



Photo: Tinkers Point Path by Jenn O'Neil

Request for Proposals

Project 202203: Finance & Accounting Review

East Coast Trail Association

50 Pippy Place, Suite 9

P.O. Box 8034

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Issuing Agency

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is issued by the East Coast Trail Association (ECTA).

Purpose

To acquire the consulting services to help us baseline our current accounting and financial management policies & practices, identifying the existing problems and opportunities, as well as, documenting the required change requirements.

This RFP will assess the overall capability of the respondents to plan, execute and deliver the expected outcomes of the “Accounting & Financial Management Project under the management and control of ECTA’s Project Team. This team is comprised of members of ECTA’s Board and uniquely qualified ECTA members and volunteers. The ECTA has secured the funding to complete all phases of this project.

Background: The East Coast Trail

The East Coast Trail (ECT) is a 336 km market-ready, pedestrian, coastal trail that runs along the eastern edge of the Avalon Peninsula between Topsail Beach and Cappahayden. The East Coast Trail Association is a 28-year-old member-based, volunteer-driven and managed registered charity. The Association’s mission is to develop, maintain, enhance and protect the ECT for today and future generations while respecting the integrity of our natural environment, the needs of our communities, and delivering a high-quality wilderness hiking experience.

The ECT is an anchor attraction that is pulling visitors into the province, the region, and our communities. The trail combines the best we have to offer into one single destination: our natural, cultural, historic and community assets and our people, together with the raw natural beauty of our coastline. The East Coast Trail has become a world-class attraction, a strategic tourism and a recreational asset for the province that is generating significant economic, social, and environmental value. The trail has become a destination trail, a demand generator that greatly impacts visitation, spending and satisfaction.

Current State

Our accounting and financial management systems have evolved on an ad-hoc basis to address specific needs in time, through a succession of volunteers over the last 28 years. We have never stopped to benchmark our performance and effectively document an integrated and structured set of policies, processes, and procedures. Over the past two years, we have restructured our Board of Directors to support the two primary functions of management and oversight: 11 directors are focused on management, and 4 directors are focused on oversight. The Governance & Oversight Committee was recruited and introduced to the Board in January 2020. In the past, we have depended solely on our volunteers to support the accounting and financial management functions. The underpinning reality is that volunteer work is completed in discretionary time, where the focus is on getting the job done and moving on. The time has come for us to benchmark where we are and how we need to change to better support and manage where we are headed.

Current Accounting System: Sage 50 Quantum Accounting Version: Release 2023.0 (30.0.0.1)



Business Need

Our #1 strategic goal is to achieve the sustainability and long-term survival of the Trail and the Association. To do this, we must be able to effectively demonstrate the capability and the capacity to raise the funds required annually to sustain the Trail and the Association.

To accomplish this goal, we must raise funds from agencies and donors, including the federal, provincial, and municipal governments, the Trans Canada Trail, an expanding list of corporations and foundations, our members, and the general public. And to acquire and retain their funding support we need their confidence, and to maintain confidence, we need to be both transparent in what we always do and be responsible for our actions, while meeting the agreed upon expectations of our stakeholders.

The objective of this review is to benchmark the status of our accounting and financial management practices and to identify the changes required to fill the gaps needed to provide a solid foundation for both management and oversight. Ultimately, our Board is accountable for the Association as well as responsible for the oversight of the charity and is accountable to all stakeholders. Therefore, it is so important for us to fully understand and benchmark our current state and to implement accountability practices, as required, and to be as transparent as possible.

Financial accountability is about the proper management of funds to ensure that the funds are used mainly in activities that further the objectives of the Association and in accordance with the agreement with funders and donors. This includes having check and balance controls in the receipt and disbursement of funds, keeping records with proper documentation, and following generally accepted accounting standards.

Accounting and Financial Management play a crucial role in our organization, as both are critical for the effective utilization and management of our resources.

Project Objectives:

1. Complete a current state accounting & financial management assessment and identify the future state change requirements.
2. Assess our compliance with relevant accounting and auditing standards and how we can eliminate or minimize our risk exposure through better use of internal controls.
3. Complete a final report including the recommended change requirements and implementation plan.

Scope of Work:

Includes:

1. Complete a current state assessment of our current accounting and financial management system, including the following functions, and define and document the problems, issues and risks as well as the opportunities for improvement:
 1. the revenue cycle & cash management including deferred revenue
 2. funding contract management & the claims process
 3. the goods & services process including inventory management
 4. project accounting & the monthly reporting process
 5. the work plan & budget process



6. internal controls & workflow management
2. Define and document our future state requirements.
3. Determine if our current accounting system, Sage 50 QA, can meet our future state requirements, and if not, review the alternatives within the Sage family of products and set the direction for the future.
4. Produce a final report including recommendations and an implementation plan.

Not Included:

1. Incremental Computer Software or Hardware costs – If the analysis results in recommendations for additional or replacement management software or computer hardware, those costs will be the responsibility of ECTA.
2. Incremental bank fees or other costs – If the analysis results in recommendations for upgraded banking capabilities, any additional fees will be the responsibility of the ECTA.

Major Activities:

The following list of major activities is included for your consideration, and where appropriate, proponents can provide alternative approaches, methods or procedures.

1. Initiate Project
2. Complete the current state Accounting & Financial Management Assessment
3. Define and document Future State Change Requirements
4. Determine if the current accounting system can meet the future state requirements
5. Define and document a plan to implement the change requirements
6. Produce Final Report including the Review & Approval Process:
7. Manage & Control Project:
8. Close Project: Final review and project sign-off

Review & finalize the following with the project team during the project initiation phase: project plan and budget, including resourcing, scope, scheduling, execution, communication plan, as well as management & control. Finalize and sign the contract.

Project Deliverables:

1. Current State Assessment Report
2. Future State Requirements Report
3. Accounting System Assessment Report
4. Change Requirements Implementation Plan
5. Final Report

Benefits:

1. Accounting & Financial Clarity – A clear and concise view of how the organization is performing.
2. Performance Opportunity Identification – Financial analysis and key performance indicators will shed light on areas of the organization that are not performing as expected, and provide insight into the causes and the need for improvement.



3. Safeguarding of Assets – Ensuring a solid framework of internal controls over revenue and receipts, along with an appropriately rigorous approval process for disbursements will ensure funds are effectively deployed in the organization.

Project Work Plan, Cost & Schedule:

Proposals must include and clearly identify the following:

1. The methodology to be used in addressing the project objectives and deliverables
2. Project team identification: include individuals' expertise, qualifications, & relevant experience
3. Provide the following information for each activity: the name, on the consulting team that is assigned to each task, and how many hours/days each resource is assigned
4. Identify whether project team members are employees of the consultant or a subcontractor, as well as identify the source of the project team members education and certification
5. Proposed project plan and budget by major activity, matching deliverables to project methodology, approaches, processes, and procedures, including timelines for reporting milestones and progress
6. Cost estimates, including explanation/justification of any hourly rates, variable rates, and assumptions
7. A proposed schedule of project activities in chronological order which shows each activity and the duration of the same; as well as supporting Gantt and Pert charts
8. Demonstrate an understanding of the project's potential challenges, limitations, issues, and risks and how they should be mitigated.

Where appropriate, proponents can provide alternative approaches, methods or procedures with associated effects on tasks, timelines and costs.

Project Timeline:

The successful proponent will meet with the ECT Project Team in the first week after the contract is awarded to review the objectives, finalize the project work plan and set the scheduled dates for the project. The work plan schedule must include time for milestone and deliverable reviews and sign-off. The project reporting and meeting schedule will be finalized on project startup and adjusted to include the deliverable schedule once the project work plan and schedule are approved by the ECT Project Team. In addition, end-of-project meetings with the ECTA and stakeholders will be required to review the final reports.

Firm Pricing:

Prices quoted shall include Harmonized Sales Tax (HST identified separately), must be in Canadian currency and shall be firm until the contract has expired. It is the intent that these prices remain fixed until completion and that no contract containing price escalations will be accepted prior to the anticipated completion date set forth in this RFP.

Please Note:

- The ECTA reserves the right to cancel this project
- The lowest cost proposal or any consultant's proposal will not necessarily be accepted
- The contract assignment will be governed by available funding, which has been acquired for all project phases.



The work plan must clearly demonstrate:

1. Relevant experience & qualifications
2. Understanding of the project objectives, requirements, & information needs
3. Understanding of project scope, complexity, potential challenges, limitations, issues, & risks
4. Appropriateness of the proposed methodology for the project
5. Understanding of the methodology challenges, issues, and limitations

Proposal Evaluation:

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

<input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Experience and Qualifications	20%
<input type="checkbox"/> Methodology and Work Plan	30%
<input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge and Understanding of Project Scope and Objectives	25%
<input type="checkbox"/> Estimated Project Costs Detailed by Requirement and/or Phase	25%

The RFP process is subject to the following schedule:

1. RFP Release: December 16th, 2022
2. RFP Information requests concerning the project may be directed in writing by e-mail on or before 4:00 pm NST, Friday, January 6th, 2023 to julia.penney@eastcoasttrail.com.
3. RFP Deadline: Proposals must be delivered by 4:00 pm NST, Friday, January 13th, 2023.
4. Notification of vendor selection: the week ending Friday, January 27th, 2023

Proposal Submission Information:

Proponents should submit:

1. Three bound paper copies of the proposal
2. One electronic copy of the proposal in .pdf format, sent via email to julia.penney@eastcoasttrail.com, or, include with paper copies on USB flash drive.

Proposal packages shall be addressed and delivered to the ECTA as follows:

Courier/Drop off:
Project 202203
East Coast Trail Association
50 Pippy Place, Suite 9
St. John's, NL A1B 4R4

Mail:
Project 202203
East Coast Trail Association
PO Box 8034
St. John's, NL A1B 3M7

Email:
Subject line: RFP Submission - Project 202203



julia.penney@eastcoasttrail.com

Please Note:

- Proponents assume the entire cost of proposal preparation and submission.
- Late, incomplete or partial proposals, including those sent by e-mail, will not, without exception or under any circumstances, be accepted.

General Conditions:

1. Verbal information or representations shall not be binding upon the ECTA. Only written changes, alterations, modifications or clarifications are binding. In order to be valid all such changes, alterations, modifications or clarifications shall be issued in the form of addenda and all such addenda shall become a part of this RFP.
2. The proposal of the successful Proponent will form part of any Resultant Contract Agreement by attachment and incorporation by reference. Claims made in the proposal will constitute contractual commitments. Any provision in the proposal may be included in the Resultant Contract as a direct provision thereof. The successful Proponent, as a condition of submitting its proposal, accepts that a customized contract will be negotiated. The ECTA will not be responsible for any legal costs associated with contract development.
3. Any Resultant Contract from this RFP shall be governed by the laws of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and shall be issued in the name of the successful Proponent exactly as that successful Proponent's personal or corporate name is stated in the RFP response document. Funds payable for materials delivered pursuant to any Resultant Contract shall be paid only to the Proponent who is so listed as party to any Resultant Contract. Only legal registered names of Proponents are acceptable.
4. All documents and other records in the custody of or under the control of some or all of the ECTA or its representatives in connection with this RFP will be considered confidential, and financial and other proprietary information will not be disclosed.
5. The Proposal shall contain the signature, name and title of the person authorized to sign on behalf of the Proponent in response to this RFP.
6. The responsibility rests with the Proponent to submit a complete proposal, with proper and adequate detail to substantiate all aspects of its proposal. Incomplete proposals shall be deemed to be non-compliant. A complete proposal shall include but not be limited to:
 - a. **LEGAL NAME AND STATUS:** The proposal shall state the correct legal name and legal status of the proposing entity and the correct mailing address.
 - b. **PROPONENT CONTACT:** The name, title, telephone and fax numbers, E-mail address and civic address of a representative who may be contacted for clarification or other matters relating to the proposal shall be provided.
 - c. **CONTENT:** The proposal shall be clear, concise, and shall include sufficient detail for effective evaluation and for substantiating the validity of stated claims. The proposal shall not simply rephrase or restate the requirements, but rather shall provide convincing rationale to address how the Proponent intends to meet these requirements.
7. The Proponent shall assume that the evaluation team has no prior knowledge of its facilities and experience, and will base its evaluation on the information presented in the proposal. Elaborate brochures or documentation, bindings, detailed artwork, or other embellishments are unnecessary and are not desired.



8. The successful Proponent must be in good standing with, and may be required to provide a letter from the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission (WHSCC), or its equivalent in the jurisdiction in which the Proponent organization is located, prior to payments.
9. If the successful Proponent is an organization or corporation, it must be licensed to conduct business in its own jurisdiction & may be required to produce a certificate of good standing.
10. All terms and conditions will apply to all subcontractors and the Proponent will be responsible for subcontractors' compliance. The Proponent will be responsible for all work done by the subcontractors. The Proponent will be responsible for all damages and will complete any work unfinished by the subcontractors.

Resulting Contract:

1. The resulting contract will contain such reasonable terms as the ECTA may require. The award of contract will be made based upon the results of the proposals evaluation. The ECTA will notify the successful consultant in writing. Those who are not successful will receive written notification as soon as possible after the award of contract. The ECTA reserves the right not to explain in detail why unsuccessful consultants were not selected.
2. If the successful consultant wishes to accept the contract and concludes final negotiations with the ECTA, the contract will commence as soon as possible after contract award.
3. The consultant will report to the ECT Project Team. All project administration on the client side, including the payment of fees, will be the responsibility of this team.
4. All data, specifications, concept plans, designs, rationales, presentation materials, technical reports and related information produced by the consultants in completing this work shall be the property of the ECTA. The consultant shall not publish, release or in any way use this information, in whole or in part.