



Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR)

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

PROJECT TITLE: Helping Nature Help Us – A Strategic Approach to Nature-based Climate Solutions (NCS) in Unama'ki

PROPOSAL DUE DATE: 30 June 2022

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

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

People around the world see the urgent need to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss. Climate change increases difficulties already faced by Indigenous Peoples, with impacts to their culture, food security, and community infrastructure. Over the past 10 years there has been growing interest in the use of nature-based climate solutions to reduce greenhouse gasses. According to a Nature United report (2021), natural climate solutions could reduce Canada's greenhouse gasses by as much as 78Mt a year before 2030. Methods like protection, restoration, and improved land management not only benefit nature but also humans. How nature-based interventions are developed, on whose traditional territories, and with what outcomes can affect the use and success of nature-based climate solutions (NCS) and the rights of Indigenous Peoples. To date, many Indigenous Nations lack the technical knowledge and financial capacity to develop climate change solutions in their territories (Townsend et al. 2020).

Effective NCS led by Indigenous Nations and organizations will be key to addressing climate justice in Canada.

UINR

UINR represents the five Mi'kmaw communities in Unama'ki or what is now known by settlers as Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. UINR has been actively involved in environmental management since 1999. UINR's strengths are the ability to weave scientific research with Mi'kmaw knowledge and engage Elders, Knowledge Holders and youth to ensure Mi'kmaw values and knowledge are protected and shared. UINR has an extensive established network of partners.

The Mi'kmaw guiding principles of Netukulimk and Etuapmumk are the foundation of UINR's work. Program examples include the Kluskap's Cave Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area

(IPCA), The Kluskap BioCultural Connectivity Project, Mi'kmaw Forestry Initiative, Aquatic Research and Stewardship, Earth Keepers Network, Outreach and Education, and Recovery of Culturally Significant and At Risk Species.

Kluskap's Cave IPCA

Kluskap's Cave is a sacred area grounded in Mi'kmaw legend. The IPCA is approximately 5,000 ha in size and unique in Canada using both a land and seascape approach to conservation. IPCAs are lands and waters where Indigenous governments have the primary role in protecting and conserving ecosystems through Indigenous laws, governance and knowledge systems (ICE 2018). In 2019, the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw 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 4 year project is to prioritize and create a province wide network of protected areas in Nova Scotia. UINR is coordinating IPCA establishment in Unama'ki.

Connectivity

The Kluskap's Cave IPCA is located at the end of a peninsula and is dependent on connection to the rest of the island. Consistent with the Mi'kmaw guiding principle 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 is using the concept of biocultural diversity based on Mi'kmaw archaeological sites, sacred areas, cultural keystone species (e.g. caribou and sweetgrass), local names, stories and features of occupation or use. These sites contribute to identity and sense of place, and enhance adaptive capacity to respond to change.

Sespite t'mnej Kmitknu Conservancy

The Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs is in the process of developing Sespite' tmnej Kmitknu Conservancy as a mechanism to secure and hold private lands through purchase, donation, or easement. The Conservancy, incorporated in 2021, has a Mi'kmaw Board of Directors that oversees the securement of priority IPCA lands identified by Mi'kmaw organizations and communities.

Maliamuki'k msit Ko'kmanaq

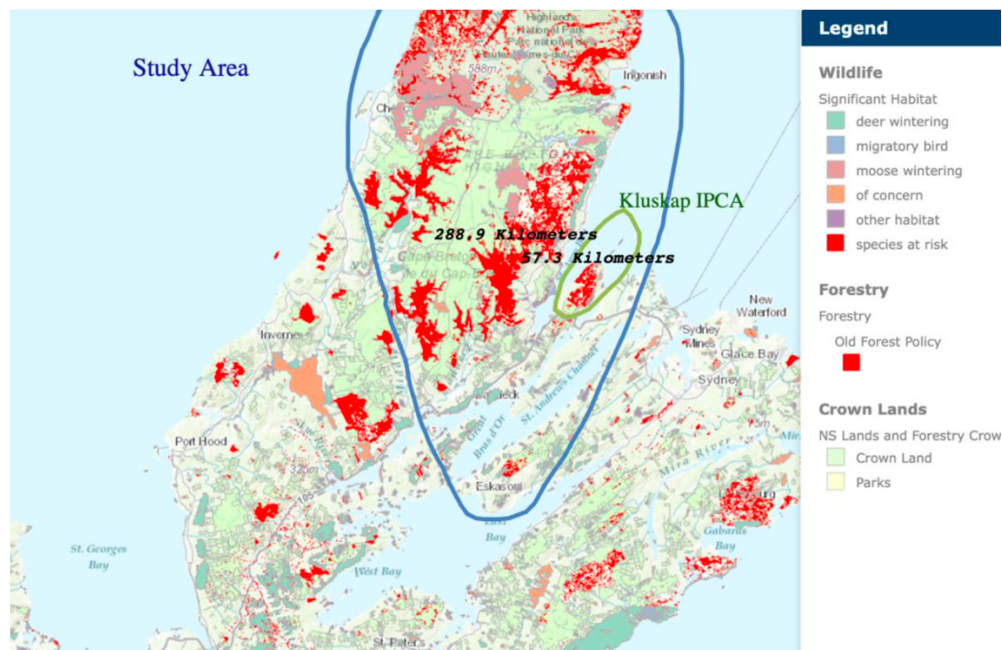
UINR is leading the project "Taking care of all our relations" funded through Canada's Community-Nominated Priority Places. The project is based in the Bras d'Or Lake watershed which is important to the survival of Mi'kmaq and 18 listed species at risk such as the Common Nighthawk (Pi'jkw) and Wood Turtle (Mikjikj). Scientific research and knowledge shared by Elders and local Knowledge Holders will identify key habitats, recommend stewardship activities, and community values to recover species at risk.

INTENT AND NEED

An assessment completed as part of the Cape Breton Conservation Strategy identified threats from climate change and habitat shifting to be very high (ECCC 2017). Climate change is already causing severe erosion, flooding, and damage to properties and infrastructure in Cape Breton (<https://www.saltwire.com/cape-breton/more/cape-breton-climate-change-environment-and-natural-resources-issues-100651035/>) which affects coastal communities, culture, and economy (EAC 2011).

UINR has received a number of requests to participate in and / or lead climate change projects. Most have focused on specific interests such as afforestation and are not consistent with Mi'kmaw principles of Etuapmunk, Wetaqnewssu'ti'k msit kistaqn, or Netukulimk. Before any nature-based climate solutions are considered, a comprehensive strategic plan based on Mi'kmaw worldview and values and specific to the Unama'ki landscape will need to be completed. This will ensure long-lasting benefits to biodiversity, climate resiliency, and Indigenous rights; and efficient and effective use of future funding opportunities. Holistic and culturally appropriate NCS such as restoration, land securement, and protection will be identified and aligned with the existing programs of UINR, a new Mi'kmaw-led land trust being developed, and ongoing collaborative initiatives with crown governments and ENGOs. The hope is that the plan will increase capacity in Unama'ki communities, lead to the implementation of NCS projects, and the creation of a number of new jobs for Mi'kmaq.

The NCS strategic plan will be developed for an area in north central Unama'ki (see map below). The area is approximately 500,000 ha in size and supports significant biocultural diversity. Within the area are Mi'kmaw spiritual and archaeological sites, 2 proposed IPCAs, Mi'kmaw Forestry Initiative sites, habitat that supports cultural and designated at risk species, old growth forests, salmonid streams, coastal / marine habitats, wetlands, and two proposed connectivity corridors. A number of designated sites exist including an international bird area (IBA), federally designated marine areas of importance, a national park, provincial protected areas, and a UNESCO biosphere reserve.



Map of Unama'ki (Cape Breton Island) with the study area (545,000 ha) indicated in blue, and the Kluskap IPCA (5,000 ha) in green.

Priority areas and best management practices to store carbon or remove carbon from the atmosphere will be identified. The final strategic plan will identify interventions and expected benefits, estimated costs, training and skills required, and a long-term monitoring plan. Along with a map, infographics and presentations will be developed to share information with Mi'kmaw communities and organizations, crown governments, and ENGOs. The project results will inform existing UINR programs and provide a model for other Indigenous Nations in Canada. It will also help Canada meet its international UNDRIP, biodiversity, and climate change commitments.

The top three outcomes for this project:

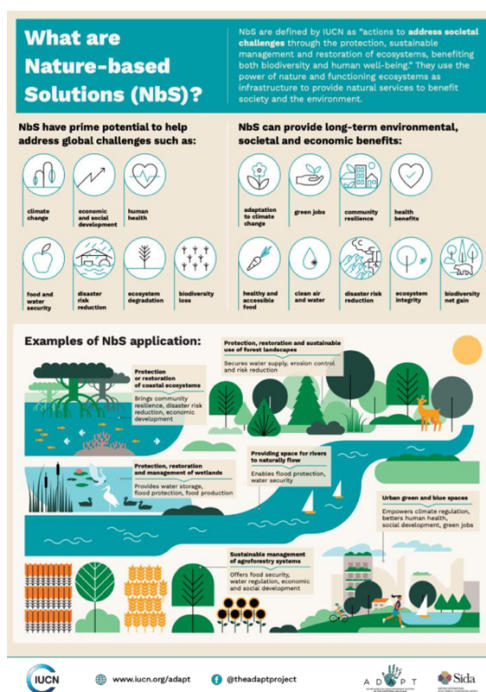
- Gather information on nature-based climate solutions relevant to First Nations and Unama'ki;
- Develop a nature-based climate solutions strategic plan using Netukulimk and Etuapmunk outlining priority sites; and
- Enhance climate solutions expertise in UINR and Unama'ki Mi'kmaw communities by identifying and recommending needed skills and training.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF WORK

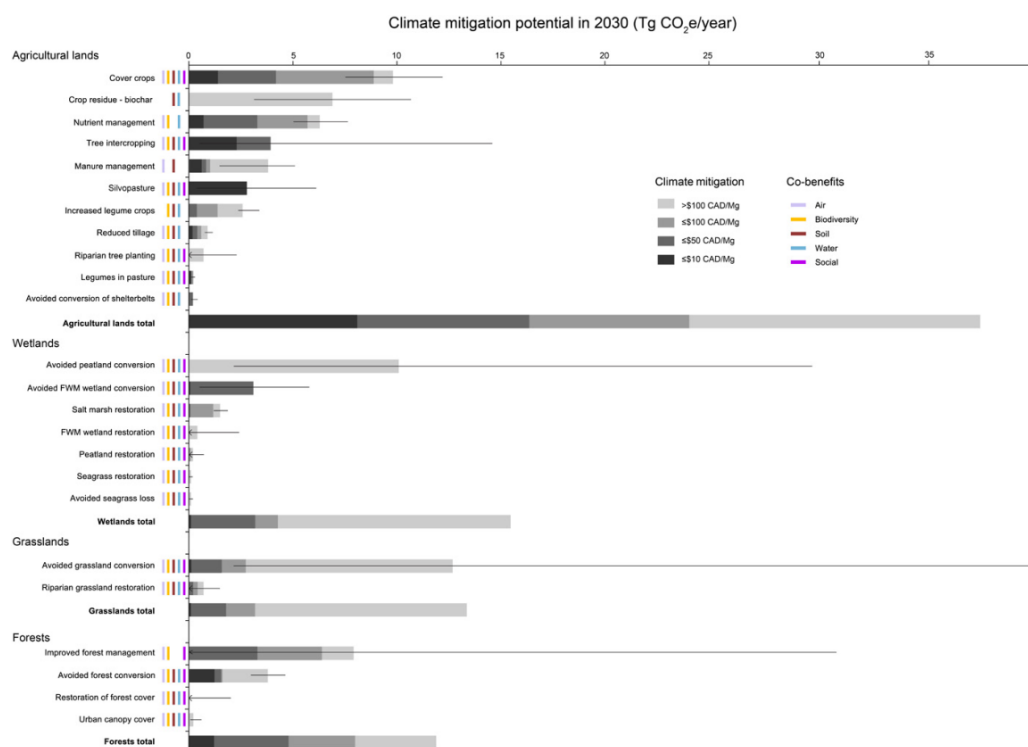
Objectives for the project:

1. Conduct a search of relevant academic and grey literature using key words such as: Cape Breton climate change, Indigenous-led climate action, climate justice, nature-based solutions, biocultural indicators, carbon sequestration, carbon offsets and assessment, long-term monitoring of climate change, and decolonization of climate actions.
2. Conduct a total of 10 key informant interviews with Unama'ki Elders, other Knowledge holders, Mi'kmaw organization representatives, crown government officials, ENGO staff, and academics to identify key issues, concerns, and approaches for a nature-smart climate solutions strategic plan in Unama'ki;
3. From the results of the literature search and interviews, develop a nature-based climate solutions strategic plan for the study area in Unama'ki (terrestrial and marine ecosystems);
4. Identify suitable biocultural indicators for long-term monitoring of the plan;
5. Identify training opportunities to develop climate change and carbon sequestration expertise in Mi'kmaw communities and organizations; and
6. Prepare a presentation and infographics to share strategic plan results with UINR staff and Board of Directors (5 Mi'kmaw Chiefs in Unama'ki), Mi'kmaw communities, crown governments, environmental NGOs, and academic institutions in Nova Scotia and Canada.

Example of Infographic for Nature-base solutions (IUCN 2020):



Example of habitats and climate mitigation potential (Nature United 2021):



DELIVERABLES AND TIMING

This project is largely a desktop exercise with no fieldwork or travel required. Measurable deliverables are to be completed by 31 March 2023 and include the following:

Task	Deliverable	Start
Background research and literature review	Conduct review of academic and grey literature (western science and Indigenous knowledges) using key words. Identify appropriate approaches, best management practices, and biocultural diversity indicators.	12 July 2022
Key Informant Interviews	Work with UINR to identify 5 Mi'kmaq Elders / Indigenous Knowledge holders and 5 specialists (government and ENGO) to interview.	18 July 2022
GIS Analysis	Using the information gathered, conduct an analysis to identify significant sites and habitat, priority properties for securement, restoration opportunities, and key players.	15 Aug 2022

Progress Meeting with UINR	Report on findings from the literature review, background research and GIS analysis, and key informant interviews.	03 Oct 2022
Prepare draft strategic plan for Unama'ki nature-smart climate solutions	Identify and prioritize areas for nature-smart climate solutions, estimate mitigation potential, prepare maps and infographics, identify potential collaborations in Atlantic Canada, identify key property PIDS for securement, and recommend biocultural indicators for assessment and long-term monitoring.	25 Nov 2022
Review of draft plan by UINR	UINR staff to review draft plan and provide feedback and comments.	11 January 2022
Finalize Plan and present / share findings	Incorporate revisions and provide final plan to UINR. Present results to UINR, Kwiilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn, Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership, and Crown Governments.	03 Feb 2021

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 **30 June 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 as a 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 the Executive Director as follows:

Name	Lisa Young
Email Address	lisa@uinr.ca
Mailing Address	4102 Shore Rd, Eskasoni, NS BIW IM4
Phone Number	(902) 379-2163

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

ESTIMATED SCHEDULE OF PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES

Issue request for proposals	06 June 2022
Proposals due	30 June 2022
Notify “Apparent Successful Contractor”	08 July 2022
Sign contract and begin work	12 July 2022
Hold progress meeting with UINR staff	03 Oct 2022
Submit final report and end of contract	31 March 2023

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 and UINR staff 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. 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 favorable 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 UINR.

COSTS TO PROPOSE

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 delegate is the only individual who may legally commit 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 – a complete description of the proposed approach and methodology for the project. The 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 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 proposed 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 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 subconsultants.
 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:
 - Mi'kmaw guiding principles and values, Indigenous-led carbon or NCS projects, terrestrial and blue carbon storage, IPCAs, connectivity, Guardian and Earth Keeper programs.
 - Understanding First Nation rights in Canada, UNDRIP, and TRC.
 - Conducting key informant interviews with Indigenous Elders and community members.
 - Preparing strategic plans, infographics, and presentations.
 - Other relevant experience that indicates the qualifications for the performance of the potential contract.
 - 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.
- 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. 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 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.