and directly engaged SR&ED activities performed were eligible activities;
- the issue was financial in nature, some of the salaries claimed, as well as subcontractor payments should have been allowed;
- some of the non-specified production labour should have been allowed as a portion of the work claimed was commensurate with the needs of the eligible work.

Footnote 1 For these five NOOs: In four cases the claimant went directly to tax court. In one case the claimant withdrew their NOO. (Return to footnote 1 source paragraph)