

ATLANTIC POLICY CONGRESS OF FIRST NATIONS
CHIEFS SECRETARIAT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)



A Research Study on Indigenous Habitat Priority Areas in Atlantic Regions

ISSUE DATE: 11 January 2023

CLOSING DATE: 27 January 2023 at 4:30 P.M. AST.

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS for A Research Study on Indigenous Habitat Priority Areas in Atlantic Regions

1. PURPOSE

The Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat (APC) is requesting proposals (RFPs) for the purpose of entering a into contract through competitive negotiations for professional services to assess Indigenous habitat priority areas with emphasis on programs being operated by Atlantic First Nations communities. This includes the identification and development of an inventory of the current habitat rehabilitation programs. The identification of gaps that exist, relating to initiating or identifying habitat rehabilitation and priority areas, and recommendations to address potential gaps. The successful contractor will be required to provide APC with a review and report, based on research, on Indigenous habitat protection priorities within the Atlantic region.

2. BACKGROUND

The Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat (APC)

The Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat (APC) is a policy research and advocacy organization for 33 Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqiyik, Peskotomuhkati, and Innu Chiefs, Nations, and Communities in Atlantic Canada, Gulf of Quebec, and Maine, USA. Through research and analysis, APC develops and tables culturally relevant policy alternatives for matters that impact on Atlantic First Nation communities.

With the support of the First Nation communities in Atlantic Canada, APC follows a relationship vision that concentrates on partnership and cooperation, government to government relationships, dialogue and education, quality of life, and self-determination in First Nations Communities. To accomplish this, APC collaborates closely with community members and leadership to get direction by providing all information in order that communities can make informed decisions.

The APC Fisheries and Integrated Resources Department conducts research, analysis, and development of policy alternatives and programs for aspects of fisheries for our member communities. The Fisheries and Integrated Resources Department supports and works cooperatively with First Nation Leadership, Treaty Tables, Tribal Councils, Aboriginal Aquatic Resources and Oceans Management (AAROM) bodies, Fisheries Directors, Industry, Academia, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), and various government departments. APC's work includes supporting the commercial communal fisheries operations of member communities and fostering long-term collaboration and management with communities and First Nation organizations on fisheries issues.

Project Background

The research study will identify Indigenous habitat priority areas and rehabilitation programs within the Atlantic Region. This is for identification and development of an inventory of areas of priority for protection, and a history of areas already identified and their avenues to success or roadblocks encountered. Additionally, the impacts of climate change on current areas identified as priority areas for protection and the species identified within these areas. This is for the benefit of First Nations across Atlantic Canada.

This project will also support Atlantic First Nations with the advancement of Indigenous Resource Management Officer programs, furthering, improving and/or promoting those which are currently under development, and/or those that are not yet developed. The project will additionally be used to inform the development and implementation of habitat protection areas and the current Indigenous Habitat Participation Program.

3. SCOPE

The contractor will be required to provide APC with a report, based on research of any current habitat protection programs that are being carried out by Atlantic First Nations communities or organizations to date, the identification of any habitat areas and species at risk seen as important for Atlantic First Nations communities, and the potential impacts of climate change on identified areas and species at risk. The report must identify and develop an inventory of current protected habitat projects, habitats of interest and species at risk, and the impacts of climate change on identified areas and species at risk. The report must also include application methods of current habitat protection programs and any roadblocks in progress encountered by current programs or prospective communities on the identification of priority habitats and species at risk.

Additionally, the contractor will be required to review and document all historic, and current, habitat protection programs of aquatic nature, in the Atlantic region, including research via literature review and community input with Atlantic First Nations communities and the Aboriginal Aquatic Resources and Oceans Management (AAROM) bodies.

The study will also include a summary of general management processes, frameworks or any related policy issues, or gaps that arise when conducting the study; these must be clearly identified and summarized to provide recommendations to address the identified gaps. The study must then identify lessons learned, and best practices to inform development and implementation of Indigenous Habitat Protection Programs based on co-development with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO).

The contractor will be responsible for conducting a study on identifying Indigenous priority habitats requiring protection and rehabilitation, in respect to the following:

- Developing an inventory of any current habitat protection programs that are being carried out by Atlantic First Nations communities or organizations to date.

- Developing an inventory of current species at risk within areas identified as well as other species of interest or of importance to First Nations communities.
- Developing a summary of proposed areas of habitat protection, or areas considered as priority areas by First Nations communities within the Atlantic regions.
- Identifying and collating current gaps that exist relating to initiating the protection of said priority areas.
- Identifying the impacts of climate change on current and identified areas of habitat protection as well as species at risk.
- Developing an inclusive, comprehensive, and Atlantic First Nations, Indigenous-focused, report on Indigenous habitat priority protection areas as it relates to the Indigenous Habitat Protection Program.
- Hosting a presentation to APC that clearly and concisely presents findings and action-oriented recommendations for Atlantic First Nations and government.

The following assumptions are made for the purpose of the RFP:

- Representatives from APC, and the contractor, will be available to one another for regular coordination as required.
- A final report is to be provided upon completion of the deliverables.
- The cost of any digital platforms, programs, and others. will be the responsibility of APC.
- The contract will be deemed completed upon successful completion of the review, community input and report submission with formal sign-off of the final report to be provided by the contractor.

4. METHODOLOGY

The contractor must clearly articulate how research plans and methodology will fulfill the projects scope, by connecting project objectives to project outcomes, with specific steps, and identifying proposed results. A description of the methodology to be used is required and shall be submitted with the contractor's proposal. Contractors must outline methods that reflect best practices of systematic or scoping literature reviews including:

- Development of guiding research objectives and questions;
- Implementation of a research protocol (e.g., development of search criteria and target databases); and
- Protocol for screening search results and;
- Protocol for data analysis.

In the case that the contractor wishes to incorporate alternative methods or approaches into their respective proposals (e.g., snowballing techniques), the contractor must provide adequate justification for how this either enhances the data set or contributes to project objectives. Qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method approaches are welcome.

5. DELIVERABLES, SCHEDULE, AND COST

The deliverables of this project are:

- Develop an inclusive, comprehensive, and Atlantic First Nations, Indigenous-focused, report summarizing any on-going habitat rehabilitation programs, identification of areas considered priority, species considered priority, and impacts of climate change on areas of priority and species identified.
- priority protection areas as it relates to the Indigenous Habitat Protection Program.
- Designing and planning the development of community input, through communication with members of Indigenous communities currently involved in Indigenous resource management, habitat rehabilitation programs, and Indigenous stewards of the land. This requires community input that facilitates a dialogue of sharing, and that is structured in interesting ways to encourage the inclusion of diverse perspectives;
 - To develop an inclusive, comprehensive and Atlantic First Nations, and Indigenous-focused, report on habitat protection priority areas and species within said areas.
 - Developing an inventory of any current habitat protection programs that are being carried out by Atlantic First Nations communities or organizations to date.
 - Developing an inventory of current species at risk within areas identified as well as other species of interest or of importance to First Nations communities.
 - Developing a summary of proposed areas of habitat protection, or areas considered as priority areas by First Nations communities within the Atlantic regions.
 - Identifying and collating current gaps that exist relating to initiating the protection of said priority areas.
 - Identifying the impacts of climate change on current and identified areas of habitat protection as well as species at risk.
- To produce a final report that will include co-developed recommendations for Atlantic Canadian First Nations, and Government, habitat protection priority areas.
- To give a presentation to APC that clearly and concisely presents findings and action-oriented, and Indigenous-led, recommendations for Atlantic First Nations and Government.

The proponent must outline a deliverables schedule and an itemized budget including:

1. Both current and potential time commitments of proposed project staff to other clients and projects.
2. Projected workload of each associated firm proposed for involvement in this project.
3. Adequate support personnel, and other resources to provide services required.
4. Other resources of technical capabilities available to the proponent which will specifically benefit the project.
5. Budget and its justification.

A contract will be developed between APC and the successful proponent detailing the terms and conditions for the work. The anticipated start date of the services is **1 February 2023 to 31 March 2023**.

Furthermore, verbal, or written updates or progress reports must also be completed upon request. Once selected, a contract will be developed between the APC and the proponent detailing the terms and conditions of the work.

The contract will be deemed completed upon successful completion of the research review, community input, report submission, and final presentation with formal sign-off of the final report to be provided by the proponent.

6. CRITERIA SELECTION COMMITTEE

The APC will have a select group of experienced individuals sit on the selection committee.

7. OWNERSHIP OF PROGRAM MATERIALS

APC will have complete and full ownership and use of all reports and materials (“works”) produced by the contract under this project and shall have copyright therein. In consideration of entering into the agreement, the contractor must agree, in writing, to waive all moral rights (as defined by the *Canadian Copyright Act*) in any works in which copyright subsists.

8. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL PROCESS

8.1 Closing Date

Each proposal must be received no later than 4:30 p.m. (AST) on 27 January 2023. The anticipated start date of the services is 1 February 2023. Proposals may be sent by e-mail or hard copy (mail or courier). Receipt of proposal submissions will be acknowledged via e-mail upon receipt, provided a valid e-mail accompanies the proposals.

An electronic copy is required.

8.2 Late Proposals

Late proposals will not be accepted and will be returned to the bidder.

8.3 Evaluation and Selection

Each proposal will be evaluated by the Selection Committee. The APC will be solely responsible for the decision as to which proposal may be chosen as the successful one. APC reserves the right to accept any or all parts of a proposal.

Proposal will be evaluated according to the following criteria. Scoring is based on the following maximum values totaling 100%.

8.3.1. Work Outline and Methodology	VALUE:	25
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A response to this RFP must outline the methods for accomplishing the proposed work. Describe what, where, when how and in what sequence work will be carried out during the contract term. Consider how each task may be carried out; what services or interaction is required from the advisory committee, identify any distinct and substantive qualifications for undertaking the proposed contract such as availability of specialized equipment or unique approaches or concepts relevant to the requirement expectations.

8.3.2. Qualifications and Demonstrated Experience VALUE: 20

Response must describe previous projects that the project team has worked on that are related in size and scope of this project. Describe the dollar amount of the contract and a brief narrative of the successes encountered during the contract period. Address how the experience will help you to perform under this contract and provide references (contact name and number) for each project. Indicate which of the proposed firms and project staff were involved in each contract. APC reserves the right to investigate references projects, contract references and research other projects the respondent has worked on.

8.3.3. Proposed Project Staff VALUE: 25

Describe the work to be performed by the individuals you name to perform the essential functions and detail specific qualifications and substantive experience directly related to the proposed contract. A response prepared specifically for this proposal is required. Marketing resumes often include non-relevant information which may detract from evaluations of proposal. Focus on individuals' specific duties and responsibilities and how the project experience is relevant to the proposed contract. Competence of the consultant/team should be demonstrated. This includes:

- Knowledge of the topic and literature in the field
- Research qualifications
- Demonstration of an effective historical relationship and involvement with First Nations communities
- Knowledge of the region

8.3.4. Objectives and Services VALUE: 15

The proponent's response to this RFP should demonstrate the comprehension of the objectives and services for the proposed contract. Do not merely duplicate the deliverables set forth within this RFP. Define any assumptions made regarding a proponent's proposal response to this RFP.

8.3.5. Quality of Proposal VALUE: 5

Proponents do not respond to this criterion. Committee will rate this based on their perception of the clarity, completeness, and presentation of proposal. This criterion is not used to rate colour or graphics or other visual techniques but only for content.

8.3.6. Cost and Timing of Study VALUE: 10

The proponent should include a response discussing:

1. Both current and potential time commitments of proposed project staff to other clients and projects
2. Projected workload of each associated firm proposed for involvement in this project
3. Adequate support personnel, and other resources to provide services required
4. Other resources of technical capabilities available to the proponent which will specifically benefit the project.
5. Budget and its justification

9. DEBRIEFING

At the conclusion of the RFP process, all consultants will be notified.

10. ESTIMATED TIME FRAMES AND PROCESS

The following timetable outlines the anticipated schedule for the RFPs and contract process. The timing and the sequence of events resulting from the RFP may vary and shall be determined by APC and the Criteria Selection Committee.

Request for Proposals issued: 11 January 2023

Request for Proposals closes: 27 January 2023

Anticipated date for Proposal's evaluation to be completed: 30 January 2023

Anticipated date for contract to be developed: 1 February 2023

11. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL PREPARATION

11.1 Signed Proposals

Each consultant must ensure that the proposal is signed by a person authorized to sign on behalf of the company/institution in response to this request for a proposal.

11.2 Electronic Version of the Proposal

Proposals that are submitted by mail must also be submitted with one electronic copy (Word or PDF Format).

11.3 Notification and Correspondence

All notices and correspondence will be sent to the principal consultant unless a request is made for the APC to correspond with someone other than the principal consultant.

Questions: Questions may be addressed by e-mail to Melissa Nevin, Director of Fisheries, and Integrated Resources, Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat (APC), melissa.nevin@apcfn.ca. However, in the interest of fairness, all questions will be answered in writing and sent to all respondents or potential respondents.

11.4 Changes to Proposal Wording

The consultant will not change the wording of its proposal after closing and no words or comments will be added to the proposal unless requested by the APC for purposes of clarification.

11.5 Working Language of the APC

The working language for the purposes of this RFP is English and all responses to the RFP must be in English

11.6 Researcher's Expenses

The contractor is solely responsible for their own expenses in preparing a proposal and for subsequent negotiations with APC, if any. If APC elects to reject all proposals, APC will not be liable to any applicants for any claims, whether for costs or damages incurred by the proponent in preparing the proposal, loss of anticipated profit in connection with any final contract, or any other matter whatsoever.

11.7 Proposal Validity

Proposals will be open for acceptance for at least 90 days after the closing date.

11.8 Firm Pricing

Prices will be firm for the entire contract period unless this RFP specifically states otherwise.

Currency and Taxes

Prices quoted must be:

A. In Canadian dollars; and

B. APC is HST exempt, and the successful consultant will be provided a copy of its HST exemption letter.

12. DEFINITION OF CONTRACT

Notice in writing to an applicant that it has been identified as the successful candidate and the subsequent full execution of written contract will constitute a contract for the goods or services and no consultant will acquire any legal or equitable rights or privileges relative to the goods or services until the occurrence of both such events.

13. LIABILITY FOR ERRORS

While APC has used considerable efforts to ensure an accurate representation of information in this RFP, the information contained in this RFP is supplied solely as a guideline for consultants. The information is not guaranteed or warranted to be accurate by APC, nor is it necessarily comprehensive or exhaustive. Nothing in this RFP is intended to relieve consultants from forming their own opinions and conclusions with respect to the matters addressed in this RFP.

14. MODIFICATION OF TERMS

APC reserves the right to modify the terms of this RFP at any time in its sole direction. This includes the right to cancel this RFP at any time prior to entering a contract with the successful consultant.

15. OWNERSHIP OF PROPOSALS AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

All documents, including proposals, submitted to the APC, become the property of APC. They will be received and held in confidence by APC.

16. USE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

This document, or any portion thereof, may not be used for any purpose other than the submission of proposals.

17. CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

Information pertaining to the APC obtained by the consultant because of participation in this project is confidential and must not be disclosed without written authorization from APC.