



Muskoka Futures
A Community Futures Development Corporation



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

For the Provision of Consulting Services

***Partnership Potential
Feasibility Study***

Release Date: February 9, 2015
Re-Release Date: February 27, 2015
Submission Date: March 20, 2015

1. INTRODUCTION

This project involves developing the partnership potential between Muskoka Community Network and the Muskoka Community Futures Development Corporation (the Partners).

Muskoka Community Network (MCN) is a not-for-profit corporation that creates economic value by building technology capacity through partnerships in the digital economy. MCN's vision is to create a network of thriving innovative intelligent communities. MCN works to build capacity and provide service in five key areas which include broadband infrastructure, e-business development, digital upskilling, innovation and research. For further information about MCN, please visit www.mcnet.ca.

Muskoka Futures Development Corporation (Muskoka Futures) is a not-for-profit corporation that supports community economic development by assisting our communities to strengthen and diversify their economies. Muskoka Futures envisions a vibrant and dynamic regional economy which attracts talent, capital, expertise and knowledge, contributing to the "quality of life for all Muskoka citizens" which earns Muskoka global recognition. Our Mission is to promote economic growth and job creation throughout Muskoka and to accomplish this Muskoka Futures empowers entrepreneurs to succeed by offering experienced guidance and financial investment in their ventures. Muskoka Futures has four key areas of programs and services including business loans, business counselling and technical services, strategic planning and community economic development. For further information about Muskoka Futures, please visit www.muskokafutures.ca

Muskoka Futures and Muskoka Community Network both promote economic growth and job creation and serve similar geographic areas of responsibility. Further the Partners have a strong history of collaboration on regional projects, including the fact that MCN developed out of research and business planning led by Muskoka Futures 15 years ago. The Partners have recognized that their current strategic plans are very similar in nature and scope and as a result have agreed to examine opportunities to work more closely in physical environs and program delivery, as well as other areas that might be identified through this process. As the District of Muskoka does not have a group or agency specifically responsible for regional economic development it is recognized by the Partners that there will be an opportunity to play a major role in regional economic development as a result of this project.

The Partners are seeking the services of a qualified consulting firm/team (the "*Consultant*") to work with both organizations, including their Directors and senior staff, other government agencies, municipal partners, the private sector and other stakeholders that might benefit as a result of this process. It will be important for the consultant to consider all opportunities to provide improved efficiencies which will directly benefit the economic growth of the region. It is anticipated that other opportunities not yet considered could be identified and implemented as a result of this project.

The expected outcome for this review will allow both organizations to do more with their present resources and provide enhanced regional assistance in economic development and job creation. The initial target is to simplify the mandates of each organization and remove any confusion around the roles and responsibilities of each organization. With the assistance of a consultant, this project will investigate further organizational synergies for faster implementation of programs and deliverables to the region. The long-term goal of this project is to provide the region with a group that has a regional economic development mandate and a focus on job creation.

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Pending funding, a consultant will be selected to prepare a feasibility study that identifies the partnership potential between Muskoka Community Network and Muskoka Futures. The project will not begin until funding is secured, an estimated 2-4 months from the RFP close date. The consultant will identify:

- options for resource sharing including physical environment and services;
- a detailed description of current services offered and how they will be supported through the proposed partnership, including budgets;
- possible funding/grant opportunities for the establishment of the project;
- a suggested governance model based upon current industry “best practices” including investigation of an independent economic development corporation; and
- a discussion of the potential to expand the partnership model to other community groups within Muskoka.

3. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Consultants with experience in publically funded community organizations are invited to prepare clear and concise submissions with no more than 15 pages of text directly related to the proposed project (resumes and covering letter in addition to the 15 pages).

At a minimum, a complete submission will address the following:

- A statement of the community engagement philosophy of the consultant, including opportunities to engage the Directors of both organizations, municipal leaders, FedNor, and the broader Muskoka community;
- A description of the experience of the consultant as it relates to the purposes of this project;
- A proposed work plan and timeline, including a proposed meeting schedule;
- A discussion of how to integrate a best practice review into the process;
- Number of hours for staff assigned to this project and their hourly rate;
- Confirmation that the consultant will be able to provide professional liability insurance in the amount of \$5,000,000, in effect during the duration of the contract;
- A statement of the environmental/sustainability philosophy of the consultant as it pertains to their business; and
- A minimum of four (4) references who have agreed to provide comment on relative skills and abilities of the consultant. Ideally references will have employed the consultant on a similar type and scale of project.

To fulfill the proposal requirements, a complete submission package would include one (1) secure digital copy of the following:

3.1 *Covering Letter*

A covering letter advising that the firm has reviewed and understands the contents of the Request for Proposal (RFP) package and is capable of meeting the proposed timelines.

3.2 *Profile/Resume*

A profile or resume of all principle staff assigned to the project, their respective roles and a brief description of the organization as a whole.

3.3 *Conflicts of Interest*

Please include any recent or ongoing projects that could conflict with the interests of this contract.

3.4 *Summary of Costs and Timelines*

The submission will clearly indicate the maximum upset amount to be paid including disbursements and the general nature of the consulting relationship.

4. SUBMISSION DEADLINE

The deadline for submission of proposals is **Friday, March 20, 2015 at 12:00 p.m. (noon)**. Electronic submissions should be sent to marjorie.macdonald@mcnet.ca. Printed submissions (optional) may be submitted to the MCN offices prior to the established deadline, and should be addressed to:

Marjorie MacDonald
Muskoka Community Network
Suite 2, 87 Forbes Hill Dr.
Huntsville, ON
P1H 0B6

Reference: RFP – Consulting Services – Partnership Potential

In fairness to all firms, submissions received past the deadline will not be considered. Please note that this condition will be strictly enforced.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Preference will be given to consultant(s) with demonstrated expertise and experience with publicly funded community organizations. As such, proposals will be evaluated on the basis of:

- The overall quality and professionalism of the written proposal
- Related experience of individuals assigned to the contract
- Past similar successes
- Overall project approach
- Ability, capacity and skill of the consultant to perform the work
- Experience with local government, education institutions and community based groups and the development of business plans
- Proven community engagement experience
- References
- Location of company as it pertains to responsiveness and ease of operation
- Commitment of the consultant to sustainability principles
- Value received and the wise expenditure of public money.

All submissions will be reviewed by the review committee composed of the Executive Directors and two Directors from each organization.

The successful consultant will be contacted by **Friday, March 27**.

Muskoka Community Network and Muskoka Futures reserve the right to hire the most qualified consultant to undertake this project. Muskoka Community Network and Muskoka Futures reserve the right to negotiate with the successful firm such terms and conditions that may be deemed to be in the best interest of the organization.