

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CAMET N° 2016-002**

**Consultation Services to Strengthen the Transition of Students
to Post-Secondary Education**

May 2, 2016



SECTION 1: SUMMARY OF KEY INFORMATION

ISSUE DATE: May 2, 2016

**CLOSING DATE FOR VENDOR RESPONSE:
Tuesday, May 24, 2016 @ 4:30 p.m. Atlantic**

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PLEASE READ THE RFP VERY CAREFULLY TO ENSURE ALL REQUIREMENTS ARE MET.

2.0 ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The following terms will apply to this Request for Proposals and to any subsequent contract.

2.1 REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL TERMINOLOGY

BUSINESS DAY	Any day other than Saturday, Sunday or statutory holiday.
CONTRACTOR/SUPPLIER	The successful proponent to this RFP who enters into a written contract with the Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET).
RFP	Request for Proposals.
SECRETARIAT	Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET) Secretariat
PROPONENT/VENDOR	An individual or a company that submits, or intends to submit, a proposal in response to this Request for Proposals.
MUST/REQUIRED/ SHALL/WILL	A requirement which must be met in order for the Proposal to receive consideration.
SHOULD/DESIRABLE/MAY	A requirement having a significant degree of importance to the objectives of the Request for Proposals.

3.0 GENERAL CONDITIONS

3.1 STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

This Request for Proposals is subject to the Standard Terms and Conditions for goods and services tenders for the Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET) Secretariat.

This RFP will be conducted in accordance with the Atlantic Procurement Agreement and its Regulations.

3.2 MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

This Request for Proposals may contain mandatory requirements. **Proposals not meeting all mandatory requirements will be rejected without further consideration.**

3.3 CONDITIONS RIGHT TO AMEND

The Secretariat reserves the right to amend or supplement the RFP, giving equal information and cooperation by way of issued addendum to all proponents as a result of any such amendment.

3.4 PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Material, data and information accessed or provided by the Secretariat and used in the preparation of the proposals is confidential and the property of the Secretariat.

3.5 CHANGES TO PROPOSAL WORDING

There will be no changes in the wording of the proposal after submission and no words or comments shall be added to the general conditions or detailed specifications unless requested by the Secretariat for purposes of clarification.

3.6 VENDOR INCURRED COSTS

All costs incurred in the preparation and presentation of proposals in any way whatsoever shall be wholly absorbed by the Vendor.

3.7 INDEMNITY

The vendor will indemnify and save harmless the Secretariat from and against all claims, demands, losses, damages, costs and expenses made against or incurred, suffered or sustained by the Secretariat at any time or times (either before or after the expiration or sooner termination of this agreement) where the same or any of them are based upon or arise out of or from anything done or omitted to be done by the vendor or by any servant, employee, officer, director or subcontractor of the vendor pursuant to the contract.

3.8 ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSALS

The Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET) Secretariat is not bound to accept the lowest price or any proposal of those submitted. Proposals will be assessed in light of the evaluation criteria.

Subsequent to the submission of Statements for Proposals, interviews and negotiations may be conducted with some of the proponents, but there shall be no obligation to receive further information, whether in writing or oral, from any proponent. The Secretariat shall not be obligated in any manner to any proponent whatsoever until a written agreement has been duly executed relating to an approved proposal.

3.9 EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

A committee formed for that purpose will evaluate all acceptable proposals. The right is reserved to make an award based directly on the proposals submitted or to negotiate further with one or more proponents.

3.10 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Proponents may be requested to demonstrate financial stability during the evaluation process.

3.11 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Proposals may contain additional information. If alternative solutions are offered, submit the information in the same format as a separate proposal.

3.12 ACCEPTANCE OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Unless otherwise stated by the proponent, all terms and conditions of this RFP document are assumed to be accepted and incorporated in the proponent's submission.

3.13 VALIDITY PERIOD

Proposals **must** be open for acceptance for at least 90 days after the closing date. Upon acceptance, prices will be firm for the entire contract period unless otherwise specified.

3.14 PROPOSAL SELECTION

Once a decision has been made, the successful vendor will be notified by the Secretariat. The committee will treat all proposals with strict confidentiality.

3.15 NEWS RELEASES

Vendors shall not make news releases concerning the RFP or the awarding of the same without the written consent of the Secretariat and then only in coordination with the Secretariat.

3.16 CONFIDENTIALITY AND SECURITY

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

3.16.2 The vendor must agree to maintain security standards consistent with security policies of the Secretariat. These include strict control of access to data and maintaining confidentiality of information gained while carrying out their duties.

3.16.3 Information obtained by the vendor as a result of participation in this project is confidential and must not be disclosed without written authorization from the Secretariat.

3.17 CONTRACT CANCELLATION

The contract may be cancelled for, but not limited to, the following reasons.

If the contractor:

- defaults in the observance of any of the conditions contained in the contract or specifications;
- has become insolvent;
- has committed an act of bankruptcy.

If the Secretariat:

- cancels the budget allocation for this particular project.

3.18 NEGOTIATION DELAY

If a written contract cannot be negotiated within thirty (30) days of notification to the designated vendor, the Secretariat may, in its sole discretion at any time thereafter, terminate negotiations with that vendor and either negotiate a contract with another vendor of its choice or choose to terminate the RFP process and not enter into a contract with any of the vendors.

3.19 CONTRACT FOR SERVICES

Written notice of acceptance of a proposal by the Secretariat, and the subsequent full execution of a written contract, will constitute a contract for the services. No proponent will acquire any legal or equitable rights or privileges relative to the services until the occurrence of both such events.

3.20 COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS

The vendor shall give all the notices and obtain all the licenses and permits required to perform the work. The vendor shall comply with all the laws applicable to the work or the performance of the contract.

3.21 DEBRIEFING

Unsuccessful proponents may request a debriefing meeting with the evaluation committee following execution of a contract with the successful proponent.

4.0 SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

4.1 NUMBER OF COPIES

Each proponent can submit a copy of their proposal by electronic mail to Rhéal Poirier, Secretary to CAMET, at rpoirier@cap-cpma.ca, on or before 4:30 p.m. AST on Tuesday, May 24, 2016, or by mail at 5161 George Street, Suite 1006, Halifax, NS B3J 1M7.

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

The proponent will not change the wording of its proposal after closing and no words or comments will be added unless requested by the Secretariat for purposes of clarification.

5.0 QUESTIONS AND INQUIRIES

All inquiries related to this RFP are to be directed by electronic mail to the Secretariat, at the following address:

Rhéal Poirier
Secretary to CAMET
rpoirier@cap-cpma.ca

All responses to inquiries made to the Secretariat will be made in writing; therefore, the proponent must include a contact name, email address (if available), or fax number on all correspondence.

All questions and responses will be made available to all proponents one (1) week before the closing date. Therefore, further questions will not be accepted after this date.

All other information obtained from alternate sources cannot be considered official and/or accurate.

6.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

6.1 Introduction

The Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET) requires the services of professional consultancy to conduct an analysis of strengths and gaps in the transition of students from public to post-secondary education, and provide recommendations for successfully strengthening transition to post-secondary education.

6.2 Background and Context

The proposed work outlined in this Request for Proposal is a continuation of the work initiated by CAMET in 2013. CAMET successfully conducted an analysis of the strengths and gaps in the school delivery of career development services in Atlantic Canada. This work resulted in the development of the report, *Career Education in Atlantic Canada: Research and Recommendations*, in January 2014. Subsequently, *Future in Focus – Atlantic Career Development Framework for Public Education: 2015-2020* was released, outlining seven goals that Atlantic provinces will pursue to strengthen career development in Atlantic Canada. Both documents are available on the CAMET website.

With the release of the framework, CAMET is now in a position to pursue initiatives aimed at strengthening the transition of students from public to post-secondary education to ensure continuity with the public education initiatives. Moving forward, it is believed that three areas need to be further investigated in order to achieve post-secondary transition:

1. providing better access to post-secondary education for students who take an indirect route to post-secondary (i.e., gap year or other lapse in time between public and post-secondary education);
2. minimizing the number of students who drop out of post-secondary prior to graduating;
3. providing more opportunity for students who are approaching post-secondary graduation to address the students' perception on the financial value of a post-secondary education given the large pool of post-secondary graduates working in jobs that require a high school degree.

The following statistics provide rationale for addressing these three areas:

- 45 percent of Canadian students are exiting high school without a plan that includes post-secondary education. Half of these students pursue some post-secondary training before age 26 (Statistics Canada, 2011).
- 70 percent of students entering post-secondary either do not have a clear idea of what they want to do when they complete their post-secondary education, or were significantly influenced by an external person to pursue a particular career stream (Ipsos-Reid/Big Brothers Big Sisters, 2013).
- 42 percent of Atlantic Canadian post-secondary students have indicated an intention to investigate entrepreneurship after post-secondary graduation in light of a gloomy job market (BMO/Pollara, 2013).

Therefore, the ministers of education and training wish to address transition and pursue the following goals:

- To increase the proportion of youth who continue to pursue formal education after public school in order that they can participate in the job market in Atlantic Canada in a more engaged way, making a greater contribution to their region, province, community and family.
- To build a better educated population and workforce within Atlantic Canada, who have the skill sets that are relevant to the career market today and for the future.

6.3 Key Tasks

The Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET) requires the services of professional consultancy to conduct an analysis of strengths and gaps in the transition of students from public to post-secondary education, and provide recommendations for successfully strengthening transition to post-secondary education.

The work resulting from this Request for Proposals is the following:

- a) collect, compile and validate the data from provincial and regional documents;
- b) collect and analyze national and international best practices (both from the academic literature and practice);
- c) conduct focus groups and structured interviews with current PSE students and post-secondary education administrators as well as employers in the Atlantic region;
- d) analyze and disseminate the data in the form of a report that is easily understood and practical for provinces;
- e) provide concrete recommendations on how to facilitate the smooth transition to post-secondary education.

6.4 Deliverable

The deliverable is a comprehensive, detailed report with specific and concrete recommendations that address the transition to post-secondary education, more specifically:

- an understanding of the issues, by province, related to why our rates of post-secondary attainment are lower than other regions in Canada and what measures would be most effective to address them; this may build on research undertaken by CAMET in **Career Education in Atlantic Canada: Research & Recommendations Final Report (2015)**, identifying emerging gaps and better understanding what happens to students once they leave K-12 system and enter PSE.
- a better understanding of why some students elect to cease pursuing education after graduation from public school and possible interventions that could help to curb that tide; this may expand upon the investigation in the above noted 2015 report to further investigate these preliminary findings as well as emerging gaps and factors that are further uncovered in this research.
- a comprehensive, fully researched, implementable plan for mobilizing our young people, provincial governments, employers, and stakeholders to remain engaged and active longer in their pursuit of education.
- specific recommendations and identified goals that build on the report, **Future in Focus (2015)**, designed to ensure successful transition beyond PSE into the labour market.

6.5 Process and Reporting

The consultant will be contracted by the Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET), and will report to the steering committee, consisting of officials from the four Atlantic provinces. The steering committee will be charged with the following mandate:

1. Provide overall direction to the contracted consultant as it relates to the key tasks outlined in this document;
2. Provide advice to the consultant;
3. Provide feedback on the various drafts of the report prepared as a result of this work; and
4. Recommend final approval of the report prepared by the consultant.

The consultant will be required to consult with provincial officials, key stakeholders, and appropriate staff.

7.0 PROPOSAL CONTENT & REQUIREMENTS

Instructions: Proposals should include a table of contents, be based on the following format and include a response to each requirement/instruction in the order in which it is asked. It is helpful to the evaluation committee if the corresponding section headings are utilized in your submission.

The proposal must include the following:

1. detailed account of the approach and process to be used to fulfill the key tasks set forth in Section 6.3;
2. detailed work plan describing milestones and timelines;

3. total cost of the contract with a description of professional services, administrative and travel costs;
4. brief summary of the history of the consultant, including years in business and past experience, and demonstrate expertise relating to continuous improvement initiative;
5. names and background of all qualified personnel to be involved in this project; and
6. names and contact information of clients and associates for whom similar or relevant work has been performed, and a description of the work completed.

7.1 MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

- a) Submissions must be received in their entirety by the time and date indicated.
- b) Submissions must be signed by an official of the company who is authorized to sign on behalf of/and bind the company to statements made in their submission.

7.2 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- Demonstrate understanding of the project scope and objectives.
- Identify the proposed approach, work plan and detailed project schedule.
- Proposals should include a price table containing a detailed breakdown pertaining to professional service fees.

7.2.1 COMPANY BACKGROUND

Provide a brief summary of the history of yourself and/or your company, including years in business, number of staff, location, etc.

7.2.2 COMPANY REFERENCES

Proposals should include names and contact information 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.

7.2.3 PROJECT TEAM

Proposals should include details on the background and experience of all qualified personnel relating to the project management and project team.

7.2.4 SUBCONTRACTING

Utilizing a subcontractor, or subcontractors (who must clearly be identified), in the prime bidder's response is acceptable. This also includes a joint submission by two or more bidders having no formal corporate links. However, in this case, one of these bidders must be prepared to take overall responsibility for successful interconnection of the multiple organizations and this must be defined in the Statement of Proposal. Also, one individual or firm must act as the sole interface between the joint partners and the Secretariat.

7.3 APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

This section should contain any additional information pertinent to the proponent's response.

All materials submitted as appendices/attachments to the proposal should be clearly indicated in the Table of Contents. Material not so documented by the vendor will be considered as extraneous information. This list of attachments should also contain a brief description of the attached material, including what information can be gained by the evaluation team from its examination of the material.

8.0 EVALUATION PROCEDURE

A Committee made up of senior officials from the four Atlantic provinces will evaluate all proposals. The accepted proposals will be used as the basis for selecting the successful proponent(s). The evaluation of proposals will be based on the criteria listed below. The process will include a review and check of the information contained in the proposals and interviewing references familiar with the work of the vendor.

8.1 EVALUATION CRITERIA

The proposal will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

REPRESENTS 100 POINTS OF TOTAL SCORE		
Knowledge and experience of the consultant	30	
Understanding of the scope of the work to be executed	30	
Work plan	30	
Price	<u>10</u>	
TOTAL	100	Points

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

This Request for Proposals does not ensure proceeding to enter into a contract(s). The Secretariat reserves the right to proceed or not to proceed with a contract(s) pursuant to this Request for Proposals.

8.2 PRICING

The maximum budget associated with this review is up to, but not exceeding, \$70,000, excluding HST. The budget includes the key tasks and deliverables, and travel.