

# FRIAA CHRP RFEOI

## Little Smoky Restoration

September 2020 – Applicant  
Questions



Applicant questions received by 4pm on October 5<sup>th</sup> will be answered and shared on the FRIAA website by 4pm on October 6<sup>th</sup>. Questions will not be addressed if received after 4pm on October 5<sup>th</sup>.

Posted September 24, 2020

### Applicant Questions:

**Question #1:** Who will check the work and how will this be done to ensure quality and the appropriate number of mounds created? This will greatly impact price.

**Answer #1:** FRIAA will look at the proposed methodology and project approach to see if it meets the requested objectives, is likely to be effective based on the Framework, and will be sustained by the proposed budget. FRIAA is not obligated to take the lowest price, but are looking for good value and a high likelihood of successful outcome delivery.

#### Additional Considerations / Information:

- FRIAA will likely do an Operational Review (site visit). In FRIAA's grant programs, the applicant(s) commit to doing the work as outlined in their proposal. Grant funding is released with the submission of progress reports and accompanying expense claims. (Progress report and expense claim templates are available on the CHRP Program page.)
- FRIAA will look at the experience and qualifications of the applicant(s) and their team (often a Project Management/Quality Control/Supervisory/Reporting/Mapping firm will partner with a heavy equipment operator) and they will supply their own QC approach inline with the Framework and EOI objectives.
- Local employment opportunities are highly encouraged, as is creating Indigenous employment opportunities.
- Applicants will decide if they will propose for summer or winter work, and if it will occur in 20/21 or 21/22. Sooner is generally better, but if there's not time to do scouting, consultation and regulatory permitting for this winter, then it may be better to wait.
- The EOI requires less information than a detailed proposal. The RFP phase will request more details including resourcing plans, risks and mitigation, covid protocols (driving at staffing resources and the ability to complete the work on time and budget), PM and QC methods, reporting and expense claim schedules and project team experience.
- RFP will potentially be due on or about November 10, and the successful applicant(s) of the project award would not be notified until at least December 1. The process (Review Panel, recommendation to the FRIAA Board, Board Approval) could take additional time. Once a successful applicant is approved, all applicants will be notified about their application results. These dates are for general guidance only.

**Question #2:** What level of detail is required in the EOI budget?

**Answer #2:** The budget amount and level of detail should support your proposed methodology, in order to advance to the detailed proposal stage. There may be room for minor adjustments in budgeting between the EOI and RFP stage, but it is not expected that major changes will occur. The template provides a budget structure to help applicants think through the necessary considerations for successful project execution.

**Question #3:** What is the expectation for following the operational plan provided, given that it's a few years old?

**Answer #3:** There is room to make field-level adjustments, based on ground conditions. Micro-topography and soil-moisture / ground-condition treatment applications have been handled well by coaching and training equipment operators to read the terrain and make minor adjustments as they go. Undulating topography may require large mounds in low areas, medium mound/screef transition and screefing at the crest – this can occur within a few hundred meter frequency – more often than a supervisor can check in on the operator or was outlined in the planning document. Using the topography and adjacent timber to make good, localized decisions is key to successful implementation.

**Question #4:** Will seed from the recent FRIAA Seed Collection project be available?

**Answer #4:** FRIAA's caribou habitat seed collection project is currently scheduled for Sb collection in late 2020, with Se and Lt in the summer of 2021. Depending on the applicant's operational implementation timing, the seed will not be collected/cleaned/ready for sowing in time. If planting is planned for summer 2022, it may be available. Applicants can source and purchase existing seed held by the GOA, the forest industry or other parties for sowing this fall. Reasonable species substitutions will be considered and approved by GOA, with applicants obtaining appropriate variance approvals as needed if seed zones are also being adjusted.

**Question #5:** Is the operational plan for the compartments available, or just the geodatabase?

**Answer #5:** The "Operational Plan for Linear Restoration, Little Smoky and A La Peche, GOA, August 2018" is posted on the FRIAA website with the RFEOI information package.

**Question #6:** What are the applicant responsibilities for Indigenous Consultation?

**Answer #6:** The applicant is responsible to obtain ACO clearance (although this is typically not required on reclamation / restoration of permanent dispositions, given the age of some legacy seismic lines and the lack of "disposition ownership", it is prudent to confirm this clearance). In terms of ground disturbance, the applicant will need to conduct a historical resources search and mitigate as required.

Additionally, and of crucial importance, the applicant(s) will need to engage with the registered trappers to understand trapline access and trap locations, and work out a plan with the trapper to facilitate their needs. Some methods used on past FRIAA projects include leaving 1-2m access for a few hundred meter segment on alternating sides of the seismic line as "untreated", such that the trapper can continue with quad or sled access, but long-distance line-of-sight is blocked. Another method that has been used is to ensure "go-around" paths in the adjacent forest for portions of the line, particularly at critical line-blocking at intersections, creek crossings and/or on steep slopes. Follow-up after completing the treatment will likely be needed to ensure the trapper can find alternative access routes. Engaging with the trapper and possibly travelling the lines together may bring new innovative solutions to mind.

**Question #7:** Will applicants be required to notify all disposition holders? The operational plans are a few years old and holdings may have changed or new ones may be present.

**Answer #7:** Applicants are required to acquire an updated land standing report and follow all required notification and consultation requirements for operating on public land. This includes but is not limited to: obtaining appropriate road use agreements, pipeline, powerline and rail crossing and proximity agreements, water act notifications and permits, wetland assessments, Indigenous Consultation, timber holder (FMA) consent if required for a TFA to conduct tree felling or tree tipping, CNT/PNT notifications/permissions as required etc.

**Question #8:** Have the operational plans been field verified or where they a desktop exercise only?

**Answer #8:** Various and combinations. Some planning contractors may have done some field verification, some had low-level imagery to assist in the plan development, some worked with higher level ecotypes. FRIAA strongly encourages including time and budget to scout the operational compartments in snow-free conditions to identify creeks, inaccessible slope and water crossings, potential staging and helipad locations etc. Potential ground access routes, safety egress, equipment mobilization and deployment are the responsibility of the

applicant. Seasonally appropriate site access, staging preparations and operations will have potential budget and timing constraints.

**Question #9:** The EOI says preferred deliverables in 12-18 months, is there flexibility into 2023?

**Answer #9:** The project(s) will likely be awarded in December 2020, so FRIAA expects completion by summer/early fall 2022. It may be possible to plan, consult, mobilize and operationalize this winter (20/21) with summer planting in 2021 and late summer/fall deliverables and final reporting. Alternatively, winter operations may be required in winter 21/22, with a summer plant in 2022. Another option may be summer operations in 2021, with summer plant in 2021 or 2022. Seedling sowing requests are usually due in November. Good planning and preparation leads to good execution and outcomes, but certainly time is of the essence with caribou habitat restoration.

**Question #10:** Is winter work required or is FRIAA open to innovative approaches?

**Answer #10:** FRIAA and the GOA would very much like to see innovative and creative approaches / techniques and adaptive management that meet the restoration objectives and can be implemented at lower costs. Lowering the \$/km is crucial to restoring the 250,000 km of legacy seismic line in the province. FRIAA and the GOA are looking for project outcomes (habitat restoration) as achieved by reducing or eliminating site-limiting factors.

In various combinations under certain site and weather conditions, this includes blocking line access to people (recreational use that causes compaction and prohibits woody stem growth), blocking access and line-of-sight to predators, alternative prey and caribou, through tree tipping, stem bending and CWM spreading. Additional tools include decompaction, warming, and drying wet soils through silviculture techniques such as ripping, mounding, and screening to create planting microsites. Natural in-seeding from adjacent timber stands and broadcast seeding may also be employed. Some soil and weather conditions permit the transplant of small or medium sized trees or clumps of trees. Terrain variability in regions of the province include slopes, watercourse and third-party infrastructure crossings, muskeg, unseasonal daily temperature fluctuations. The prepared operational plans have attempted to accommodate the best available knowledge about the local site conditions, but there is still much to be gained from harnessing local knowledge and experience.

**Question #11:** How will FRIAA consider the balance of cost reductions and Indigenous inclusion?

**Answer #11:** There are many ways to consider Indigenous inclusion in the work plan – from hiring Indigenous owned companies or equipment, from iron to tree fellers to medics to quality control, tree planting, scouting, local access knowledge, to offering training and capacity building opportunities. In past FRIAA projects we've seen huge cost-savings from using local equipment, which may or may not be indigenous-owned, but may alternatively engage in hiring local Indigenous operators. These are only some ideas.

**Question #12:** How does the funding “held in trust” work (PGA template Section 2.7)? Can funding be accessed incrementally over the project duration?

**Answer #12:** In the RFP phase, applicants will be requested to provide a payment schedule that should correlate to planned activities and expenses. Periodic Progress Reports and Expense Claim submissions can be made as the project progresses. “Advances” paid by FRIAA (any payment that is not fully supported by timesheets, third-party invoices etc. is considered an “advance”), could be recalled by FRIAA if it was found that the payment could not be substantiated with adequate supporting documentation – PGA Section 2.10. Once FRIAA commits funds to your approved project, that is the amount available to complete the work as outlined in your proposal. Changes to the scope, timing etc. must be captured in an Amendment document, usually discussed prior to deviations being made.

Applicants may request an amount of funds early in the project as an “advance”, when there may be little documentation to support the requested amount. Subsequent payments usually require the submission of timesheets / hours log, sub-contractor invoices, receipts or invoices for materials or third-party services such as helicopters. A minimum of 20% of your total grant will be paid with receipt, review and approval by FRIAA of the required deliverables and Final Outcomes Report.

As an example, consider a restoration project proposed for \$1.42 million. Perhaps the first few months of the project involved permitting and regulatory approvals, consultation, and ground verification for \$30,000 per month. Then field operations begin and there is a month of crossing installations for a cost of \$200,000. Then operations begin with multiple pieces of equipment, fellers, safety and supervision staff, for two months of \$400,000 of costs. Some preliminary results (GIS files of line segments by treatment type) are reported the following month for \$10,000. There's a several month gap with no activity, no costs, no expense claims. Tree plant occurs, adding the cost of the trees and some additional tree felling, bringing another month of \$300,000 of costs. The following month final mapping and reporting occurs, for a cost of \$20,000. The final payment needs to be \$284,000 (20% of the total grant). Applicants can decide which payments are reduced from the full cost, or ideally, finalize the last report and costs so that the final payment can be made soon after the project completion.

**Question #13:** What key factors can be attributed to successful proponent led caribou habitat restoration projects administered through FRIAA in the past?

**Answer #13:** Careful planning and thorough logistics, pre-scouting the ground (after grant award but prior to operations commencing) by ground or air or both, pre-constructing crossings with a couple pieces of machinery prior to full crew and equipment deployment, being prepared for the hard, frozen ground – your excavator will use up a lot of teeth, having access to a mechanic and parts to keep machinery running, using local tendered crews and equipment with minimal mob and demob costs, having contingency areas and access that can be used under varying weather conditions, working closely with operators so they understand the purpose of the work and can make terrain-based decisions throughout the shift, use technology to guide and inform operators of the planned treatments as they work, and further record on deviations of applied treatment on the fly, consider that winter access and staging may not be accessible for summer tree-plant operations. Helicopter slinging of trees was more effective than trying to access with a side by side. Treatments that look aggressive in the winter, melt and settle in the spring and summer.

Frequent communications with FRIAA during the project on progress status (this might be a weekly call or email during operations outside of planned monthly progress reporting), potential hiccups and planned mitigations, early requests for deviations from the operational plan, justification and alternative actions if required. (Plan deviations will usually require AEP approval.)

**Question #14:** What key factors can be attributed to less successful proponent led caribou habitat restoration projects administered through FRIAA in the past?

**Answer #14:** Deviations from the proposed and approved scope of work – potentially throwing off the project timing and budget. Pounding in too much frost or clearing snow from lines too soon, necessitating ripping to enable the excavator to make mounds or creating very slow mounding production. Tree felling in the winter requires significant effort to trudge through deep snow, if not complimented with machine operations – some segments and key intersections may be better left tree felling or stem bending in the summer, possibly coordinating with the tree plant.

Photos of line blocking from FRIAA CHRP 2019/2020 A La Peche Restoration Project







**Tapper Access "Go-Around" – full line blocking was used, but trapper access was ensured through the adjacent stand.**

