



Request for Proposals

Supporting the Internationalization of Atlantic Canada's Expertise in Environmental Characterization and Monitoring

RFP Release Date: October 14, 2021

Proposal Due Date: October 28, 2021

Objective:

The objective of this project is to identify what steps econext and its partners can take to support Atlantic Canada's expertise related to environmental characterization and monitoring – from the international business perspective – according to established cluster best practices.

Background:

In the course of its work in 2019-21, econext has identified a world-class grouping of expertise that exists in Atlantic Canada around the sensing, characterization, and monitoring of the environment.

Through the use of sonar, radar, satellites, lasers, and other technologies and processes, Atlantic Canada is home to significant research, development, and private sector activity that helps us understand our impact on the natural environment – and its impact on us and our industrial activities. This grouping of expertise is one of Atlantic Canada's most prominent clean technology competitive advantages.

International businesses development supports exist in the region that assist actors in this space at the firm or organizational level (e.g. trade missions). However, to date firms and organizations developing and providing environmental sensing, characterization, and monitoring technologies and services have not been supported deliberately at a macro level or as a collective.

The firms and organizations concentrated in Atlantic Canada focused on environmental characterization technologies and processes can be considered a 'cluster'. A business cluster can be defined a geographic concentration of interconnected businesses, suppliers, and associated institutions in a particular field. Clusters are considered to increase the productivity with which companies can compete, nationally and globally.

Since the introduction of cluster-theory, economic developers internationally have been working to support geographic or sectoral groupings of expertise – like that which exists in Atlantic Canada – and best practices in doing so have emerged over 30 years of application.

The objective of this project is to identify what steps econext and its partners can take to support Atlantic Canada's expertise related to environmental characterization and monitoring – from the international business perspective – according to established cluster best practices. Recommendations will be made that recognize the relevant supports that are already being provided to these firms and organizations by virtue of being participants in broader industry classification (e.g., cleantech, oceans, energy, etc.)

Scope of Work

The project partners are open to proponent recommendations with respect to achieving the outlined objectives, but anticipate that the work would include the following activities:

1. *Define Atlantic Canada's Environmental Sensing, Characterization, and Monitoring Cluster*
The consultant will be provided with substantial information from which a working definition can be established, including a preliminary listing of R&D and private sector actors that make up the cluster. The consultant will ground truth the list with key stakeholders.
2. *Understanding Existing Supports for Cluster*
Using the definition established in Task #1, the consultant will engage with a small list of key stakeholders (~5) to understand how cluster participants are supported in the region from an international business development perspective.
3. *Best Practices for Clusters and International Business*
The consultant will conduct secondary research to understand best practices as they relate to the support of clusters – similar to that which is the focus of this project – from the perspective of international business development.
4. *Recommendations*
Based on the findings from Task #2 and Task #3, the consultant will identify any gaps that exist in supporting the international business development of Atlantic Canada's Environmental Sensing, Characterization, and Monitoring cluster. The consultant will provide recommended next steps for econext and/or its partners to take in supporting the internationalization of this cluster.

Deliverables and Timing

Task #1: The consultant will present their findings to econext and its partners. Feedback will be acquired to inform the subsequent tasks and the project's final report.

Task #2: The consultant will present their findings to econext and its partners. Feedback will be acquired to inform the subsequent tasks and the project's final report.

Task #3 & #4: The consultant will provide a draft report which will be reviewed by econext and its partners, who will in turn provide feedback for a final report.

It is anticipated the project will commence on November 1, 2021 and conclude January 31, 2021. It is anticipated that some tasks can be pursued concurrently.

The payment schedule will be negotiated with the successful proponent.

Evaluation Criteria

Submissions will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Knowledge and experience in relation to the work: demonstrated ability to meet expectations based on completion of similar projects and/or quality of previous works

- Understanding of the scope and objectives of the project: demonstrated comprehension of/adherence to the RFP
- Proposed approach/workplan and schedule
- Knowledge of and experience working with or within Atlantic Canada's clean technology and/or oceans industries
- Price - value of work proposed versus identified costs

Proposal Submissions

The contracting organization for this RFP is econext. A single electronic document is sufficient. The proposal should be no longer than three (3) pages, and be concisely worded with clearly described objectives, methods, timelines, and outcomes. The proposal must acknowledge and fully accept the terms and conditions as laid out in this RFP.

The proposal should feature appendices, including (1) a brief description of the respondent's company and its relevant experience with similar projects, and (2) a description of the relevant work experience of the staff assigned to this project.

The budget available for this project is \$60,000, applicable taxes included. Price is just one of the criteria that will be used in the evaluation of received proposals. Submissions should include detailed budgets that align with the proposed methodology, project components, and timelines.

The electronic copy of submissions should be in DOC and/or PDF format, and sent to Kieran Hanley, econext's Executive Director, via email at kieran@econext.ca no later than **October 28, 2021**. Questions from interested applicants can be directed to the same address

Terms and Conditions

- All proposals received will be considered strictly confidential;
- The lowest cost, or any proposal, will not necessarily be accepted;
- Proposed costs must be represented in Canadian dollars;
- No payment will be made for the preparation and submission of proposals for this project;
- No fee will be made on the cost of work incurred to remedy errors or omissions for which the consultant is responsible; and
- econext reserves the right to meet with all, or any, of the applicants during the proposal evaluation stage to clarify information in the submissions and seek additional detail which may be used in the evaluation.