

**ATLANTIC POLICY CONGRESS OF FIRST NATIONS
CHIEFS SECRETARIAT**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)



The Defence Industry: Atlantic Indigenous Economic Opportunities

ISSUE DATE: Monday, August 17, 2026

CLOSING DATE: Friday, September 11, 2026 at 4:30 p.m.

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RFP

Atlantic Indigenous Communities and Businesses Opportunities in the Defence Industry

1. PURPOSE

This RFP's purpose is to produce research designed to analyze how Atlantic Indigenous communities and businesses can realize economic opportunities in the defence industry.

In October 2025, the Government of Canada announced a commitment to increase defence spending by 2% of the gross domestic product (GDP), which amounts to approximately \$63 billion in 2025-2026. The plan is to have this percentage up to 5% by 2035. The Canadian defence industry contributes nearly \$10 billion to the GDP and it supports over 81,000 jobs. With the new Defence Investment Agency – which will overhaul and streamline Canada's defence procurement – domestic manufacturing and supply chains will be created. This in turn will provide world-class equipment to the Canadian Armed Forces.

With this increase in spending over the next several years, a thorough study needs to be undertaken on how Atlantic First Nations can become involved in this reinvigorated commerce. This is an important opportunity for Atlantic First Nations especially in light of federal procurement openings for Indigenous businesses and Economic Reconciliation. Exploring this area would help Canada achieve its spending goals, foster and support Atlantic Indigenous Economic Reconciliation, and strengthen Canada's Department of National Defence.

The research activities will include, but are not limited to, exploring economic development opportunities for Atlantic Indigenous communities and businesses, both by literature review and interviews/focus group meetings with Atlantic Indigenous economic development leaders and stakeholders. Such research activities and engagements will have defence industry opportunities for Atlantic Indigenous communities and businesses at the forefront in the economic development context. The research project will suggest how government, post-secondary institutions, and or industry can support and facilitate Atlantic Indigenous involvement and participation via best practices, recommendations, and calls to action. The research project will also advise on steps Atlantic Indigenous communities and businesses should undertake for thorough involvement.

2. BACKGROUND

Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat

The Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat (APC) is a policy research organization that analyzes and develops culturally relevant alternatives to federal policies that impact on the Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, Passamaquoddy, and Innu communities and people.

APC Secretariat works closely with the Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, Passamaquoddy, and Innu First Nations communities. APC also works in partnership with the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Indigenous Services Canada, the Nova Scotia Office of L'nú Affairs, and other Indigenous organizations including – but not limited to – the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq, the Joint Economic Initiative, Mawiw, and the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of Prince Edward Island.

AIEDIRP is a unique research program formed in 2007 through partnerships between the APC member communities, the Inuit of Labrador, 15 Atlantic universities, and three government funders. AIEDIRP's main purpose is to work with Indigenous communities to improve the knowledge base concerning Atlantic Indigenous economic development in order to improve the lives of Indigenous people in the region.

To enhance strategic planning and research initiatives, AIEDIRP is guided by a Steering Committee and a Research Subcommittee, both providing direction and advice throughout all research processes. Both committees are comprised of Indigenous leaders, university representatives, and federal and provincial government funding partners.

In June 2022, Atlantic university partners renewed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with AIEDIRP/APCFNC. This document sets out a common framework around issues such as overhead costs, protection for graduate students, and ownership of research. By signing the MOU, the universities agree that the AIEDIRP will not be charged university overhead administrative fees for projects the universities collaborate on.

Research

As part of AIEDIRP's purpose, the Contractor is to produce research designed to analyze how Atlantic Indigenous communities and businesses can realize economic opportunities in the defence industry. The research activities will include – but are not limited to – exploring economic development opportunities for Atlantic Indigenous communities and businesses, both by literature review and interviews/focus group meetings with Atlantic

Indigenous economic development leaders and stakeholders. Such research activities and engagements will have defence industry opportunities for Atlantic Indigenous communities and businesses at the forefront in the economic development context. The research project will suggest how government, post-secondary institutions, and or industry can support and facilitate Atlantic Indigenous involvement and participation via best practices, recommendations, and calls to action. The research project will also advise on steps Atlantic Indigenous communities and businesses should undertake for thorough involvement. The researcher will be working with an advisory committee in overseeing/guiding the work.

3. SCOPE

APC requires the services of a Contractor to undertake the work as outlined above.

APC requires the services of a Contractor to engage with all appropriate Atlantic First Nations stakeholders. Furthermore, the Contractor will also undertake a literature review re economic opportunities in the defence industry with a focus on First Nations communities and businesses and their economic goals and needs. Interviewing key leaders on Atlantic First Nations economic development will form part of the research to gather their concerns. Finally, the research project will suggest best practices, recommendations, and calls to action. The researcher will be working with an advisory committee in overseeing/guiding the work. The Contractor will regularly update the APC Director of AIEDIRP on progress and potential issues.

The contract will begin as soon as possible to March 31, 2027.

4. METHODOLOGY

To engage with appropriate stakeholders, conduct a literature review, and to provide a report on the findings and re best practices, recommendations, and calls to action.

5. DELIVERABLES, SCHEDULE, AND COST

Engage with appropriate stakeholders and conduct a literature review.

Verbal or written updates or progress reports must be also completed upon request.

Estimated costs should be detailed in proposal submitted.

A final report must be produced.

A contract will be developed between APC and the successful applicant/firm detailing the terms and conditions for the work.

6. CRITERIA SELECTION COMMITTEE

APC will have a select group of experienced individuals sit on the Selection Committee.

7. OWNERSHIP OF PROGRAM MATERIALS

APC will have complete and full ownership and use of all reports and materials (works) produced by the contract under this project and shall have copyright therein. In consideration of entering into the agreement, the Facilitator must agree, in writing, to waive all moral rights (as defined by the *Canadian Copyright Act*) in any works in which copyright subsists.

8. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL PROCESS

8.1 Closing Date

Each proposal must be received no later than 4:30 p.m. (AST) on Friday, September 11, 2026. The anticipated start date of the services is Monday, October 5, 2026. Proposals may be sent by e-mail or hard copy (mail or courier). Receipt of proposal submissions will be acknowledged via e-mail upon receipt, provided a valid e-mail accompanies the proposals.

An electronic copy in Word is required.

8.2 Late Proposals

Late proposals will not be accepted and will be returned to the bidder.

8.3 Evaluation and Selection

Each proposal will be evaluated by the Selection Committee. APC will be solely responsible for the decision as to which proposal may be chosen as the successful one. APC reserves the right to accept any or all parts of a proposal.

Proposal will be evaluated according to the following criteria. Scoring is based on the following maximum values totaling 100%.

8.3.1. Work Outline and Methodology

VALUE: 20

A response to this RFP must outline the methods for accomplishing the proposed project, if methodology is contained in the proposal, address its adequacy to the project. Describe what, where, when, how and in what sequence work will be carried out during the contract term. Consider how each task may be carried out; what services or interaction is required from the First Nation/organization. Identify any distinct and substantive qualifications for undertaking the proposed contract such as concepts relevant to the requirement expectations. How strong is the research methodology? Research methods may include quantitative and /or qualitative methods and must show an ability to generate valid and reliable results.

8.3.2. Qualifications and Demonstrated Experience

VALUE: 20

Response must describe previous projects that the project team has worked on that are related in size and scope of this project. The response should provide a brief narrative of the successes encountered during the contract. Indicate which of the proposed firms and project staff were involved in each contract. First Nations/organizations reserves the right to investigate references projects, contract references and research other projects on which the respondent has worked.

8.3.3. Proposed Project Staff

VALUE: 20

Describe the work to be performed by the individuals you name to perform essential functions and detail specific qualifications and substantive experience directly related to the proposed contract. A response prepared specifically for this proposal is required. Marking resumes often include non-relevant information which may detract from evaluations of proposal. Focus on individual's specific duties and responsibilities and how the project experience is relevant to the proposed contract. Competence of the consultant/team should be demonstrated. This includes:

- Knowledge of the topic and literature in the field;
- Research qualifications;

- Demonstration of an effective historical relationship and involvement with First Nation communities; and
- Knowledge of the region.

8.3.4 Objectives and Services

VALUE: 10

The proponent's response to this RFP should demonstrate the comprehension of the objectives and services for the proposed contract. The response should not merely duplicate the deliverables set forth within this RFP. They should define any assumptions made regarding a proponent's proposal response to this RFP.

8.3.5. Quality of Proposal

VALUE: 5

Committee will rate this based on their perception of the clarity, completeness, and presentation of proposal. This criterion is not used to rate colour, graphics, or other visual techniques, but only for content.

8.3.6. Cost and timing of Study

VALUE: 10

The proponent shall include a response discussing:

- Both current and potential time commitments of proposed project staff to other clients and projects;
- Projected workload of each associated firm proposed for involvement in this project;
- Adequate support personnel, and other resources to provide services required;
- Other Resources of technical capabilities available to the proponent which will specifically benefit the project; and
- Budget and its justification.

8.3.7. Indigenous Research Capacity

VALUE: 10

One of the AIEDIRP objectives is to create Indigenous Research Capacity. The proponent should explain how they will support Indigenous Research Capacity. This would include - but is not limited to - being an Indigenous researcher, having Indigenous researchers as part of the research team, and or partnering with an Indigenous researcher.

8.3.8. Post-Study Promotional Work

VALUE: 5

One of the AIEDIRP's objectives is to share knowledge on Indigenous Economic Development. These include, but are not limited to, workshops, conferences, and or media events. The proponent should explain how they will help promote and share the completed study within their means, networks, and or contacts up to a year after completion.

9. DEBRIEFING

At the conclusion of the RFP process, all consultants will be notified.

10. ESTIMATED TIME FRAMES AND PROCESS

The following timetable outlines the anticipated schedule for the RFPs and contract process. The timing and the sequence of events resulting from the RFP may vary and shall ultimately be determined by APC and the selection committee.

Request for Proposals issued: Monday, August 17, 2026

Request for Proposals closes: Friday, September 11, 2026

Anticipated date for Proposals evaluations: Friday, September 18, 2026

Anticipated date for contract to be developed: Friday, September 25, 2026

Anticipated start date for researcher: Monday, October 5, 2026

11. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL PREPARATION

11.1 Signed Proposals

Each consultant must ensure that the proposal is signed by a person authorized to sign on behalf of the company/institution in response to this request for a proposal.

11.2 Electronic Version of the Proposal

Proposals that are submitted by mail must also be submitted with one electronic copy

(Word Format).

11.3 Notification and Correspondence

All notices and correspondence will be sent to the principal consultant unless a request is made for the APC to correspond with someone other than the principal consultant.

Questions: Questions may be addressed by e-mail to Jarvis Googoo, APC Director of AIEDIRP, jarvis.googoo@apcfnc.ca. However, in the interest of fairness and transparency, all questions will be answered in writing and sent to all respondents or potential respondents.

11.4 Changes to Proposal Wording

The Facilitator will not change the proposal's wording after closing and no words or comments will be added to the proposal unless requested by APC for clarification purposes.

11.5 Working Language of the APC

The working language for the RFP and all proposals must be in English

11.6 Researcher's Expenses

The Facilitator is solely responsible for their own expenses in preparing a proposal and for subsequent negotiations with APC, if any. If APC elects to reject all proposals, APC will not be liable to any applicants for any claims, whether for costs or damages incurred by the proponent in preparing the proposal, loss of anticipated profit in connection with any final contract, or any other matter whatsoever.

11.7 Proposal Validity

Proposals will be open for acceptance for at least 90 days after the closing date.

11.8 Firm Pricing

Prices will be firm for the entire contract period unless this RFP specifically states otherwise.

Currency and Taxes

Prices quoted must be:

A. In Canadian dollars; and

B. APC is HST exempt and the successful applicant will be provided a copy of its HST exemption letter.

12.1 Definition of Contract

Notice in writing to an applicant that it has been identified as the successful candidate and the subsequent full execution of written contract will constitute a contract for the goods or services and no consultant will acquire any legal or equitable rights or privileges relative to the goods or services until the occurrence of both such events.

12.2 Liability for Errors

While APC has used considerable efforts to ensure an accurate representation of information in this RFP, the information contained in this RFP is supplied solely as a guideline for consultants. The information is not guaranteed or warranted to be accurate by APC, nor is it necessarily comprehensive or exhaustive. Nothing in this RFP is intended to relieve consultants from forming their own opinions and conclusions with respect to the matters addressed in this RFP.

12.3 Modification of Terms

APC reserves the right to modify the RFP's terms at any time in its sole direction. This includes the right to cancel this RFP at any time prior to entering a contract with the successful applicant.

12.4 Ownership of Proposals and Freedom of Information

All documents, including proposals, submitted to APC, become the property of APC. They will be received and held in confidence by APC.

12.5 Use of Request for Proposals

This document, or any portion thereof, may not be used for any purpose other than the submission of proposals.

12.6 Confidentiality of Information

Information pertaining to the APC obtained by the consultant as a result of participation in this project is confidential and must not be disclosed without written authorization from APC.