



SAULT STE. MARIE  
**INNOVATION**  
CENTRE

# RAIN

RURAL AGRI-INNOVATION NETWORK

## **Request for Proposals**

### **Northeast Food & Agriculture Market Study**

**Rural Agri-Innovation Network  
Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre  
99 Foster Drive, Level Six  
Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A5X6**

**David Thompson**

**705-942-7927 x3027**

[dthompson@ssmic.com](mailto:dthompson@ssmic.com)

**Identification Sheet (Must be returned with proposal)**

Name of Consultant: (the Consultant)
Mailing Address: (Street Name and Number or PO Box)
City/Province/State:
Postal/Zip Code:
Name of Contact Person: (for this proposal)
Telephone Number & Extension:
Fax Number:
Email Address:
Name of Person Signing on Behalf of Consulting Firm:
Title of Person Signing on Behalf of Consulting Firm:

Contact for this Request for Proposals:

Administrative:

David Thompson, Project Coordinator (705) 942-7927 x3027 [dthompson@ssmic.com](mailto:dthompson@ssmic.com)  
 Rural Agri-Innovation Network  
 Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre  
 99 Foster Drive, Level Six Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 5X6  
[www.rainalgoma.ca](http://www.rainalgoma.ca)

**Acknowledgement of Proposal Documents**

Received by Consultant

(Must be returned with proposal)

I/We, the undersigned, hereby acknowledge and confirm on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ that I/We have received all of the documents contained in this RFP and have been provided with the entire project details required to permit me/us to submit a proposal.

1. I/We declare that this proposal is made without any connection, knowledge, comparison of figures, or arrangements with any other company, firm or person making a proposal for the same services.
2. I/We declare that I/We have carefully read this proposal document and have satisfied ourselves as to the nature of the services required and do hereby make our proposal to Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre for the services described herein.
3. I/We acknowledge that we have received all or any addendum to this Request for Proposal and that it is my/our responsibility to ensure that all addenda issued by Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre have been received.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **1.0 Purpose of the Request for Proposals**

Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre (SSMIC) / Rural Agri-Innovation Network (RAIN) is seeking proposals to research, write and deliver a detailed study of the demand for regionally produced food that is purchased in the Algoma, Manitoulin and Sudbury area.

## **2.0 Background**

The Rural Agri-Innovation Network is a division of the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre (SSMIC), with support from farmers and communities to enhance the agri-food sector in northern Ontario. RAIN's vision is to build a resilient farm and food sector in northern Ontario through innovative research and agricultural development projects.

We accomplish this by:

- Encouraging business growth and improved capacity for producers of commodities and value-added products;
- Collaborating with industry, government and communities to develop initiatives that meet the needs of farmers and agri-food businesses; and
- Providing a network of support that enhances the industry.

In 2016, RAIN and local Community Futures Development Corporations from Algoma convened with an interest to see the local food and agriculture sector grow. This partnership has grown to include RAIN/SSMIC, Local Food and Farm Co-ops, Superior East Community Futures, the Community Development Corp of Sault Ste. Marie & Area, East Algoma Community Futures Development Corp., the City of Greater Sudbury, the Bruce Mines Agricultural Society and the Mill Market. These organizations identified a need to undertake a Northeast Food and Agriculture Market Study (NFAMS) to better understand the regional market to encourage increased regional food production, processing and purchasing.

The purpose is to support agri-food development through market research in Algoma, Manitoulin, and Sudbury Districts. Each partner involved has an interest in gathering information on regional market conditions for locally-produced and wild-harvested foods from the regions of Algoma, Manitoulin, Sudbury and West Nipissing.

Project administration will be provided by the Rural Agri-Innovation Network, within the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre.

## **3.0 Introduction**

There is a lack of information on the agri-food sector in northeastern Ontario across the value chain from producer to consumer. While farm and agri-food businesses realize they need to take steps to diversify, they still lack information on what the market demands are from customers. Some agri-food businesses have steadily grown to the point of scaling up to serve wholesale markets. However, there is hesitation from businesses as they lack information about what customers require. The purpose of the Study is to get a detailed profile of the area's food economy from the demand perspective. Information from the Study will be relevant to stakeholders such as farmers planning crops, food entrepreneurs seeking information to build business plans, lenders issuing loans, economic development organizations

addressing infrastructure challenges and government officials responding to the needs of local farms and food businesses.

#### **4.0 Scope of Work**

The market study will provide a comprehensive picture of demand and how food moves through the system, with a more detailed picture of the regional food economy. It will show the size of the existing market by sector (food service, food retail, food processing, food programs), with information on what food products and volumes are being sold, processed and purchased in each sector. Data collection will focus on foods that are already grown or processed in the Districts (including West Nipissing), and on select foods that have potential for being produced or processed in the area. Example categories (but not exclusive to) that will be included in the research are fish, beef, pork, poultry, root vegetables, soft fruit (berries, cherries), flour/specialty grains (including malting grains), non-timber forest products (maple syrup, mushrooms) and baked goods. In addition to information on products and volumes of food purchased in the Districts, the market study will report on key areas of interest such as critical price points, purchasing habits and preferences of different sectors, and factors determining overall patterns of demand. Further, this study will seek to quantify purchases of regional food (from the Algoma, Manitoulin, Sudbury, West Nipissing Districts) relative to food sales in general, as well as the interest in, and capacities for, procuring more regionally grown and processed foods. The study will also share how regional farms and processors are currently serving these sectors successfully.

By interviewing businesses in the Districts on their purchases, this information will enable food businesses to act on locally relevant information, such as creating strategies for expansion, working with other food businesses to supply market needs, and collaborating with other businesses to develop efficiencies (e.g. in the areas of storage, processing or distribution).

In the medium to long-term, the project will support local job creation, retention, and economic activity within the agri-food sector and broader economy. For instance, we anticipate that established farmers and processors will expand their businesses to reach new markets, while new food businesses will also emerge to fill gaps in the market with new products.

The study will produce a final report that will provide a comprehensive overview of the characteristics and dynamics of the area's food economy by exploring four areas of demand in the supply chain. These include:

1. *Food retail sector*: Businesses that buy food wholesale and sell to the end consumer, such as grocery stores and farmers' markets
2. *Food processors*: Businesses that buy wholesale, add value, and sell to a retailer or intermediary
3. *Food service sector*: Businesses that buy food wholesale and prepare food for end user consumption (e.g. restaurants, caterers, public sector institutions)
4. *Food programs*: Institutions and organizations that buy food to increase access to healthy foods (e.g. Good Food Box Program, Student Nutrition Programs, and Farm to Cafeteria)

The consultant will be responsible for survey design, with interviews tailored to each of the four sectors of demand described above as each sector has unique purchasing practices and contexts. The Partnership will be given an opportunity to review and comment on the interview guide or survey prior to them being administered. It is also expected that each of the guides be tested on businesses so that guides can be reviewed and further fine-tuned. Guides and surveys will need to be administered to the

four sectors in Algoma, Manitoulin and Sudbury. The Partnership wishes to get an adequate response rate from businesses across these sectors and regions. A response rate goal from each sector will need to be refined within proposed work plans.

Primary research will be conducted in the form of surveys and one-on-one or group interviews of stakeholders. Primary research can be supplemented where applicable with secondary research using Statistics Canada and other reputable aggregate data sources.

The Partnership also wishes that there would be focus groups with farmers or food producers (fisheries, harvesters) to:

- identify barriers to market and meeting needs of the four sectors;
- share what challenges and opportunities they see with on-farm and regional food processors;
- and, validate findings and to gather their views on producing for these sectors.

These focus groups would help to share the successes and challenges of supplying food to these businesses from a producer perspective. A bilingual facilitator is required for focus groups.

The Partnership will provide input on key contacts and stakeholders through the RAIN Project Coordinator, David Thompson.

## 5.0 Area of Study

The study area for conducting interviews and surveys on demand would include communities that are along Hwy 17 within Algoma, Manitoulin, Greater Sudbury, and Sudbury Districts. These communities include Wawa, Sault Ste. Marie, Echo Bay, Desbarats, Bruce Mines, Richards Landing, Hilton Beach, Thessalon, Iron Bridge, Blind River, Elliot Lake, Spanish, Webbwood, Espanola, Wikwemikong, Little Current, Gore Bay, Mindemoya, M'Chigeeng, Walden, Capreol and Sudbury.

Focus groups with farmers to validate findings would be held in Algoma, Manitoulin, Sudbury, Massey and West Nipissing.

## 6.0 Deliverables

Item	Description
1	Sign contract with approved consultant
2	Work plan Outline goals and measures required to accomplish them
3	Survey design and research methodology a) Provide a methodology outlining businesses to be surveyed or interviewed Provide a draft of sector specific surveys to be administered for comment by the NFAMS Partnership
4	Focus groups Five focus groups to validate research findings
5	Draft and final reports: a) Provide a first draft outline of the Market Study including headings and suggested content b) Provide a first draft report c) Provide a revised draft showing revisions and new information following consultations with the NFAMS Partnership d) Provide a final report (PDF & Word/Excel) e) Provide raw data (surveys, interview transcripts, and compilation of data)

<b>6</b>	Slide Presentation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Provide a draft presentation of the report in PowerPoint showing highlights of the study</li> <li>b) Provide a final presentation of the report in PowerPoint including revisions from the NFAMS Partnership</li> </ol>
<b>7</b>	Meetings: A minimum of 4 x Partnership consultation meetings <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To refine scope of project</li> <li>2. To discuss and refine interview and survey questions and identify contacts</li> <li>3. To present draft report outline</li> <li>4. To present draft report and summary PowerPoint</li> </ol>
<b>8</b>	Public Presentations Consultant to present final report and PowerPoint summary at three public events (Algoma, Manitoulin and Sudbury)

## 7.0 Responsibilities

This NFAMS Partnership will be accountable for:

- Appointing member(s) to a project steering committee
- Supporting the project with in-kind by promoting the study in their communities or organizations
- Supporting the project with in-kind by supporting research activities through forwarding information to memberships and producer groups
- Fostering collaboration in support of a NFAMS

The project steering committee would be responsible for overseeing the project, giving advice on study progress and would meet quarterly. They would be responsible for:

- Meeting as needed for discussions during the development of the market study
- Maintaining the focus of the Partnership on the agreed-upon scope, outcomes and benefits
- Discussing and monitoring the progress of the NFAMS, which will include identifying strategies for moving the study forward
- Reviewing and commenting on budgets, budget adjustments, work plans and materials
- Monitor performance in relation to the project work plan and take corrective action as needed;
- Oversee the evaluation of the project and approve the final report.

The RAIN Project Coordinator will be responsible for:

- Coordinate Partnership meetings as needed
- Take and circulate meeting minutes
- Share project information with all collaboration members, such as through regular updates
- Assist with activities outlined in the Timeline, such as drafting and revising the budget, drafting and revising the RFP, and managing the tendering process
- Be the primary point of contact with the funding agent
- Be the primary contact for the consultant(s)
- Administer all funding and submit progress and final reports

- Translation of the final report
- Managing three part-time Regional Outreach Assistants in each District

The part-time Regional Outreach Assistants (located in the three Districts) will be responsible for:

- Sharing information about the NFAMS at community events throughout the study period
- Connect regional businesses, organizations and institutions with the consultant(s) to increase survey response rate
- To assist consultant(s) with visiting businesses or organizations to collect and administer surveys under the discretion of the RAIN Project Coordinator

## 8.0 Proposal Requirements

The proposal must provide background information on your company, including its legal name and indicate the principal business and corporate directorships of the members. The profile should include a statement of the management, ownership and history of the company.

### Key personnel

The proposal must specify the project manager and key personnel directly involved in the project including CVs. The proposed work plan will include key personnel that are involved in each task of the work plan.

### References

The proposal must include 3 references from persons/projects for whom the Consultant has successfully provided similar goods and services to those described in the Scope of Work section of this RFP within the past (5 years). The name and telephone number of a contact person for each reference and a brief description of past projects, project timeframe, approximate budget and results achieved.

### Work plan

The proposal must include a detailed work plan describing how the Consultant proposes to complete the deliverables, tasks and objectives with a proposed timeline. The work plan should identify the proposed methods to be used in addressing the objectives of the project. The work plan must contain no more than 4 pages showing a full understanding of the project, expected outcomes and summarized in a Gantt chart.

### Schedule

The milestones and delivery dates for this project will be proposed by the consultant and approved by the NFAMS Partnership and SSMIC/RAIN in consultation with the Consultant based on the work plan submitted in the selected proposal. The project must be completed no later than March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

ITEM
Scope of work is refined, work plan approved by the Partnership. The work plan should include a draft outline format for the final report.
Consultant to invoice SSMIC/RAIN on receipt of approved work plan (10% of contract).
Data collection phase is underway and a finalized methodology (surveys) is presented to RAIN. Consultant to invoice SSMIC/RAIN (30% of contract)



Data collection phase: the four areas of demand for food are researched, using a combination of one-on-one surveys, interviews, focus groups, and secondary data. Monthly activity reports to be submitted to the RAIN Project Coordinator no later than the 1 <sup>st</sup> of each month.
Data Analysis: Consultant delivers draft report to be presented to the Partnership. Consultant to invoice SSMIC/RAIN (25% of contract).
Revised report: Consultant shares revised draft report with the Partnership. Consultant to invoice SSMIC/RAIN (15% of contract).
Final report is delivered to the Partnership as a PDF file, as well as a PowerPoint presentation summarizing report highlights. Media event held to present report. Consultant to invoice SSMIC/RAIN (10% of contract) after final report is accepted by NFAMS partnership.
Consultant and RAIN Project Coordinator share results through three presentations in Algoma, Manitoulin and Sudbury (final 10% of contract with holdback)

## 9.0 Pricing and Conditions

### Pricing

Prices quoted by the Consultant shall include a lump sum amount for all deliverables, as well as estimated days, cost per day (for all staff) and estimated charges for travel and incidentals. All pricing shall be provided in Canadian Funds, inclusive of all applicable duties and taxes (with HST itemized separately).

### Payment

The Consultant shall submit an itemized invoice following the payment schedule identified in Section 8 (found above) referencing the deliverables identified in Section 6. SSMIC/RAIN may request additional supporting information from the consultant as needed. SSMIC/RAIN may hold back payment or set off against payment if, in the opinion of SSMIC/RAIN acting reasonably, the Consultant has failed to comply with any requirements of the Contract.

### Insurance

The proposal must include proof of insurance coverage for:

- 1) 2 million dollars in General Liability and
- 2) 2 million dollars in Professional Errors and Omissions Insurance

Consultants selected will be required to provide evidence of registration and good standing with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) and a current copy of the Consultant's Account Rate Profile from the WSIB.

### Awarded firm

The successful consultant will be required to enter into a professional services contract with SSMIC/RAIN for the work as outlined in this RFP.

## 10.0 Proposal evaluation

Bidders are requested to submit a proposal that includes a proposed workplan and methodology to fulfill the requirements. Financial proposals would be received in a separate sealed envelope, or separate PDF file attachment.

SSMIC/RAIN will initially screen all proposals to ensure compliance with the requirements as outlined. SSMIC/RAIN may eliminate any proposal that does not meet the submittal criteria, is clearly lacking in appropriate experience/personnel, or is deficient in any of the elements outlined in Section 6.0.

The proposals (including workplan and methodology) are evaluated first, and the financial proposals remain sealed and secured. Firms achieving the minimum technical qualifying mark or greater, as stated in the request for proposals, will then have their financial proposals opened for evaluation. Financial proposals are evaluated, and the firm achieving the highest score on the combined technical and financial proposals evaluation is invited to contract negotiations. If negotiations fail, the next highest ranked firm is called for contract negotiations.

## **10.0 Evaluation**

Quality of the proposals will be evaluated by the NFAMS Partnership on three criteria:

- 1) Experience and Qualifications 30 points
- 2) Understanding of the Project/Work Plan 40 points
- 3) Pricing 30 points

Any proposal not scoring minimum 70% (49/70) will be rejected and pricing will not be considered.

### ***Experience and Qualifications (30 points)***

Each proposal will be evaluated based on the following components with respect to the experience and qualifications of the Consultant:

- a) A brief description of the Consultant;
- b) A description of three projects the Consultant has previously and/or is currently delivering with an emphasis on experience relevant to the Deliverables including:
  - A list of three relevant past assignments for either regulatory agencies or private/professional entities and the names of references for these assignments;
  - A summary/summaries or overview of three similar projects completed for regulatory agencies or industry associations;
- c) The roles and responsibilities of the Consultant and any of its agents, employees and sub-contractors who will be involved in providing the Deliverables, together with the identity of those who will be performing those roles and their relevant respective expertise including CVs of key personnel;
- d) A demonstration of the knowledge, skills and expertise of the personnel to be assigned to the project in the following areas:
  - Experience in conducting market studies, with noted experience related to food and agriculture research;
  - Understanding of local food and agriculture markets and their importance to local and regional economic development

### ***Understanding of the Project/Work plan (40 points)***

Each proposal should include a detailed description of how the Consultant intends to complete the Food and Agriculture Market Study and provide the Deliverables. Proposals should include:

- a) An understanding of the project to be undertaken/deliverables to be provided, including a description of the approach(s) it will take to meet the SSMIC/RAIN and Northeast FAMS Partnership requirements;
- b) A detailed description of its proposed approach and methodology for gathering data for the four identified sectors
- c) A detailed work plan for the Deliverables, including all tasks, milestones and timeframes (this should be accomplished using a Gantt chart, graphic or other tool).
- d) An organizational chart indicating how the Consultant intends to structure its working relationship with the SSMIC/RAIN, the RAIN Project Coordinator and the Northeast FAMS Partnership.

### ***Pricing (30 points)***

In setting out pricing, Consultants should have regard to the instructions in Section 4.0 of this RFP. Pricing will count for 30 points in this Evaluation Process.

SSMIC/RAIN reserves the right to reject any or all proposals without incurring any liability whatsoever. SSMIC/RAIN is under no obligation to accept the lowest or any bid associated with this RFP and SSMIC/RAIN will not accept any responsibility, financial or otherwise, claimed by, or resulting from, a Consultant's response to this RFP.

There is to be no payment for the preparation and submission of proposals in response to this RFP.

Any revisions to the agreed upon work, which may require additional expenditures to be made, shall require the written approval of SSMIC/RAIN. SSMIC/RAIN reserves the right to negotiate changes to the content and cost of the most satisfactory proposal(s).

Should any work or materials be required which are not detailed in the RFP, either directly or indirectly, but which are nevertheless necessary for the proper carrying out of the intent hereof, the Consultant is to understand the same to be implied and required, and shall perform all such work and furnish any such materials as fully as if they were particularly delineated or described.

### **11.0 Ownership**

All interview and survey data, and information collected, as well as the reports produced become the property of the Northeast FAMS Partnership, to be retained by SSMIC/RAIN.

### **12.0 Proposal Submission**

If submitting by mail, the Proponent must submit one original colour hard copy (signed by an authorized official of the proponent) and one (1) electronic copy (as a PDF file on a USB drive or CD) of the proposed workplan and methodology in a sealed package. The financial proposal will be included in a separate sealed envelope within the package.

If submitting by email, the Proponent must submit one electronic copy (PDF) of the proposed workplan and methodology (signed by an authorized official). The financial proposal will be included as a separate PDF file.

Proposals are to be prominently marked with the RFP title, with the full legal name and return address of the proponent, and with the Proposal Submission Deadline date and time. Proposals submitted in any other manner will be disqualified.

Proposals can be submitted by email or mail and to the attention of David Thompson by 4:00 p.m. on **April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018**.

**David Thompson, RAIN**

Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre

99 Foster Dr., Level Six

Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 5X6

Tel: 705-942-7927 x3027

[dthompson@ssmic.com](mailto:dthompson@ssmic.com)

Any questions regarding this Request for Proposals must be directed to David Thompson, Project Coordinator at Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre [dthompson@ssmic.com](mailto:dthompson@ssmic.com) by **April 4<sup>th</sup>**. Answers will be posted as an RFP Addendum on RAIN's website ([www.rainalgoma.ca/opportunities](http://www.rainalgoma.ca/opportunities)) no later than **April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018**.

### 13.0 Legal

- **Indemnity.** If the contract is awarded, the successful proposer will be required to indemnify and hold SSMIC harmless and against all liability and expenses, including solicitors fees, howsoever arising or incurred, alleging damage to property or injury to, or death of, any person arising out or attributable to the consultants performance of the contract awarded. Any property or work to be provided by the consultant under this contract will remain at the consultants risk until written acceptance by the SSMIC; and the consultant will replace, at the consultant's expense, all property or work damaged or destroyed by any cause whatsoever.
- **Exceptions.** The proposer shall furnish a statement on company letterhead giving complete description of all exceptions to the terms, conditions and specifications. Failure to furnish the statement will mean that the proposer agrees to meet all requirements of the Request for Proposal.
- **Termination for Convenience.** The SSMIC may terminate a contract, in whole or in part, whenever the SSMIC determines that such a termination is in the best interest of the SSMIC, without showing cause, upon giving written notice to the proposer. The SSMIC shall pay all reasonable costs incurred by the proposer up to the date of termination. However, in no event shall the proposer be paid an amount which exceeds the bid price for the work performed. The proposer shall not be reimbursed for any profits which may have been anticipated but which have not been earned up to the date of termination.
- **Termination for Default.** When the proposer has not performed or has unsatisfactorily performed the contract, SSMIC may terminate the contract for default. Upon termination for default, payment will be withheld at the discretion of SSMIC. Failure on the part of the proposer to fulfill the contractual obligations shall be considered just cause for termination of the contract. The proposer will be paid for work satisfactorily performed prior to termination, less any excess costs incurred by the SSMIC in re-procuring and completing the work.
- **Interpretation.** The contract resulting from this Request for Proposal shall be construed under the laws of the Province of Ontario

- **Integration.** This Request for Proposal document, the proposer's response to this solicitation, and subsequent purchase order(s) to the successful proposal contain the entire understanding between parties, and any additions or modifications hereto may only be made in writing executed by both parties.
- **Non-Assignment of Contract.** The proposer shall not assign the contract, or any portion thereof, except upon the written approval of the SSMIC.
- **Contract Agreement.** The selected proposer will be required to enter into a contract agreement with SSMIC
- **Compliance with Laws.** The contractor will give all the notices and obtain all the licenses and permits, required to perform the work. The contractor will comply with all laws applicable to the work or performance of the contract.
- **Intellectual Property Rights.** SSMIC will be the owner of the intellectual property rights, including patent, copyright, trademark, industrial design and trade secrets in any deliverable product or product developed through this contract. Licensing and marketing rights to the developed product will not be granted in the contract.
- **Confidentiality.** The selected proposer agrees not to release or in any way cause to release any confidential information of the SSMIC unless they have been specifically approved to so in writing.
- **Added Value.** SSMIC is interested in maximizing the value of expenditures as it relates to achieving additional value that would further benefit SSMIC. As such, bidders are encouraged to consider, develop and propose value added concepts, programs, components and the like that would further enhance the proposed acquisition represented in this solicitation request.
- **Disputes.** In cases of dispute as to whether or not an item or service quoted or delivered meets proposal requirements, the decision of SSMIC, or authorized representatives, shall be final and binding on all parties.
- **Reservations.** SSMIC a) reserves the right to reject or accept any or all proposals or parts of proposals, when in this reasoned judgment, the public interest will be served thereby, b) may waive formalities or technicalities in proposals, as deemed necessary, c) may waive minor differences in the proposal provided these differences do not violate the proposal intent.