

**Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta
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REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

FOREST SECTOR COVID SAFETY MEASURES PROGRAM

FEBRUARY 2021



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (“**FRIAA**”) is inviting applications for reimbursement of incremental costs incurred and paid for implementing certain COVID-19 safety measures under FRIAA’s Forest Sector COVID Safety Measures Program (the “**Program**”) as funded through the Federal COVID-19 Health and Safety Cost Relief Program. The following information sets out the Request for Applications (“**RFA**”) process and provides instructions to prospective applicants who wish to apply for funding under the Program through this RFA.
- 1.2 Applicants are advised to pay careful attention to the information provided in this RFA. Failure to satisfy any term, condition or requirement of the Program or this RFA may result in the rejection of the application.

2. PROGRAM BACKGROUND

- 2.1 FRIAA was established in 1997 to promote and initiate projects that enhance Alberta’s forest resources. In keeping with this purpose, FRIAA entered into a Contribution Agreement with the Minister of Natural Resources Canada (“**NRCan**”) to deliver the Program.
- 2.2 The Program is funded by the Government of Canada through the Forest Sector Safety Measures Fund administered by NRCan to help defray incremental costs associated with COVID-19 safety measures incorporated into businesses operations conducted by small- and medium-sized forest sector enterprises (“**SMEs**”).
- 2.3 The objective of the Program is to support ongoing sustained yield forest management in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Program is intended to provide for the reimbursement of Eligible Expenditures incurred and paid for by certain SMEs for implementing necessary safety measures in Alberta to comply with the health and safety requirements and the Public Health Orders of Alberta authorities. The Program does not subsidize or relieve forest disposition holders of their responsibilities for sustained yield forest management including reforestation and other forest management activities and associated costs and expenses; rather, it addresses activities that are above and beyond required forest management functions that arise directly from compliance with health and safety requirements and Public Health Orders. The Program will apply to such incremental costs incurred and paid from April 1, 2020 up to and including March 15, 2021 subject to the availability of funds.
- 2.4 Up-to-date information can be found at www.friaa.ab.ca. It is the responsibility of the applicant to check this resource frequently for any Program updates, changes, or postings of Questions and Answers. FRIAA will not be providing Program updates, changes or postings by any other means.

3. COVID-19 IN ALBERTA

- 3.1 The Government of Alberta has established guidelines and requirements for workplaces to manage COVID-19 related health and safety risks that prescribe those actions for which incremental costs that have been incurred and paid may be claimed by SMEs (“**Eligible Expenditures**”). Subject to paragraph 5, Eligible Expenditures include:
- (a) salaries and benefits, and worker training and development;
 - (b) management, professional and technical services;
 - (c) contractors;
 - (d) materials and supplies
 - (e) routine laboratory and field equipment maintenance;

- (f) transportation rental, operation and maintenance;
- (g) rental, upgrading or expansion of facilities;
- (h) machinery and equipment;
- (i) travel expenses including accommodation, and venue expenses; and
- (j) GST, PST or HST, net of any tax rebate to which an applicant is entitled.

4. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- 4.1 Applicants are those SMEs that have employee count averages of less than 500 employees in the last 12 months where an average takes into account the seasonal nature of some SMEs. The employee count must include all employees on the payroll in Canada at the corporate level (not by facility or by work site).
- 4.2 Applicants are those SMEs whose primary business activities are listed under one of the following North American Industry Classification Systems (“**NAICS**”) codes: forestry and logging (NAICS 113), support activities for forestry (NAICS 1153), wood product manufacturing (NAICS 321), and pulp and paper manufacturing (NAICS 322).
- 4.3 SMEs providing goods or services to the forest sector but whose primary activities are not listed under the aforementioned NAICS codes (113, 1153, 321, 322), such as transportation, housing or equipment, are not eligible for funding under the Program.
- 4.4 Alberta Agriculture and Forestry has provided FRIAA with a priority listing of SMEs that are eligible for funding under the Program in the following order of priority:
 - (a) tree planting companies – NAICS Code 1153;
 - (b) silviculture survey companies – NAICS Code 1153;
 - (c) contractors and service providers – NAICS Codes 113 or 1153; and
 - (d) other SMEs – NAICS Codes 321 or 322.

- 4.5 Applicants are accountable to FRIAA and shall provide FRIAA with all forms of documentation and reports as may be required by FRIAA.

5. ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES

- 5.1 The following set out the criteria for the determination of eligible expenditures recognizing that COVID-19 health and safety measures can vary across different operations. As such, Eligible Expenditures shall be:
 - (a) incurred and paid between April 1, 2020 and March 15, 2021;
 - (b) incurred and paid by a SME;
 - (c) incremental expenses directly related to the implementation of COVID-19 health and safety measures (*e.g.* personal protective equipment, handwashing stations, extra vehicles and accommodations in work camps, extra sanitization efforts, and facilities for self-isolation in work camps);
 - (d) incremental, discrete, and distinguishable from other changes in revenues or productivity

(*e.g.* lost revenues from reduced sales effectiveness shall not be Eligible Expenditures);

- (e) incurred at places of work or work camp location (*i.e.* personal COVID-related costs such as the cost of employees isolating at home shall not be Eligible Expenditures); and
- (f) incurred for program delivery in Alberta;

and shall not be:

- (g) in-kind costs, being contributions of goods and services provided by the applicant or other contributors;
- (h) expenses incurred by provincial and territorial governments for program administration, information dissemination and training on COVID-related health and safety requirements, monitoring, enforcement and any other provincial and territorial residual costs;
- (i) expenses that have already been covered by payments from other sources (*e.g.* already transmitted to and paid by large forest sector companies by way of higher fees);
- (j) expenses and costs associated with the activities already supported under other federal or provincial programs, however, the applicant can apply to or benefit from other federal or provincial government COVID-related or other funding programs, provided such funding or other contributions do not directly support the implementation of COVID safety measures.

6. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- 6.1 Applications must be in writing and may be submitted by SMEs that fall within one of the categories set out in paragraph 4.4 according to the order of priority set out therein.
- 6.2 Applications must be clear, well written, and must concisely describe the Eligible Expenditures including each of the requirements set out in paragraph 6.3 below, using the Application Template that can be found on the FRIAA website at www.friaa.ab.ca within the RFA “zip” folder available for download.
- 6.3 An application submitted to FRIAA must include the following:

(a) Application Form

The Application Form must be signed by the Authorized Representative and set out:

- (i) the identification of the applicant and Authorized Representative¹ (name, phone number, email and address);
- (ii) a description of the Eligible Expenditures;
- (iii) an indication of the period within which the Eligible Expenditures were incurred and paid; and
- (iv) the amount of funding being applied for.

¹ Applications must be signed by a chief financial officer or other senior level executive responsible for the company’s finances.

(b) Application Template

The applicant must set out:

- (i) a description of the period for which the expenses being claimed relate to and the Eligible Expenditures that will be included;
- (ii) a description as to how the applicant has determined eligibility for cost relief based on the priorities, industry (NAICS) code(s) associated with the applicant's primary business activities and the average number of employees as set out in paragraph 4;
- (iii) a reporting against the targets as established by FRIAA for the Program such as employment, Indigenous ownership, and COVID outbreaks affecting operations;
- (iv) a list and description of the Eligible Expenditures for which the applicant is seeking reimbursement;
- (v) supporting documentation outlining the Eligible Expenditures, including accounting statements, excerpts from the general ledger and receipts where possible;
- (vi) a statement confirming that the applicant has not billed or received payment or reimbursement from another party, such as a timber disposition holder, other third party, or jurisdiction; and
- (vii) signature of the senior executive of the applicant responsible for the claim.

7. ADJUDICATION CRITERIA

7.1 Applicants may be contacted by FRIAA for further information as required. The adjudication criteria that will be used in the final selection are as set out within this RFA and as follows:

- (a) Applications submitted to FRIAA shall be prioritized based on the priorities provided by Alberta Agriculture and Forestry as set out in paragraph 4.4;
- (b) The applicant incurred and paid Eligible Expenditures in Alberta directly as a result of forestry services delivered in Alberta;
- (c) The costs set out in the application must be necessary and reasonable, with respect to compliance with Public Health Orders, requirements and directives due to COVID-19;
- (d) The application and Eligible Expenditures must comply with and not be contrary to the objects and bylaws of FRIAA or the provisions of relevant legislation, regulations or workplace requirements of relevant authorities;
- (e) An application must be made in writing and submitted by an applicant that is contracted by a forest tenure holder or FRIAA to deliver goods and services, or as otherwise may be approved by FRIAA;
- (f) Applications must include a request for reimbursement of Eligible Expenditures which were incurred and paid after April 1, 2020 and up to March 15, 2021 for Alberta program delivery;
- (g) Applications must include a statement that the reimbursement amount, information provided to support the reimbursement amount requested and backup information are true

and accurate; and

- (h) Applications must be signed by a chief financial officer or other senior level executive responsible for the applicant's finances.

8. LEGAL NOTICE

8.1 By submitting an application, you confirm that you have read, understand and accept the information contained in this RFA and, that each of you, the applicant and all individuals and entities that collaborate or are otherwise involved in the preparation of the application or the submission of the required documentation ("**Project Partners**") agree as follows:

- (a) FRIAA may at any time withdraw, suspend, cancel, terminate, amend or alter all or any portion of this RFA, including but not limited to the Application Requirements, the Adjudication Criteria, and the application review and selection process.
- (b) FRIAA reserves the unqualified right to accept or reject any or all applications for any reason. FRIAA is not required to accept any applications nor is it required to accept any application for funding.
- (c) FRIAA's evaluation of the applications may be based on, but is not in any way limited to, the criteria set out in this RFA. FRIAA may consider any criteria determined by FRIAA to be relevant to FRIAA's mandate, regardless of whether such additional criteria have been disclosed to the applicant.
- (d) No conduct, act or omission of FRIAA, or its directors, officers, consultants, project advisors, members, agents, servants and their respective successors and assigns (collectively the "**FRIAA Parties**") other than a written notice to the applicant signed by an authorized person for FRIAA, will constitute an acceptance of an application.
- (e) Applications that do not comply with the requirements described in this RFA may be rejected in whole or in part or not considered. FRIAA reserves the unqualified right to accept or reject a non-compliant application.
- (f) This RFA is an invitation for applications only. It is not an offer and the submission of an application does not create a contract or agreement of any kind between FRIAA and the applicant.
- (g) Acceptance of an application does not create a binding contract between FRIAA and the applicant. FRIAA shall not be obligated in any manner whatsoever to any applicant until a written agreement between FRIAA and the applicant ("**Contribution Agreement**") has been duly executed relating to an approved application.
- (h) As between the parties, the application and all documents and materials you submit to FRIAA in connection with the application and this RFA and all intellectual property in and to the foregoing are the exclusive property of FRIAA immediately upon delivery to FRIAA. For clarity, this refers to the materials themselves, not to any technology or innovations disclosed or discussed in them. Intellectual property developed during the course of the application will be addressed through the Contribution Agreement and will normally be owned by the applicant.
- (i) You, the applicant and any Project Partners will keep this RFA confidential and all source data, information, drawings, or specifications provided with it except as necessary to prepare an application to FRIAA in response to this RFP or in the event of a successful application the deliverables specified in the RFP requirements.

- (j) You, the applicant and any Project Partners will not make a claim against FRIAA or the FRIAA Parties for any reason whatsoever relating to this RFA. You are undertaking the expenditures required to prepare and submit an application entirely at your own risk, and you waive any right and release FRIAA and the FRIAA Parties from any demands, liability, claim or recovery for costs, expenses, or damages incurred whatsoever and howsoever arising out of or relating to this RFA or any application prepared in response to it, whether such right or claim arises in contract, negligence or otherwise.
- (k) FRIAA takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the information supplied during this RFA process by FRIAA or the FRIAA Parties.
- (l) Neither FRIAA nor any of the FRIAA Parties will have any liability whatsoever to you, the applicant, or any Project Partners, or any of them, in connection with this RFA or any application prepared in response to it.
- (m) Upon acceptance of an application by FRIAA, the applicant will be required to enter into a Contribution Agreement with FRIAA, on substantially the same terms and conditions contained in the Contribution Agreement provided during the RFA or available upon request.

9. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

- 9.1 An applicant may submit an application for funding to FRIAA in accordance with the Application Form and Terms and Conditions, the Program Description, this RFA, and the requirements, policies and procedures of FRIAA.
- 9.2 Applications must be identified as follows: “FRIAA Forest Sector COVID Safety Measures Program -- RFA February 2021”.
- 9.3 Applications may be sent by email. Email submissions must be sent to: admin@friaa.ab.ca and must include “FRIAA Forest Sector COVID Safety Measures Program -- RFA February 2021” in the subject header of the email. Only applications formatted in PDF or Microsoft Word will be accepted.
- 9.4 Applicants may submit a single, unbound original copy accompanied by an electronic version (in PDF or Microsoft Word) on USB drive. Application submissions must use the Application Template and be sealed and enclosed in an envelope clearly marked as: “FRIAA Forest Sector COVID Safety Measures Program -- RFA February 2021”. Submissions must be sent to the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta:
 - by mail to: Box 11094, Main Post Office,
Edmonton, AB T5J 3K4
Attention: FRIAA Administrator
 - by courier to: FRIAA c/o MNP LLP
Suite 1600, MNP Tower,
10235 - 101 Street NW
Edmonton, AB T5J 3G1
Attention: FRIAA Administrator
- 9.5 Applications sent to any FRIAA or Government of Alberta representative will not be accepted.
- 9.6 **Deadline for applications:** Only those applications received before the close of business at 4:00 p.m., local Edmonton time, on **Monday March 15, 2021** will be accepted for evaluation. **Applications received any time thereafter will not be accepted for evaluation.**

- 9.7 FRIAA is not responsible for applications that are not received as the result of any courier or postal delivery service issues including disruptions, loss of postal service, the loss of an application by the postal service or a delivery failure of any kind by any delivery service whatsoever. FRIAA is also not responsible for applications that are not received as the result of technological issues, attachment size or any other logistical barrier which may impede electronic submission.

10. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 10.1 An optional call-in Question and Answer session will be held and is scheduled on Thursday, February 25, 2021 at 1:00 PM MST. Further details will be provided at www.friaa.ab.ca at least 1 week prior to the scheduled session. Applicants are encouraged to submit questions to admin@friaa.ab.ca prior to the call-in session, so that these can be discussed accordingly.

11. NEXT STEPS

- 11.1 Where FRIAA approves an application, an approval and a Contribution Agreement shall be prepared and forwarded by FRIAA to the applicant outlining the terms and conditions of the approval.
- 11.2 The approval shall address amongst other things, the following:
- (a) The maximum amount payable under the approval;
 - (b) The terms and conditions of the approval; and
 - (c) Any other terms and conditions required by FRIAA including audit procedures and reporting requirements.