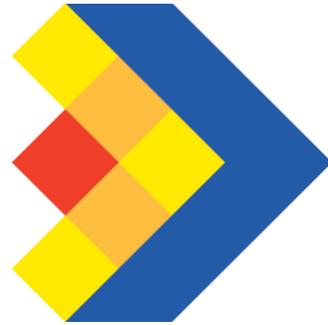


digital
nova scotia



Request for Proposal

Project Evaluation

Closing date and time: April 30th, 2019
Contact: Victoria Jeha, Project Coordinator, Digital Skills
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INTRODUCTION

As the demand for skilled digital talent continues to grow, Digital Nova Scotia (DNS) and Bluedrop Learning Networks have partnered to develop and deliver learning technologies aimed at increasing job prospects, (as defined by higher income or job placement) in the Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador ICT sectors through industry validated blended programs around job search skills, workplace productivity skills, and technical skills.

This project aims to develop blended training programs for the ICT sector in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador for two broad types of learners:

- 1) The currently employed, yet under skilled; and,
- 2) The unemployed and under-served

The programs will focus on two key components:

- a) Skills training for specific ICT roles and important complementary skills
- b) Employer engagement/job placements

BACKGROUND

With more than 600 companies working in ICT in Nova Scotia there is a continuous need for skilled talent; however, this remains a challenge for many to secure. This often results in poaching from local companies or employing skilled talent from outside of the province. Despite the clearly identified need for workers, Nova Scotia's 7.7% unemployment rate remains higher than the national average (6.8%).

The release of the 2017 IT Labour Market Report by the Information and Communications Technology Council (ICTC), shows that Nova Scotia is expected to fill 3,500 ICT positions in the next 5 years – with over 90% of those roles located in Halifax.

In Newfoundland & Labrador, the ICT sector suffers a greater proportion of workers in the older age groups compared to the total provincial workforce, with more than 34% of the total ICT talent nearing retirement. Homegrown talent will not be sufficient to meet hiring requirements in the next 5 years.

We believe that there is an opportunity for Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador to bridge the skills gap and train the unemployed and underemployed to meet the increasing demand for skilled talent, and thus decrease the unemployment rate.



PARTNERS

Digital Nova Scotia

Digital Nova Scotia (DNS) will be the lead on the initiative. With over 30 years experience as the industry association for Nova Scotia, DNS has had extensive experience managing multiple initiatives of a similar nature, including a three-year Women's Leadership Initiative funding through a federal initiative. DNS represents over 130 member companies throughout the province, collaborates with industry and community partners, and engages with government departments and educational institutions daily. The team brings in expertise in marketing and communications, stakeholder engagement, project management, government relations and IT.

Project Partner: Bluedrop Learning Networks

Digital Nova Scotia's project partner is an innovator in both the development of innovative eLearning and simulation, as well extended enterprise learning management and credential management platforms. These platforms deliver and validate skills and credentials across multi-stakeholder workforce ecosystems, while enabling workers to upgrade their skills on demand, validate on the job competencies, and keep their credentials as they transition between jobs.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the project are as follows:

- Provide blended skills training programs that will give end users the foundational technical skills that they need to start in an entry-level position in the ICT sector
- Ensure that the project specifically targets groups under-represented in the ICT sector; specifically, youth, women, and indigenous populations
- Increase employer involvement in ensuring their current and future employees have required skills

STATEMENT OF WORK AND EVALUATION DELIVERABLES

Bluedrop Learning Networks will be conducting upfront literature and resource reviews to identify best practices for a targeted and blended skills training programs. The findings from this review, combined with Bluedrop Learning Networks experience designing and developing similar skills training programs for other industries and jurisdictions will be documented and used to develop a high-level testing model for the program.

The testing model will outline:

- The hypothesis that will be tested/proved through the program
- Training design, development, implementation, and delivery practices
- A step-by step plan for rolling out and testing the program
- The parameters within which the program will be tested (i.e., target user group, targeted occupations, desired level of employer engagement and support)

EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES

To accurately and objectively evaluate the success of the program, Digital Nova Scotia and the Project Partner seek a third-party consultant that brings knowledge and expertise in program evaluation, data analysis and reporting.

The evaluator will be expected to review Bluedrop Learning Networks high-level testing model and assist with development of a formal evaluation plan. The evaluation plan will provide:

- A review of the high-level testing model and provide any recommendations for improvement, if required
- The key performance indicators that will be used to measure success
- A timeline for data collection and analysis
- The methods/channels that will be used to collect data
- An explanation of how data will be analyzed
- The specific tools (surveys, focus group questions, etc.) that will be used to collect the data

Once the evaluation plan has been approved, the evaluator will be expected to:

- Develop the tools that will be used to collect data
- Assist Bluedrop Learning Networks and DNS with data collection
- Analyze the data, and provide it to Bluedrop Learning Networks and DNS in a format that can be inputted into the formal report that will be submitted to the project Funder

TIME LINE

Action	Delivery Date
Closing date for RFP	April 30 2019
Selection of consultant	May 2019
Development of a formal evaluation plan based on literature and resources findings	July 2019
Develop the tools that will be used to collect project data .	August to October 2019
Assist Bluedrop Learning Networks and DNS with data collection	January 2020 to April 2021; at quarterly intervals
Analyze collected data and complete draft final report	September 2021

SELECTION CRITERIA

The successful candidate will be determined based upon the following:

- The extent of knowledge and experience in relation to the proposed work;
- An understanding of the scope and objectives of the proposal;
- Proposed approach, work plan, schedule, and cost*

* Determination of best value may not result in the lowest cost being accepted.

BUDGET

Payment will be made upon the consultant submitting electronic invoices with supporting documentation in a form satisfactory to DNS Payment schedule as follows:

- 33.3% upon signing of contract;
- 33.3% upon submission of the draft of the final report; and
- 33.3% holdback paid upon satisfactory completion of the project. Failure to meet any of the conditions outlined in the contract will result in adjustment to final payment/holdback;
- Payment of invoices will take place in **Canadian Dollars** within thirty (30) days of receipt.

EVALUATION FACTORS

1) Project Management

This area includes professional qualifications and experience of key personnel assigned to this project, track record, and experience in ICT training-based evaluation.

2) Project Team

This area includes professional qualifications of key project members, their experience and network of contacts within the ICT sectors.

3) Comprehension

This area includes understanding of the scope and objectives of the proposal, the approach proposed, the work plan and schedule, identification of potential problems and recommendation of possible solutions, etc.



PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

- Proposals must include a company prospectus, services offered and details on the qualifications of the firm, including previous experience in similar type work, sector knowledge and network of contacts;
- Proposals must include details on the background and experience of qualified personnel relating to the project management and project team;
- Proposals should include names of former clients and associates for whom similar or relevant work has been performed presented as references, as well as a description of the work completed.

DNS is not obliged to accept the proposal with the lowest price or any other proposal for this project. DNS reserves the right, upon 10 days written notice, to terminate these services and the work contemplated in this proposal, at any time.

Inquiries, Via Email

Attention: Victoria Jeha, Project Coordinator
Digital Nova Scotia - Email: victoria@digitalnovascotia.com

No payments will be made for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a proposal in response to this request.

Please submit one copy of your Proposal clearly marked:

DNS, RFP for the Provision of Evaluation Services

*Must be received (email) no later than **April 30th, 2019***



EVALUATION OVERVIEW/CONSULTANT SELECTION METHODOLOGY

Evaluation Procedures

Proposals will be assessed based on the criteria specified.

The clauses of this section of the RFP are categorized as “Mandatory” Requirements. Mandatory items are identified specifically with the word “MANDATORY”.

To be considered responsive, a bid must meet all the mandatory requirements of this solicitation. Bids not meeting all mandatory requirements of this solicitation will be given no further consideration.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

1. Bidder **MUST** submit a company profile with their proposal, including resumes and roles of all personnel who will be participating in the project.
2. Bidder **MUST** provide a list of similar work projects undertaken in the past three years (3) and substantiate that the firm has gained ICT evaluation experience through these projects
3. Bidder **MUST** demonstrate a minimum of three (3) years’ experience working with companies, universities or other associations in the areas of technology.