



Qalipu
FIRST NATION

Request for Proposals
COMMUNICATIONS ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGY

Deadline for Submission:
Thursday, February 2, 2023 12:30pm

Section 1: Terms and Conditions (Context Important)

1.1 Issuing Department or Division

Executive Office

1.2 Synopsis or Service Requirement

Through this request for proposals, the Qalipu First Nation (QFN) invites interested and qualified consultants to submit a proposal for a diagnostic assessment of the Band's communications approach, and subsequent development of a five-year Communications Strategy. The communications strategy will outline a phased approach to addressing any identified gaps and growth opportunities identified in the assessment.

1.3 Terms of Submission

1.3.1 A copy of this RFP may be obtained by emailing the following person:

Alison White, Communications Manager
Qalipu First Nation
PO Box 460
St. George's, NL
A0N 1Z0

awhite@qalipu.ca

1.3.2 In this document

- (a) bidder and consultant are used interchangeably. Both, however, refer to a person who has or intends to submit a proposal in response to this RFP.
- (b) *advertisement period* refers to the period this RFP is publicly advertised on Qalipu.ca and proposals are solicited from consultants.
- (c) *successful consultant* refers to the consultant who has been selected by the Band and to complete the project.
- (d) *contracted consultant* refers to the consultant who has entered into a contract with the Band to complete the project and becomes the prime consultant.

1.3.3 Bidders must provide a digital copy in PDF and MS WORD format by email to Alison White at awhite@qalipu.ca before the end of the advertisement period.

- 1.3.4 Consultant proposals must be structured in the same manner as this RFP. For greater certainty, the consultant is required to use the same headings, subheadings, and numbering system as presented in this RFP. Where a term or condition does not require the consultant to provide a response or document, the consultant may leave the heading/subheading from the proposal.
- 1.3.5 In addition to the requirements under s. 1.3.4, proposals must include the following:
- (a) A cover letter briefly summarizing the qualifications of the project manager, team members, sub-contractors, statement of work, methodology, and total fees (inclusive of all costs and taxes). The cover letter will be used to provide a preliminary evaluation of proposals when there is a large response.
 - (b) Identification of project manager and team members along with a description of their respective roles and qualifications. The consultant must assure the Band that the project manager identified in the proposal will remain on the project until completion. In cases where the project manager changes due to circumstances beyond the contracted consultant's control, the contracted consultant must advise the Band immediately and enter into discussions with the Band to replace the project manager with someone of similar qualifications and qualities.
 - (c) Description of the project organization and management system in addition to company profiles of the primary consultant and sub-contractors.
 - (d) Methodology.
 - (e) A minimum of three reference letters from any applicable projects involving similar scope and scale.
 - (f) Time and task allocation of team members.
 - (g) A schedule of project activities in chronological order that shows each activity and its duration.
 - (h) Itemized project costs including fee structure, staff cost, overhead and other related expenses, including HST, as well as a suggested/preferred payment schedule. The proposal must include a statement signed by the most senior consultant with signing authority or, in the case of a firm/company/corporation, verification from the president/CEO that the consultant is capable of completing the work outlined in the consultant's proposal for the price/fees quoted. The statement must be located in the proposal immediately following the cover page.
- 1.3.6 Late, incomplete, or partial proposals or submissions including those sent by fax or e-mail, will not be accepted under any circumstances.

- 1.3.7 The deadline for questions relating to the RFP is four (4) business days before the close of the advertisement period. Questions received after that deadline will not be considered. Where a question seeks to clarify a point in the RFP, the Band will distribute its response, via email, to all consultants who expressed an interest in the project at the point and time the response is generated. In cases where a response to a consultant's question would provide the consultant with an unfair advantage, in the Band's judgment, the Band will provide the consultant with the opportunity to withdraw the comment. If the consultant decides to pursue the question further, the response provided by the Band will be distributed, via email, to all consultants who expressed an interest in the project at the point and time the response is generated. Questions regarding this RFP must be directed, by email, to the following person:

CONTACT:

Alison White

awhite@qalipu.ca

Section 2: Terms and Conditions (Required Additional Information)

- 2.1 The Band requires confirmation of the identity of all the sub-contractors, their experience, personnel and knowledge levels, and their relationship and experience with the primary bidder. This information must be explicitly stated in the proposal submitted by the primary bidder. Sub-contractors will be evaluated as part of the selection process and the Band must approve any changes in sub-contractors other than those specified in the submission.
- 2.2 The consultant is required to submit three reference letters from persons that received similar services from the consultant within the past five (5) years.
- 2.3 The contracted consultant is required to provide the contact at the Band with biweekly email updates regarding the project's progress.

Section 3: Terms and Conditions (General Terms)

- 3.1 The Band is not bound to accept the lowest priced bid and may exercise the right not to select any of the proposals submitted under the RFP.

- 3.2 Preference will be given first to businesses fully or majority owned by Indigenous peoples.
- 3.3 The consultant submitting a proposal under this RFP is considered to be responsible, on behalf of it and all its sub-contractors, for all undertakings and deliverables related to the provision of services as specified in this RFP to the Band.
- 3.4 This RFP is the primary document and should a dispute arise between the RFP and the bidder's proposal then the RFP will supersede the bidder's proposal in any legal dispute.
- 3.5 The Band will be responsible to administer this RFP, award the contract to the successful bidder, and for the general supervision of the project's implementation.
- 3.6 Proposals submitted through this RFP must be valid for 90 calendar days after the advertisement period.
- 3.7 Consultants should strive to provide clear responses to issues and questions raised in the RFP in a language that is clear and not subject to differing interpretations.
- 3.8 The contract executed by the Band and the successful consultant to complete this project will be governed by the laws of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- 3.9 All data, specifications, concept plans, designs, rationales, presentation materials, economic and technical reports and related information produced by the consultants during this project shall be the property of the Band.
- 3.10 All potential bidders who have requested or are known to have obtained copies of this RFP will be notified of any changes, via email, should they occur after its publication.
- 3.11 The contract for this project, where awarded, will be granted by the Band based upon the results of the evaluation of submitted proposals. The Band will notify the successful consultant in writing. Those who are not successful will receive written notification within approximately ten (10) business days following the execution of the contract with the successful bidder.
- 3.12 The contract with the successful consultant will commence immediately upon the execution of the contract by the Band and the successful consultant. Ten (10) business days will be provided after the successful bidder has been notified to conclude final negotiations and execute the contract. Where a contract is not executed before the expiration of the aforementioned ten (10) business days, the Band reserves the right to commence negotiations and enter into a contract with another consultant.
- 3.13 Bidders may raise issues with this project and RFP that have been overlooked by the Band but are nonetheless critical to the successful completion of the project. In such cases, the bidder may tender

a recommended change to the CONTACT by email. The Band shall take the recommendation under advisement and issue, if deemed necessary, an amendment to this RFP. This RFP may be amended up to three (3) business days before the conclusion of the advertisement period.

- 3.14 The Band may, at its discretion, determine if a bidders conference is necessary. A bidders conference must take place at least 10 days before the closing of the RFP.
- 3.15 Before a contract is awarded, the Band will negotiate the final details of a contract to be signed by the Band and the successful consultant. The Band will enter into a contract with the successful consultant only. There will be no contracts entered into between the Band and any sub-contractors.
- 3.16 The contracted consultant shall designate a senior project manager who shall receive all communications from the Band on behalf of the contracted consultant. The contracted consultant shall also furnish the address, telephone and fax numbers and email address for the senior project manager.
- 3.17 All communications from the contracted consultant to the Band should be directed to the following person:

Alison White

awhite@qalipu.ca

709-647-3009

Section 4: Statement of Work

4.1 Background

4.1.1 QFN Communications

Qalipu First Nation (QFN) was officially formed September 22nd, 2011, through an agreement between the Government of Canada and the Federation of Newfoundland Indians (FNI). This agreement officially recognized QFN as a band under the Indian Act, and with a membership of 24,000, it represents the largest landless band in Atlantic Canada. QFN is comprised of 67 traditional Mi'kmaq communities across Newfoundland with offices located in Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor, Glenwood, St. George's, Stephenville, and Corner Brook. This structure supports our widespread membership and communities.

QFN has experienced significant capacity growth since its formation. In 2015, a Communications and Marketing Coordinator position was created. The position was reclassified to Communications Manager in 2020.

The 2020-2029 Strategic Plan outlines one key Goal for Communications: Qalipu First Nation will enhance effective communication within the organization, our members and with external stakeholders, through appropriate messages, mediums and technologies.

Strategic objectives included the following:

- Foster a greater sense of inclusion and belonging among members including those who live outside the Qalipu Wards through use of interactive on-line technology.
- Develop a Communications Strategy
- Develop process improvement for communications to ensure they are timely and relevant.

In 2019, QFN initiated the work of creating a Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP). The purpose of creating a CCP for the Nation ensures a holistic and all-encompassing path forward for the Nation created by Nation's membership. QFN involved the community members in every phase of creating this plan and consulted widely to ensure that their ideas were recorded accurately and reflected the future that they wish to see for Qalipu First Nation. Communications themes that emerged in this document include, but are not limited to:

- A diverse and broad geographic membership creates problems in communicating directly to members.
- Technology enhancements are needed to improve communication and engagement with members.
- Membership controversy often overshadows positive communications about work and progress of the Band.

To address goals of the Strategic Plan and work toward a vision of improved communications outlined in the Comprehensive Community Plan, QFN will undergo a diagnostic assessment of its communications approach including its function and structure within Band administration, and the tools, methods, and tactics employed to reach various audiences. The diagnostic assessment will serve as the foundation in the development of a five-year Communications Strategy.

The diagnostic assessment will include a collaborative assessment and needs identification, review and assess the current communications challenges and opportunities. The assessment will include exploration of past QFN communications activities and their impact, examine current use of existing digital tools including qalipu.ca website, and video messaging, identify gaps in messaging and communications systems between departments, wards and throughout the membership and include consultation with the Communications Manager, Chief and Council, Departments and staff, Wards and wider community and specific groups such as Elders, Knowledge Keepers, youth, local and away members, and students.

The subsequent five-year communications strategy will provide a recommended plan of action to address the gaps and growth opportunities outlined in the diagnostic assessment. The Strategy will provide for:

- A five-year plan based on updated communications goals and objectives
- A path forward for strengthened communications
- Improved internal communications leading to greater workplace satisfaction, enhanced collective knowledge, and better informed leaders and decision makers.
- Suggested development of functional tools to meet the everyday needs of Qalipu First Nation and its members
- Effective delivery of internal and external communications.
- Processes to determine if communications strategy is demonstrating meaningful impact.
- Identify specific action items to implement the strategy and a timeline for execution
- highlight key success factors that the Band can measure to ensure an effective communications strategy is meeting the needs of the Band and members

4.2 Mandatory Requirements

QFN requires a digital copy in PDF and MS WORD format of the consultant's proposed approach to the diagnostic assessment and development of a five-year communications strategy. Section 1.3.3 details bidder's submission options.

4.3 Deliverables - Scope of Work

The successful consultant will be responsible for:

4.3.1 Diagnostic Assessment to include:

- Assessment and needs identification
 - Complete review including exploration of past and current QFN communications activities and their impact, current use of existing digital tools including qalipu.ca website and video messaging, gaps and growth opportunities in messaging and communications systems between departments, wards and throughout the membership.
- Collaborative approach
 - Input from Communications Manager, Chief and Council, Departments and staff.
- Written report
 - Findings
 - Recommendations with priority assigned for short term (five-year strategy) and beyond.
 - Suggested financial implications

4.3.2 Five-Year Communications Strategy to include:

- Alignment with Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Community Plan
- A five-year plan to address priority findings, or goals, arising from Diagnostic Assessment
- A five-year plan based on updated communications goals and objectives
- A path forward for strengthened communications
- Improved internal communications leading to greater workplace satisfaction, enhanced collective knowledge, and better informed leaders and decision makers.
- Suggested development of functional tools to meet the everyday needs of Qalipu First Nation and its members
- Effective delivery of internal and external communications.
- Processes to determine if communications strategy is demonstrating meaningful impact.
- Identify specific action items to implement the strategy and a timeline for execution
- highlight key success factors that the Band can measure to ensure an effective communications strategy is meeting the needs of the Band and members.

Section 5: Consultant Qualifications

The consultant must demonstrate that it has the following attributes:

- Experience in assessing communications and developing communication strategy's
- Experience in the field of communications, marketing and public relations
- Experience working with Indigenous organization
- Strong community engagement and data collection experience
- Experience with working with governmental organizations

Section 6: Consultant Methodology

6.1 Project Management/Implementation

The consultant must demonstrate the following in its proposal:

- Propose methodology to satisfy all elements of scope of work outlined in 4.3
- Documents confirming qualifications outlined in section 5
- Project schedule and timeline
- Client engagement plan
- Detailed budget

Section 7: Budget

This is a fixed price contract. The bidder will provide budget as indicated in 6.1, outlining and breaking down each component that is outlined in section 4.3. The contract will be evaluated as indicated in section 8.

Each section and budget component (related to 4.3) may be evaluated individually. The final contract may remove one or more components of section 4.3 to meet budget constraints.

Section 8: Evaluation and Selection Framework

- 8.1 The grading of proposals is an integral part of the RFP process. The Band has decided to describe the selection criteria so that all bidder/consultants can evaluate their chances of success, within reason, given the current competitive market conditions in the industry.
- 8.2 Figure 1 forms the basis of what the evaluation sheet will look like, subject to possible changes. There are nine attributes that will be judged and graded. Each attribute will be weighed in terms of its importance to the objectives of the RFP.
- 8.3 All proposals will be evaluated using specific criteria, attributes, and characteristics that have been generated by the Band. Criteria are based upon the detailed specifications of the scope of work, work schedules, technical specifications, quality standards, consultant qualifications and other desirable features and benefits contained in this RFP.

Figure 1: Proposal Grading

Primary Consultant:

Cost of Bid:

Rating of the Proposal: For each of the components, please provide rating 1-10 where 10 represents the best.

Component	Rate X (1-10)	Weight	Total	Comments regarding strengths and weaknesses of this component, rationale for the score and general notes
Experience of Consultant Team: key personnel, experience, references, qualifications, commitment to assignment		1.5		
Experience of Project Manager; experience, position in the firm, qualifications, commitment to assignment		1.0		
Management of sub-contractors and their commitment to assignment		0.5		
Proven competence in similar work		1		
Sufficient Human Resources		.5		
Clarity of tasks and responsibilities		1		
Proposed liaison with client		1		
Proof that the specifics of the RFP are understood and addressed including the proposed methodology, approach, receivables, and schedule		2.5		
First Nation Knowledge – Experience working with First Nations.		2.5		
Cost		1		
Total Score:				