



Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

PROJECT TITLE: Connecting the Kluskap Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) to the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve – A biocultural land, sea, and sky approach.

PROPOSAL DUE DATE: 04 January 2022

BUDGET – Maximum \$45,000.00

CONSULTANT ELIGIBILITY: This procurement is open to consultants or individuals that satisfy the minimum qualifications stated herein and are eligible to work in Canada.

INTENT

The Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources hereafter called "UINR," is initiating this Request for Proposals (RFP) from firms or individuals interested in assisting with the development of a plan for biocultural connectivity (land, sky, sea) from the new Kluskap IPCA to the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve. This RFP includes information on:

1. Purpose and Background
2. Objectives and Scope of Work
3. Proposal Contents
4. Evaluation and Award

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Connectivity conservation is essential for managing healthy ecosystems, conserving biodiversity, adapting to climate change across all biomes and spatial scales, and ensuring cultural connection. Well-connected ecosystems support a diversity of ecological functions such as migration, hydrology, nutrient cycling, pollination, seed dispersal, food security, climate resilience and disease resistance (IUCN 2020). A strategic approach using best management practices and a Mi'kmaw lens is required to maintain and restore ecological connectivity among and between protected areas, effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), and other significant ecosystems.

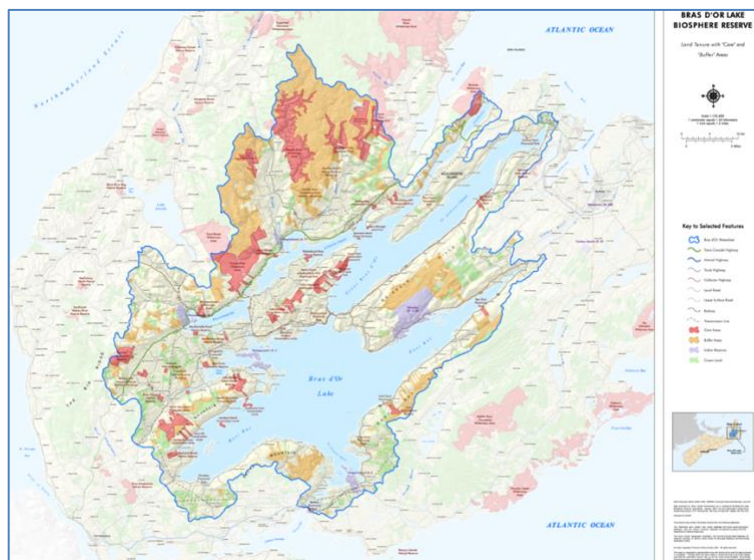
The Kluskap IPCA Area of Interest (AOI) includes a number of Mi'kmaw sacred sites based on the Kluskap legend, a provincial wilderness area, and is being considered as a national cultural landscape. It is also an area with outstanding coastal scenery and high biodiversity. The IPCA is located on the Cape Dauphin and a portion falls within the Bras

d'Or Biosphere Reserve watershed (see map 1 and 2). Threats identified for priority habitats in the Cape Breton bioregion are:

- Housing and urban area development (Threat status: Medium)
- Road fragmentation (Threat status: Medium)
- Forest harvesting practices (Threat status: Medium)
- Recreational activities (Threat status: Medium)
- Invasive non-native species (Threat status: Medium)
- Climate change and Habitat Shifting (Threat status: Very High)



Map 1. Location of Kluskap IPCA and proposed Southwest to the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve.



Map 2. Location of the Bras d'Or Lake watershed

The Kluskap IPCA

Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) are lands and waters where Indigenous governments have the primary role in protecting and conserving ecosystems through Indigenous laws, governance and knowledge systems. Culture and language are the heart and soul of an IPCA (ICE 2018). In 2019, the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs collaborated with the Province of Nova Scotia on the proposal, "*Advancing Target 1 in Nova Scotia - A Collaborative Conservation Approach*". The goal of the project is to prioritize and create a province wide network of protected areas in Nova Scotia. The project is now funded through the federal Challenge Fund. The Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR) is coordinating IPCA establishment on Cape Breton Island.

Engagement sessions and key informant interviews were held in 2020 with Unama'ki Elders and other Knowledge Holders and UINR prepared the Tan Telolt'ik Report to guide IPCA establishment. The report identified Kluskap's Cave as the priority site for protection. This site is sacred to the Mi'kmaq and is thought to be the centre of the universe. The IPCA area of interest (AOI) is grounded in the features of the Kluskap legends and is approximately 5,000 ha in size. The IPCA is unique in Canada as it uses a land / seascape approach to conservation of both culture and biodiversity.

The Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia are developing Sespit tmnej Kmitknu Conservancy as a mechanism to secure and hold private lands through purchase, donation, or easements. The Conservancy was incorporated in 2021, a Board of Directors has been established, and priority lands are being identified by Mi'kmaq organizations and communities.

Species at Risk

UINR is leading the project, "*Maliamuki'k msit Ko'kmanaq*", which means "Taking care of all our relations" funded through the Canada Nature Fund's Community-Nominated Priority Places. The project will advance conservation in the Bras d'Or Lake watershed and includes habitat important to the survival of 18 listed Canadian species at risk such as the Common Nighthawk (Pi'jkw) and Wood Turtle (Mikjikj). As with all of UINR's work, this project has a "Two-Eyed Seeing" approach, with equal value placed on scientific research and knowledge shared by Elders and local knowledge holders. These knowledges inform:

- identification of key habitats within the Bras d'Or watershed using a two-eyed seeing approach;
- development of land use guidelines;
- development of educational campaigns that are guided by community perceptions and values around species at risk;
- development of stewardship programs; and
- promotion of conservation easements to maintain and enhance special habitats.

Connectivity

Consistent with Mi'kmaw principles of interconnectedness, UINR has proposed connectivity from the Kluskap IPCA to two areas 1) the Cape Breton Highlands National Park, and 2) the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve. UINR has partnered with Parks Canada to initiate a connectivity study that will focus on the area from the National Park to Kluskap IPCA and has engaged a Dalhousie University academic and graduate student. **This RFP will focus on connectivity between Kluskap IPCA and the Bras d'Or Biosphere Reserve only.**

The concept of biocultural diversity is based on the web of life that includes both nature and culture. Indigenous worldviews have evolved over millennia and recognize their place in the natural world. Indigenous laws and values recognize the importance of connection and the need for conservation and stewardship of resources for future generations. Biocultural features are place-based and can include archaeological sites, sacred areas, cultural keystone species (e.g. moose and sweetgrass for the Mi'kmaq), local names, stories and features of occupation or use. They contribute to identity and sense of place and enhance our adaptive capacity to respond to change.

The Kluskap IPCA is located at the end of a peninsula and is dependent on connection to the rest of the island. It is important to investigate the opportunity to link it to the Bras d'Or Biosphere which is also recognized for its important culture and ecology. Preliminary discussions with the Province of Nova Scotia and the forest industry have indicated opportunities for collaborative work, however a strategic approach is required. This project would also meet the goals and objectives of a number of existing projects funded by the federal government, help Canada meet its international conservation and climate change commitments, and provide an innovative strategic approach to cultural and ecological connectivity. If successful, it could provide a model for other areas and Nations.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF WORK

This project is a desktop exercise with no fieldwork or travel required. Measurable objectives are to be completed by 31 March 2022 and include the following:

Task	Deliverable	Start
Literature Review	- Conduct a review of academic and grey literature to support the design and monitoring of connectivity based on biocultural attributes. Key words such as Indigenous, corridor, connectivity, biodiversity, species at risk, cultural keystone species, and restoration may be used. A summary of findings will be prepared to inform the other components of this project.	Jan 2022
Gather existing biocultural information	- Collect cultural information from sources such as the Beaton Institute, Nova Scotia Museum, Cape Breton Genealogical Society, Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre, and UINR.	Jan 2022

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interview Mi'kmaw Knowledge Holders familiar with the area of interest (names to be provided by UINR). - Import species data from ACCDC and iNaturalist databases. - Obtain relevant GIS layers from the Province of Nova Scotia, Port Hawkesbury Paper, and ENGOS. - Review Trans Canada Highway road kill data to identify species use and key areas for connectivity. 	
GIS Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using the information gathered, conduct a connectivity analysis to identify significant sites and habitat, priority properties for securement, restoration opportunities, and key players. - Design a strategic camera trap system for UINR Earth Keepers to deploy and use to monitor species presence. 	February 2022
Identify biocultural indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare a list of indicator species and habitat requirements for the design and long-term monitoring of connectivity. 	February 2022
Hold Progress Meeting with UINR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review findings with UINR staff – Executive Director, IPCA Program Manager, and Maliamuki'k msit Ko'kmanaq Program Manager 	February 2022
Prepare final report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare a final connectivity report that identify important areas, opportunities, barriers, relevant best management practices, biocultural indicators, priority properties for transfer or securement, next steps, and a budget for connectivity establishment. 	March 2022

EVALUATION AND RESULTS

The proposed project will result in a comprehensive analysis which will inform the establishment of a biocultural connectivity corridor (land, water, sky) between the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve and the new Kluskap IPCA. The project results will guide collaborative efforts with crown governments, Sespite tmnej Kmitknu Conservancy, academia, and ENGOS using the principles of:

- shared priorities and strategic investments;
- Indigenous leadership, engagement, and capacity building;
- strengthened evidence for decision making; and
- restored habitats and resilience for biodiversity and climate change

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Interested parties are required to submit one copy of their proposal. The proposal must arrive at UINR no later than **4 pm Atlantic time on 04 January 2022**. UINR assumes no responsibility for delays and all late proposals will be disqualified from further consideration.

Electronic proposals must be emailed as an attachment in Microsoft Word or PDF to Lisa Young, Executive Director, UINR at lisa@uinr.ca. If UINR’s email is not working on the submission date, appropriate allowances will be made. All communication between the Consultant and UINR shall be with:

Name	Lisa Young or Trish Nash
Email Addresses	lisa@uinr.ca or patricia@uinr.ca
Mailing and Physical Address for Delivery	4102 Shore Rd, Eskasoni, NS B1W 1M4
Phone Number	(902) 379-2163 or (902) 919-5229

Any other communication will be considered unofficial and non-binding with UINR.

ESTIMATED SCHEDULE OF PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES

Issue request for proposals	December 08, 2021
Proposals due	January 04, 2021
Notify “Apparent Successful Contractor”	January 07, 2022
Sign contract and begin work	January 11, 2022
Hold progress meeting with UINR staff	February 23, 2022
Submit final report and end of contract	March 31, 2022

UINR reserves the right to revise the above schedule if required.

PROPRIETARY INFORMATION/PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

Proposals submitted in response to this competitive procurement will become the property of the UINR.

REVISIONS TO THE RFP

If revisions are made to the RFP, addenda will be provided via email to firms and individuals who have made their interest aware to the UINR Executive Director. Please send your name, email address, and telephone number to the Executive Director to receive RFP addenda.

RESPONSIVENESS

All proposals will be reviewed by the Executive Director to determine compliance with administrative requirements and instructions specified in the RFP. Failure to comply with any part of the RFP may result in rejection of the proposal as non-responsive. The UINR also reserves the right to waive minor administrative irregularities.

MOST FAVOURABLE TERMS

UINR reserves the right to contact a Consultant for clarification or make an award without further discussion of the proposal submitted. Therefore, the proposal should be submitted initially using the most favourable terms the Consultant can propose. There will be no best and final offer procedure.

The Apparent Successful Contractor should be prepared to accept this RFP for incorporation into a contract. Contract negotiations may incorporate some or all of the Consultant's proposal. It is understood that the proposal will become a part of the official procurement file on this matter without obligation to the UINR.

COSTS TO PROPOSE

The UINR will not be liable for any costs incurred by the Consultant in preparation of a proposal submitted in response to this RFP, in conduct of a presentation, or any other activities related to responding to this RFP.

NO OBLIGATION TO CONTRACT

This RFP does not obligate UINR to contract for services specified herein.

REJECTION OF PROPOSALS

The UINR reserves the right at its sole discretion to reject any and all proposals received without penalty and a contract as a result of this RFP.

COMMITMENT OF FUNDS

The Executive Director of UINR or their delegate is the only individual who may legally commit the UINR to the expenditures of funds for a contract resulting from this RFP. No cost chargeable to the proposed contract may be incurred before receipt of a fully executed contract.

PROPOSAL CONTENTS

The Proposal must contain a comprehensive description of services including the following:

- A. Project Approach/Methodology – Include a complete description of the proposed approach and methodology for the project. This section should convey the Consultant's understanding of the proposed project.

- B. Work Plan - Include all project requirements and the proposed tasks, services, activities, etc. necessary to accomplish the scope of the project defined in this RFP. This section of the proposal must contain sufficient detail for the evaluation team to understand the Consultant's knowledge of the subject and skills necessary to successfully complete the project. Include any required involvement of UINR staff.
- C. Project Schedule - Include a project schedule indicating when the elements of the work will be completed. Project schedule must ensure that any deliverables requested are met.
- D. Outcomes and Performance Measurement – Describe the impacts/outcomes the Consultants propose to achieve as a result of the delivery of these services including how these outcomes would be monitored, measured and reported to UINR.
- E. Risks - The Consultant must identify potential risks that are considered significant to the success of the project. Include how the Consultant would propose to effectively monitor and manage these risks, including reporting of risks to the UINR.
- F. Deliverables – Fully describe deliverables to be submitted under the proposed contract. Deliverables must support the requirements set forth in Section 1.2, Objectives and Scope of Work.
- G. Project Management
1. Project Team Structure/Internal Controls - Identify key project team members noting the project lead and any partners or sub-consultants.
 2. Staff Qualifications/Experience - Identify responsibilities and qualifications of each of the team members. Brief (maximum 2 pages each) CVs may be included in an appendix. The consultant must commit that staff identified in its proposal will actually perform the assigned work. Any substitutions must be pre-approved by UINR.
- H. Experience of the Consultant
1. Indicate the experience the Consultant and any subcontractors have in the following areas:
 - IPCAs and management planning for important cultural, ecological, and socio-economic areas.
 - Understanding First Nation communities' roles in IPCA development in Canada.
 - Knowledge of Indigenous Guardian programs and the important role they play.
 - Conducting key informant interview with Indigenous Elders and communities.
 - Workshop facilitation, capacity/needs assessment, and writing reports.

- Indicate other relevant experience that indicates the qualifications of the Consultant, and any subcontractors, for the performance of the potential contract.
- Include a list of contracts the Consultant has had during the last five years that relate to the Consultant's ability to perform the services needed under this RFP. List contract period of performance, contact persons, telephone numbers, and fax numbers/e-mail addresses.

I. References

Provide names, addresses, telephone numbers, fax numbers and email addresses of three (3) business references for the Consultant and three (3) business references for the lead staff person for whom work has been accomplished and briefly describe the type of service provided. Do not include current UINR staff as references. By submitting a proposal in response to this Work Request, the vendor and team members grant permission to UINR to contact these references and others, who from UINR's perspective, may have pertinent information. UINR may or may not, at UINR's discretion, contact references. The UINR may evaluate references at the UINR's discretion.

J. Identification of Costs

Identify all costs in Canadian dollars including all expenses to be charged to accomplish the objectives of the contract. A fully detailed budget outlining deliverables with staff costs, travel costs, and other costs is required as outlined in the RFP.

EVALUATION AND CONTRACT AWARD

Proposals will be evaluated strictly in accordance with the requirements stated in the RFP and any additional addenda. Proposals will be reviewed, evaluated, and ranked by a team designated by the UINR.

UINR will notify the Apparently Successful Contractor of their selection in writing following the evaluation process. Individuals or firms not selected for further negotiation or award will be notified separately by email or facsimile.