



Regional District of Mount Waddington

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Regional District of Mount Waddington

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Seaweed Industry Development Plan and Site-Specific Business Plan

1. Introduction

The Regional District of Mount Waddington (RDMW) proposes to engage the services of a consulting firm to compile:

- (a) A Seaweed Industry Development Plan for the Regional District (RD) area that may also serve as a template for the province and for other seaweed cultivation business developers, and
- (b) A site-specific business plan for a seaweed pilot project located in a First Nation Traditional Territory in the RDMW.

The objective of this request for proposal is to provide the Regional District with qualified proponents capable of carrying out the work herein defined. The subsequent proponent submissions will form the basis for evaluation and selection. Consulting firms may submit proposals for one or both assignments.

2. Submission Details

An electronic copy of the proposal marked Seaweed Industry Development Plan, addressed to Pat English, Manager of Economic Development, penglish@rdmw.bc.ca must be received by 4:30 p.m., Saturday Sept 30, 2023. Submissions received after this time will be returned to the sender.

Proposals shall be irrevocable until the Regional District awards a contract or cancels this Request for Proposals, whichever first occurs.

All proposals will remain confidential, subject to the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act.

3. Enquiries

Clarification of project details and terms and conditions of the proposal process shall be directed to:

Pat English, Manager of Economic Development
Regional District of Mount Waddington
Phone 250-956-3301
E-mail penglish@rdmw.bc.ca

The Regional District, its agents and employees shall not be responsible for any information given by way of verbal communication.

4. Project Description

Seaweed cultivation is an emerging sector that offers significant potential for new investment and employment for coastal communities. A recent report from the Pacific Seaweed Industry Association (PSIA) stated that “The rural development opportunity of seaweed can’t be underestimated to support economic growth in the province. With growing concerns about the environment, food security and climate change, seaweed could play a major role in various sustainability plans in B.C. As an integral player in Canada’s Blue Economy, the Province has an opportunity to lead in this emerging sector. With an already established aquaculture industry, existing skill sets (e.g., commercial fishing), and infrastructure that can be leveraged to accelerate employment, the seaweed industry in B.C. is positioned for growth.”

The focus discussion session concerning seaweed industry development held on April 6, 2023, as part of the Regional District of Mount Waddington’s North Island Economic Forum attracted representatives from industry, provincial government, academic researchers and local politicians and entrepreneurs. The high level of interest from all the stakeholders confirms the potential economic benefits that could follow introduction of the industry in our region. The proposed seaweed industry development plan and the site-specific business plan will support the development of the sector by providing a template and information source for business development. This two-pronged approach will help determine if the application of the Industry Development Plan is a cost-effective approach to fostering business development by local entrepreneurs.

We have discussed the development of a seaweed cultivation industry with several economic development leaders from local First Nations. At this time however, we have not selected a First Nation to partner this initiative. The preferred consultant will need to recommend criteria and a methodology for selecting a First Nation partner.

5. Consultant Deliverables

Seaweed Industry Development Plan (SIDP)

This deliverable needs to include, at a minimum, the following elements:

1. A review of existing seaweed industry planning documents available from various sources, e.g. Marine Plan Partnership (MaPP), North Island College (NIC), Pacific Seaweed Industry Association (PSIA), federal and provincial agencies including Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Ministry of Forests, etc., as well as broader industry associations such as Aboriginal Aquaculture Association and Canadian Aquaculture Association.
2. A TOWS (Threats, Opportunities, Weakness, Strengths) assessment of the market and production strengths and weaknesses of the several seaweed species suitable for cultivation on the BC coast, including but not limited to demand for pre-processed product, availability of seed, ease of cultivation and

harvesting, product life cycle, access to processing facilities, etc., and identify any potential locational advantages for species in the RD.

3. A checklist of site criteria that should be considered for each potential product with locational advantage in the RD. The checklist should provide generalized criteria and define the scope and extent of a detailed site analysis that should be undertaken. Identify general areas of potential sites in RDMW including a large-scale map of the coastal area of the region identifying the potential areas based on the site criteria developed.
4. Examine and document the current process to obtain tenure for seaweed cultivation and identify an optimal tenure for a startup enterprise. Provide a check list of agency approvals required and a conceptual timeline for the separate authorization in the tenure process. Identify financial costs associated with the tenuring and licensing process including both application fees and ongoing payments.
5. Identify Provincial and Federal regulatory requirements and/or permitting requirements (FOR, CFIA, AF Seafood Industry Licensing, DFO, product labeling, export controls, etc.) and strategies to address each.
6. Identify capital and human resources needed for industry development including working capital and administrative infrastructure. Assess options for organizational structure, recruitment strategy and funding opportunities (grants and loans) for new entrants into the industry. Identify capital requirements and sources of capital and operating grants and contributions. Discuss pros and cons of various financing strategies, including debt, equity, co-ops, joint ventures, etc. Identify infrastructure requirements for the several species identified as suitable for cultivation (transportation, processing, etc.) and associated costs and assess the availability in the North Island region.
7. Delineate operating requirements for production, harvesting, processing and distribution including capital equipment and strategies to address these requirements (partnerships, joint ventures, ownership, etc.)
8. Identify and discuss marketing issues and strategies, including branding, market geographic distribution, supply chain issues, co-ops, joint ventures, contract suppliers, etc.
9. Provide a communications/consultation plan for the Steering Committee, user groups and First Nations that identifies a schedule of meetings and workshops.
10. Recommend policy positions, next steps, and/or additional research for the RDMW that will promote implementation of the SIDP.

Subject to final confirmation, an initial draft plan should be completed by March 1, 2024 and a final plan and all supporting documentation will be presented to the SIDP Steering Committee by March 31, 2024.

Business Plan (BP)

The proposal from the consulting team for the First Nation (FN) Seaweed Business Plan (BP) will apply the criteria and framework developed in the SIDP for a detailed business analysis of potential sites in the FN traditional territory to address, at a minimum, the following elements:

1. Recommend criteria and methodology for selecting a First Nation partner for the focused BP. Work with the RDMW to conclude a partnership agreement prior to proceeding with the workplan below. The First Nation partner will be invited to join the project steering committee.
2. Conduct a detailed analysis of the preferred sites identified in the SIDP in the FN traditional territory to identify high potential locations and recommend a phased development plan.
3. Recommend a preferred seaweed species cultivation strategy for the FN pilot based on the TOWS assessment in the SIDP. This recommendation may include a phased introduction of various species.
4. Document and assess any tenure and regulatory issues associated with the high potential sites identified as preferred locations.
5. Based on the detailed site analysis of the pilot's high potential sites, develop a site-specific regulatory and tenure plan including a GANTT chart with resource requirements, timelines and milestones.
6. Apply the infrastructure requirements identified in the SIDP to the proposed FN pilot, noting and quantifying any factors unique to the First Nation.
7. Apply the operating requirements for the pilot and recommend a preferred operating structure with appropriate cost estimates.
8. Recommend a preferred marketing strategy for the First Nation pilot and identify further market development initiatives.
9. Recommend a capital and operating financing strategy for the First Nation pilot and identify funding sources.
10. Provide 5-year proforma financial projections (income, balance sheet & cash flow) that document the base case of the recommended business strategy.
11. Identify potential risks implementing the plan and suggested mitigation measures.

Subject to final confirmation, an initial draft First Nation BP should be completed by April 30, 2024 and a final plan and all supporting documentation will be presented to the SIDP Steering Committee by May 31, 2024.

6. Proposal Submissions

Proponents shall provide in their submissions a corporate profile of their firm and other members of the consulting team outlining their history, sector experience and target market.

Identify the staff to be assigned to this project and their relevant experience and qualifications to this project. Consultants are encouraged to include staff with local knowledge as part of their team and may want to incorporate a role for the First Nation partner in the community consultation process.

Provide a priced methodology complete with a time allotment for each task in the approach you propose to employ to carry out the work, this shall form the basis for payments to the successful proponent. Supplement this with a schedule of fees for staff to be assigned to the project.

Show what co-ordination and meetings the Regional District will be required to provide and provide a timeline for the key milestones of the study.

7. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals shall be evaluated by the project steering committee to determine the best value offered to the Regional District based on the following criteria:

- Experience and capacity of the lead consultant
- methodology of work program proposed.
- experience and qualifications of those staff to be assigned to the project.
- cost of proposal
- references

8. Working Agreement

Negotiation

If the Regional District selects a Preferred Proponent, they will enter into negotiations with the Preferred Proponent in an attempt to reach an agreement necessary to implement the services, as generally described in this RFP. If the Regional District considers that it is unlikely to reach an agreement with the Preferred Proponent despite having negotiated with the Preferred Proponent for at least seven (7) days after selection of the Preferred Proponent, the Regional District is entitled to cease negotiations with the Preferred Proponent and to begin negotiations with another Proponent.

Proponents may include their standard terms of engagement in the service agreement.

9. Miscellaneous

The Regional District is entitled to cancel this RFP at any time by addendum issued to Proponents, without liability for any loss, damage, cost or expense incurred or suffered by any Proponent as a result of that cancellation.

This RFP is solely a request for expressions of interest and statements of qualification. It is not an invitation for tenders, an offer to contract, or an invitation for offers capable of acceptance to create a contract. No contractual or other legal obligations or relations between the Regional District and any other person can or will be created except in a written contract executed by two authorized signatories of the Regional District, under the authority of an express resolution of the Regional Board.

In considering any submissions delivered in response to this RFP, the Regional District reserves the absolute and unfettered discretion to:

- accept or reject any proposal that fails to comply with the requirements set out in this RFP for the content of proposals;
- assess proposals as they see fit, without in any way being obliged to select any proposal or Proponents;
- assess and select proposals as they see fit without being obliged in any way to select the proposal that offers the lowest price or cost;
- determine whether any proposal or proposals satisfactorily meet the selection criteria set out in this RFP;
- require clarification after the dates and times set out above from any one or more of the Proponents in respect of proposals submitted;
- communicate with, meet with or negotiate with any one or more of the Proponents respecting their proposals or any aspects of the project;
- reject any or all proposals with or without cause, whether according to the selection criteria set out above or otherwise.

Each Proponent is solely responsible for the risk and cost of preparing and submitting a proposal in response to this RFP and neither the Regional District nor their officials, employees or consultants are liable for the cost of doing so or obliged to remunerate or reimburse any Proponent for that cost.

By submitting a proposal to the Regional District, each Proponent represents and warrants to the Regional District that the information in the proposal is accurate and complete.

The RFP does not impose on the Regional District any duties of fairness or natural justice to any or all respondents with respect to this RFP or the process it creates. Unless the Regional District is expressly permitted or required by this RFP to “act reasonably” the Regional District is entitled to act in its sole, absolute and unfettered discretion.

While the Regional District has used considerable efforts to ensure an accurate representation of information in this RFP, the information contained herein is supplied solely as a guideline for Proponents. The information is not guaranteed to be accurate, nor is it necessarily comprehensive or exhaustive. The Regional District will assume no responsibility for any oral information or suggestion(s). The successful proponent will enter into a contract for services with the Regional District based upon the information contained

in this request for proposal and the successful proponents' submission and any modifications thereto.