



Request for Proposal

City of Spruce Grove

Options for Delivery of Business Services & Supports

Closing Date & Time:

4:00pm MDT on October 13, 2023

RFP No. 2023-09-11

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The City of Spruce Grove is committed to a Sustainable Procurement process that integrates social, economic, and environmental value and benefit for our community. The City will always remain accountable to open, fair, and transparent Sustainable Procurement that balances fiscal and legal responsibility, social equity, and environmental stewardship.

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2 Introduction

2.1 About The City of Spruce Grove

Spruce Grove is a vibrant city of approximately 40,000 residents about 11 km west of Edmonton, offering an ideal mix of city conveniences, excellent schools, sports, culture and recreation facilities and a mix of businesses.

A regional hub with a \$2.1 billion retail economy, Spruce Grove supplies a dynamic mix of commercial, retail, professional and entertainment services. With over 1,500 businesses, we are the service and supply destination for a trade area population of 150,000. With an average growth of 4.2% annually over the past 10 years, Spruce Grove has more than tripled in the last two decades. Today, we are 39,348 strong and adding more every day.

The city administrative organizational structure includes an executive team consisting of three general managers and the CAO. Administration is structured around four main divisions: Corporate Office, Planning & Infrastructure, Corporate Services and Community & Protective Services. The city is governed by a six-member Council and a mayor. Strategically the city administration is driven by a three-year corporate business plan that is based upon a strategic plan developed by Council.

2.2 Background

What is driving this RFP

The City's Corporate Strategic Plan 2023-2025 includes a proposal to establish a "Business Incubator, Accelerator, and Enhanced Business Services Program." The City is committed to nurturing growth in its business environment and wants to develop a solution that supports entrepreneurship and sustainable growth. Based on this proposal, we seek to determine the best course of action for supporting startups and early-stage businesses here in Spruce Grove

2.3 RFP Objective

This project aims to create a solution for Spruce Grove's business ecosystem through a comprehensive approach.

The main purpose of the options report is to:

- **ONE** – Determine if setting up a physical incubator location aligns with the city's overall goals, or if a different approach would be more suitable. It considers a range of additional services and programs, including mentorship, funding opportunities, technical resources, and ways to access the market.
- **TWO** - Explore whether a broad, general strategy or a more focused, industry-specific approach would yield better results.

In essence, this report acts as a guide for the city's future actions. It aims to offer a well-informed recommendation based on a comprehensive analysis.

3 Project Scope & Deliverables

3.1 Scope of Work

The selected consultant or firm will be responsible for the following tasks:

1. Needs Assessment: Assessing Local Business Landscape

Conduct an in-depth evaluation of the current conditions and demands within the Spruce Grove business community to determine the essential services and programs required.

- **Economic and Market Conditions:** Evaluating the current economic and market conditions in Spruce Grove to understand the business environment, industry trends, and potential niches.
- **Opportunities and Gaps:** Identify areas with an unmet demand for supportive resources and services that an incubator could provide. Understand the specific challenges faced by startups and entrepreneurs in the region, distinguishing between incubator and accelerator models.
- **Determine Specific Focus:** Determine whether the incubator should cater to a specific industry or general business strategy

2. Feasibility Analysis: Evaluating Practicality and Sustainability

Evaluate the viability and sustainability of establishing the proposed incubator or exploring alternative strategies as a means of achieving the city's objectives

3. Engagement: Involvement of Local Entities and Organizations

Engage with a wide spectrum of local and regional entities, encompassing both traditional and non-traditional business support networks.

- **Connect with various local stakeholders** such as, program delivery partners, the chamber of commerce, co-working spaces, pop-up shops here in the city.
- **Examine the broader regional environment**, encompassing a diverse range of viewpoints and insights from numerous entities. Explore the practices of neighboring municipalities, alongside insights from existing incubators and program delivery organizations.

3.2 Functional Requirements

The following list outlines the specific outcomes that the proposed solution should achieve in response to this RFP.

- **Customized Services Offerings:** The proposed solution should outline tailored service offerings for startups and early-stage scaling companies (under three years) addressing specific needs such as mentorship, funding access, technical resources, and networking opportunities.

- **Strategic Recommendations:** The solution should encompass actionable recommendations derived from the comprehensive analysis. These recommendations should address pivotal insights obtained from the benefits and costs assessment, and available options for services. Additionally, the solution should explore potential collaborations through joint ventures with established organizations, aimed at enriching program support and augmenting the array of services provided.
- **Risk Assessment and Mitigation:** The proposed solution should identify potential challenges and risks associated with the project's implementation and operation, along with mitigation strategies to ensure smooth execution.
- **Measurement Metrics:** The solution should define key performance indicators (KPIs) and measurement metrics that will be used to track the success and impact of the Business Incubator, Accelerator, and/or Enhanced Business Services Program over time.
- **APPENDICES:**
 - Appendix A – Economic Merits: Overview of the economic merits driving the proposed business services, offering a compelling business case that underscores the value and potential impact of the initiative.
 - Appendix B – Engagement Report: Insights and feedback on the proposed incubator concept outlining the methods you employed to engage with diverse stakeholders, such as underrepresented entrepreneurs, minority-owned businesses, women entrepreneurs, individuals with disabilities, and other marginalized groups. Highlight the different engagement channels you utilized, surveys, focus groups, and collaboration with community organizations.

4 Budget

4.1 Summary

The allocation for this project amounts to up to \$40,000.00 (Forty thousand dollars) plus GST. The selected consultant is required to furnish a comprehensive task list, an itemized cost estimate, a work plan, and an inclusive project cost encompassing all consulting fees, disbursements, contingencies, and any other expenses integral to the execution of the scope of work. Respondents bear the responsibility of accurately anticipating and transparently delineating all necessary tasks essential to fulfill the requisites outlined in the RFP.

Upon selection, the chosen consultant is accountable for submitting meticulous invoices detailing the undertaken work for each invoicing period. These invoices should specify the deployed personnel, hours spent at their respective hourly rates, disbursement amounts, the total fee for each invoice, as well as the total budget utilization and remaining balance. Any instances where this stipulated budget might be exceeded should be promptly communicated to the City of Spruce Grove. No additional work leading to budget excess should be initiated without explicit written consent from the City.

4.2 Pricing Details

The breakdown of proposal pricing is delineated within the proposal structure.

5 RPF Process

5.1 Proposal Submissions

Responses to this RFP are to be submitted electronically by email. Messages are limited to 40 MB in size. Submissions are to be sent to:

- Jodi Fulford, Economic Development Specialist, Commercial
- jfulford@sprucegrove.org.

Vendor proposals should consist of a single PDF file that includes the full scope of their response.

5.2 RFP Timeline

The following table outlines the expected timeline for this RFP:

Activity	Planned Date
Issue date of this RFP	September 11, 2023
RFP Submission Deadline	October 13, 2023
Consultant Selection	October 19, 2023
Commencement of work (target), Project Kick-Off Meeting	October 21, 2023
Draft Report	December 20, 2023
Completion of work (target)	January 5, 2023

The proposed timeline is tentative and reflects the expected timeline and dates.

Presentation dates will be confirmed with short list candidates upon completion of the review and evaluation of received proposals.

The City reserves the right to amend the identified timeline as required.

5.3 Evaluation

The process of evaluating the results of this RFP will be conducted according to the following stages:

- Stage 1 – Confirmation of mandatory requirements
- Stage 2 – Evaluation of proposals against evaluation criteria

Received proposals will be evaluated by a committee of reviewers led by the Economic & Business Development Department and will be rated against the criteria defined within this RFP.

The following table outlines the evaluation criteria that will be employed in evaluating proposals received under this RFP:

Rated Criteria Categories	Weighting (Points)
Relevance of Experience: Demonstrated expertise in conducting comprehensive feasibility studies and analyses for business incubators, accelerators, and enhanced business services, aligned with the city's Economic Development Strategy and Corporate Plan	30
Strategic Approach: Clear understanding of the project's objectives, combined with a well-defined methodology that leverages the Economic Development Strategy and Corporate Plan to inform recommendations for the proposed program.	25
Expertise: Consultant or Consulting team qualifications	20
Proposal Excellence: The overall quality of the proposal, including organization, readability, adherence to the prescribed format, and a compelling presentation that reflects the city's strategic objectives.	15
Value Alignment: Thoughtful consideration of pricing that reflects the services sought in this RFP	10
Total	100

6 Proposal Requirements

6.1 Overview

Proposals are to contain sufficiently detailed and complete information for the evaluation team to evaluate and assess the viability of a proposed solution and its conformance with the City's requirements. At the same time, we encourage vendors to be focused and to the point. Vendors are encouraged to keep their proposals to under 50 pages, to the greatest degree possible.

6.2 Submission Requirements

Submissions must be submitted in the format prescribed in this RFP. Vendors should ensure that they have included in their response:

- Cover letter
- Proposal
 - Table of Contents
 - Executive Summary
 - Understanding of Requirements
 - Solution
 - Work Plan

- Company Information
 - References
 - Resume
- Pricing submission

6.3 Proposal Structure

The following sections identify the structure and required content of submitted responses. Vendors are reminded to use the defined structure in developing their submission, and to include all information required to evaluate their proposed offerings within the body of the proposal.

6.3.1 Cover Letter

Vendors are reminded to include a cover letter, signed by a person authorized to represent the vendor organization, that should include:

- Confirmation that the contents of the proposal are complete, accurate and representative of the products and capabilities of their organization as they exist today.
- Commitment of the organization to abide by the terms and conditions of this RFP.
- Identification of the contact name and details for correspondence in association with this RFP.
- Acknowledgement and receipt of all addenda issued under this RFP.

6.3.2 Proposal

6.3.2.1 Table of Contents

Provide a table of contents, including page numbers, reflecting the structure and outline of your proposal.

6.3.2.2 Executive Summary

Provide a summary of the key features of your proposal, including:

- Identification of the solution being proposed, its key features and the proposed suitability in meeting the City's requirements.
- Identification of the proposing organization, history and experience in conducting similar projects.
- Outline of the proposed approach in managing and implementing the solution.
- Key features and benefits of the proposal and their value to the City, based upon your interpretation of the RFP.
- Additional innovation and value-added offerings that you are able to provide to the City.

Executive summaries should be no more than two pages long.

6.3.2.3 Understanding Of Requirements

Provide an overview of your understanding of the City's requirements.

Discussion of requirements should be no more than three pages long.

6.3.2.4 Solution

Provide an overview of the proposed solution.

This should include a detailed discussion of:

- The details of the solution being proposed.
- Why the solution is relevant and appropriate in responding to the City's requirements.
- A detailed response indicating how the proposed solution meets each of the functional requirements as outlined by the City.

6.3.2.5 Work Plan

Provide an overview of how the solution will be implemented within the City. This should include:

- A discussion of the overall approach to be adopted in confirming, developing, and implementing a solution for the City.
- A detailed workplan, including:
 - Activities.
 - Start and finish dates for each activity.
 - Resources for each activity.
 - Effort estimates for each activity.
- Deliverables and anticipated deliverable dates.
- The project organization, including identification of:
 - Team structure.
 - Roles and responsibilities for the proposed team structure.
 - Proposed resources for each position.
 - Required support from City resources.

6.3.2.6 Company Information

Provide an overview of the organization and its experience in delivering similar solutions. This should include:

- Brief corporate overview.
- Experience in conducting similar projects to that contemplated in this RFP.
- Summary of the resources and capabilities of the organization.
- Identification of additional capabilities and value-added services that will be available to the City.

6.3.2.7 References

Provide three customer references of recently completed projects similar in scope to the requirements of this RFP. References should ideally be municipalities. Reference information should include:

- Organization name.
- Contact information (name, phone number and email).
- Project timing and duration.

- Project cost.
- Overview of the scope of work, solution and why that solution was relevant.
- Discussion of challenges encountered and how those challenges were resolved.

6.3.2.8 Resumes

For each proposed resource, provide a resume for each resource. Resumes should clearly identify:

- The experience of each proposed resource
- Involvement in projects similar in scope to the requirements of this RFP.
- Depth of expertise for the role that is being proposed.

Resumes should be no more than three pages each in length.

6.3.3 Pricing

Provide a detailed breakdown of your proposed pricing based upon the defined workplan. This should include identification of:

- Costs for each deliverable.
- Resource rates for each proposed resource.
- Estimates of travel expenses and disbursements.
- Identification of estimation assumptions and combine a section on budget.

7 Final Report

7.1 Design

The Strategy will reflect a professional design with quality images, an attractive cover page, practical layout, and content in a clear, easy-to-read font.

7.2 Delivery

The consultant will compile a draft document that will be forwarded by email to Spruce Grove's Economic & Business Development Department for review and feedback. The consultant will make all necessary revisions to the draft and, on approval by the City, will be finalized. The final strategy will be provided to the City in electronic PDF form and five (5) printed and bound hard copies.

7.3 Presentations

The consultant will prepare and deliver three (3) formal presentations of the DRAFT strategy, each with a targeted PowerPoint presentation to the following groups:

- Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC)
- Spruce Grove City Council (possible)

8 Source Documents

The following documents will be made available to the successful consultant to help them be properly informed.

Additional reports as identified may also be provided.

- Economic Development Strategy & Action Plan 2023-2028
- Corporate Plan 2023 -2025
- City of Spruce Grove Strategic Plan 2018-2035
- List of current government supports:
 - [Funding & Loan Programs](#)
 - [Small Business Resources for Businesses and Entrepreneurs](#)
 - [Export Ready?](#)

9 RFP Terms & Conditions

9.1 Gifts & Gratuities

Vendors will not offer entertainment, gifts, gratuities, discounts, or special services, regardless of value, to any employee of the City of Spruce Grove. Vendors shall report to the City any attempt by City employees to obtain such favours.

9.2 Cost Of Proposal

As a condition of submitting a proposal, each vendor acknowledges and agrees that this procurement process is a request for proposals and is not a tendering process. It is part of an overall procurement process intended to enable the City to identify a potential successful vendor. The City will not be responsible for any costs, expenses, losses, damages or liability incurred by any vendor as a result of, or arising out of, preparing, submitting, or disseminating a proposal, or for any presentations or interviews related to the proposal, or due to the City's acceptance or non-acceptance of a proposal. No implied obligation of any kind or on behalf of the City shall arise from anything in this RFP.

9.3 Communications

Communications with respect to this procurement are to only be conducted in accordance with the provisions outlined in this RFP. Vendor organizations should not rely on any communications or information not included in this RFP or, by extension, any subsequent addenda issued in accordance with the RFP process. Any communication with City staff or other stakeholders outside of the defined question process will result in the disqualification of that organization's response.

9.4 Media

Vendor organizations may not communicate directly or indirectly with the media regarding this RFP or any subsequent negotiations or contract without the express written permission of the City.

Vendor organizations will refrain from engaging in lobbying or carrying out any activities to publicly promote or advertise their participation, any details of their proposal or their interest in this RFP.

9.5 Bid Ineligibility

The City may reject a proposal from a vendor where, in the opinion of the City, the commercial relationship between the City and the vendor has been impaired by the

act(s) or omission(s) of the vendor, within the five (5) year period immediately preceding the date on which a contract is to be awarded.

The act(s) or omission(s) include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Threatening litigation or pursuing litigation against the City, in relation to previous contracts awarded to the vendor by the City;
- A claim has been made by the City against the vendor regarding previous performance under an agreement with the City, including claims under a security submitted by the vendor, such as a Bid Deposit, Performance Bond or Materials and Labour Bond;
- The vendor has refused to follow reasonable directions of the City or to cure a default under any agreement with the City;
- The vendor refuses to enter into any agreement with the City after the vendor's proposal has been accepted by the City;
- The vendor has communicated, directly or indirectly, with any other vendor about the preparation of the vendor's bid for the same Work;
- The vendor or any person with whom that vendor is not at arm's length, within the meaning of the Income Tax Act (Canada) as amended, has been convicted of an offence under any taxation statute in Canada;
- The vendor has been convicted under the Criminal Code or other legislation, including environmental, product liability, occupational health and safety and financial securities legislation.

9.6 Retention

Submitted proposals will be retained by the City for on-going reference, and will not be returned to vendors.

9.7 Late Proposals

Late proposals will not be accepted. Responses received after the closing date and time will be returned to the vendor unopened.

9.8 Entire Proposal

The proposal submitted by vendor organizations is to be the full, complete, and entire proposal of the vendor. No links or references to additional documentation, promotional material or web sites should be included by the vendor. Vendors should not rely on any other information being considered in evaluating responses apart from the information contained within the submitted proposal.

The City will not be responsible for incomplete or misdirected proposals.

9.9 Expiry Date

Proposals and pricing shall be irrevocable for a period of 90 (ninety) days from the closing date and time of this RFP.

9.10 Acceptance Of Proposals

The City may elect at its sole discretion to accept or reject any proposal or part thereof and to waive any defect or irregularity in any Proposal and to accept or reject any Proposal, in whole or in part. The City may reject any or all proposals, cancel the RFP, or cancel and re-issue the RFP in whole or in part on the same or different terms at any time.

9.11 Assessment Of Proposals

The City reserves the right to consider and rely on any criteria that the City deems relevant, even if such criteria has not been published in this RFP.

Without reducing the generality of the previous statement, the City reserves the right to consider while evaluating proposals:

- The information provided in the proposal.
- Information provided in response to enquiries of credit and industry references.
- Information received in response to enquiries by the City to third parties regarding the reputation, reliability, experience, and capabilities of a vendor.
- Previous experience of a vendor in providing services to the City.

9.12 Conflict Of Interest

In submitting a response to this RFP, vendors warrant that no employee or member of Council of the City will have any interest, directly or indirectly, in the performance of work or any profits that would result should they be successful vendor. Vendors shall disclose to the City any such conflict(s) prior to executing an agreement for this work. If such a conflict of interest does exist, the City may, at its discretion, withhold the execution of the agreement until the matter is suitably resolved.

Vendors shall, upon request, provide all pertinent information regarding ownership of their company. This information shall be supplied within forty-eight (48) hours of request.

9.13 Change To Timeline

The City reserves the right to amend the timeline of this RFP. Timeline amendments will be communicated to all vendors by addendum as discussed in the Clarifications section, above.

Vendors requesting an extension of this timeline must provide sufficient reason for their request. Extension requests received less than 5 (five) business days before the published closing date will not be considered, provided that in any event the City shall in no circumstances have any obligation to allow any extension or to provide a response to an extension request in a timely manner, or at all.

9.14 Amendment Or Withdrawal

Vendor organizations may amend or withdraw their proposals any time prior to the submission deadline for this RFP. The last proposal received will invalidate and supersede all previous submitted proposals. After the deadline, all proposals are irrevocable.

9.15 Clarification

The City may, at its direction, seek clarification from vendor organizations regarding any unclear, ambiguous, or missing information within their proposals and allow clarifications to

be made by vendors. Vendors should be prepared to respond and provide additional information in a timely fashion.

Vendor organizations are cautioned not to rely on this provision, and should endeavor to ensure their submitted proposals are complete, clear, and comprehensive.

9.16 Negotiation

The selected vendor(s) will be expected to negotiate and enter into an agreement with the City. Any negotiations will be subject to the terms of reference defined within this RFP, and the governing law of the Province of Alberta. The City will not be obligated to enter into a legally binding agreement until satisfied with the solution, pricing, and terms of reference of the agreement. No legal relationship will be created until a formal written agreement is negotiated and signed by both parties.

9.17 Best Fit, Not Lowest Price

The City is seeking a solution that best fits the requirements and needs of the organization.

The City is under no obligation to award an agreement to the lowest cost or any proposal submitted under this RFP.

9.18 Failure To Enter An Agreement

Where the successful vendor(s) fails to enter into an agreement, the City reserves the right to approach and negotiate with the next ranked candidate(s).

9.19 Inaccurate Information

By submitting a proposal, vendors warrant and certify that all information is true, reflective of the current capabilities of their product(s) and free of misstatements or misrepresentations.

Identification of material errors, misstatements or inaccuracies may result in a vendor's proposal being disqualified.

9.20 Debriefing

At the completion of the RFP process, vendors may request a debriefing. Requests are to be made in writing, and within thirty days of receiving notification of the results of this RFP.

The intent of the debriefing information session is to aid the vendor organization in presenting a better proposal in subsequent procurement opportunities. Any debriefing provided is not for the purpose of providing an opportunity to challenge the procurement process.

9.21 Freedom Of Information

The City is subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPP) act of the Province of Alberta. This obligates the City to release information under certain conditions and circumstances.

Under the Act, information harmful to the business interests of a contractor and/or proprietary information must be protected. Vendors are encouraged to identify which portions of their proposals are considered proprietary or confidential. However, the City

cannot guarantee such information will remain confidential and is subject to disclosure required by FOIPP, or otherwise required by law or by order of a court or tribunal. Vendors are advised that their proposals will, as necessary, be disclosed on a confidential basis to the City's advisers that have been retained for the purpose of evaluating or participating in the evaluation of their proposals.