

Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta

FRIAA FIRESMART PROGRAM (FFP)

REFERENCE: FRIAA-FFP JANUARY 2023

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Issue Date:	January 19, 2023
Closing Date/Time:	February 17, 2023 - 16:00 hrs
Information Sessions:	January 25 and January 31, 2023
Administrator:	FRIAA Administrator
Telephone:	780-429-5873
Submission Portal:	https://friaa.ab.ca/program-submissions/
Inquiry Email:	admin@friaa.ab.ca
Website Information:	www.friaa.ab.ca
Mailing:	Box 11094 Main Post Office Edmonton, AB T5J 3K4

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (“**FRIAA**”) was established in 1997 to promote and initiate projects that enhance Alberta’s forest resources. In keeping with this primary purpose, FRIAA entered into a Grant Agreement with the Government of Alberta (“**GOA**”) to deliver the FRIAA FireSmart Program (“**FFP**”).
- 1.2 The purpose of the FFP is to:
- (a) provide for enhanced public safety and improved protection of at-risk-communities, forest resources, and other landscape values through operational and planning activities designed to prevent wildfire occurrence and to reduce the fire hazard and risk throughout Alberta;
 - (b) provide financial assistance to communities, organizations and groups that wish to reduce the threat of incoming wildfire; and
 - (c) support community education and involvement in the continuing dialogue on wildfire prevention, management and suppression issues and the practical application of FireSmart principles throughout Alberta.
- 1.3 FRIAA is inviting Expressions of Interest (“**EOI**”) under the FFP. The following information outlines the intent of this Request for Expressions of Interest (“**RFEOI**”) process and provides instructions to prospective applicants who wish to submit an EOI under this RFEOI.
- 1.4 This RFEOI is open to any municipality; Alberta First Nation; Métis Settlement, Co-operative, Enterprise or Local; non-profit society or other organization or group mutually agreed to by the GOA and FRIAA.
- 1.5 Subject to available funding, the maximum amount of funding for a single project will be \$200,000 over the life of the project. Project applicants who have not successfully completed at least one FRIAA FireSmart project of a similar discipline (i.e. vegetation management) will be limited to a single project, subject to available funding.
- 1.6 The maximum duration of the proposed work should not exceed two years (with one year preferred, aligned to seasonal considerations) over the life of the project, starting on the date set out in your approved Project Grant Agreement (approximately early June 2023).

2. EOI REQUIREMENTS

- 2.1 Applicants are advised to pay careful attention to the information provided in this RFEOI. Failure to satisfy any term, condition or mandatory requirement of this RFEOI may result in rejection of the submission.
- 2.2 EOIs must be clear, well written and concisely describe the components of the proposed project including each of the requirements set out in subsections 2.3 and 2.4 below, using the application form and discipline-specific template as provided on the FRIAA website.

2.3 Application Form

- (a) Provide a project title specific to your project location and discipline.
- (b) Provide contact information for the Authorized Representative (name, title, phone number, email and address) of the 1) applicant organization and the individual(s) authorized to represent the applicant and commit the applicant to the execution of a Project Grant Agreement and 2) the individual who will manage the project.
- (c) Indicate which of the activity(ies) described in subparagraph 1(k) of the Program Outline referred to in Section 4 of this RFEOI (the “**Eligible Activity(ies)**”) will be completed (by checking the appropriate box) as well as the duration and the amount of funding requested to complete the proposed project.
- (d) An applicant may include in its EOI, a request for funding assistance to engage a consultant experienced with Alberta’s FireSmart program, to prepare its project proposal, which FRIAA at its sole discretion may approve in whole or in part. If approved, the applicant shall invoice directly to FRIAA under separate cover, and include as supporting documentation, a copy of the invoice from the consultant.
- (e) Indicate participation in a call-in Information Session to gain insight on program priorities, and facilitate questions and answers, the details of which are set out in Section 6 of this RFEOI. Check the box to indicate this has been completed.
- (f) Applicants are highly encouraged to contact and discuss their EOI and proposed project with a FRIAA FireSmart Field Representative at least two weeks prior to the submission deadline which if not completed at that time will be required prior to the applicant’s submission of a project proposal if invited to do so. FRIAA FireSmart Field Representatives will be available on a first come, first served basis. Check the box to indicate whether this has been completed.

FRIAA FireSmart Field Representatives and their respective geographic coverage areas (subject to change) include:

- (i) Andy Gesner
andy.gesner@friaa.ab.ca
780.404.6944
Fort McMurray, Lac La Biche, Slave Lake, Whitecourt
- (ii) Rick Arthur
rick.arthur@friaa.ab.ca
403.489.2026
Edson, Rocky Mountain House, Calgary
- (iii) Wes Nimco
wes.nimco@friaa.ab.ca
780-689-9073
High Level, Peace River, Grande Prairie
- (g) Indicate the appropriate attachment(s) for developing agency support and prioritizing activities. Check the boxes to indicate what has been completed.

- (h) Indicate the appropriate attachment required below (by checking the appropriate box to indicate this has been completed) and have an Authorized Representative sign the applicant acknowledgement set out in the Application Form. Applications from:
 - (i) Municipalities must be accompanied by properly executed Council Resolution;
 - (ii) First Nations must be accompanied by a properly executed Band Council Resolution; and
 - (iii) Métis Settlements must be accompanied by a properly executed Settlement Council Resolution and applications from Co-operatives, Enterprises or Locals must be signed by the President.

2.4 Template

- (a) Provide a project overview, identifying the Eligible Activity(ies) to be undertaken, outcomes and values-at-risk (*i.e.* schools, health centers, water treatment plants, communications towers, occupied residential structures, *etc.*)
- (b) Describe the project location including the treatment units or planning area. Describe any non-fuel landscape features, the remoteness or accessibility of the community, the egress routes and historic evacuation frequency. Indicate if Fire Emergency Services are located in the community. Include an overview map for vegetation management and planning areas.
- (c) Describe the involvement and support of Fire Emergency Services provider(s) applicable for the project location described. A letter of support for the proposed project is strongly encouraged with the EOI submission and will be required if an applicant is invited to submit a project proposal.
- (d) Describe the review and support from the Wildfire Management Branch specific to the proposed activities and how the project aligns with Provincial wildfire prevention objectives. A letter of support for the proposed project is strongly encouraged.
- (e) For Public Education activities, including Home Assessments, provide confirmation in writing of contact with the FireSmart Provincial Liaison for Alberta. Production of logo branded material will require FireSmart Alberta copyright permission. Resident engagement through Home Assessments will require the use of FireSmart Alberta methods and tools. A letter of support for the proposed project is strongly encouraged with the EOI submission and will be required if an applicant is invited to submit a project proposal.
- (f) Describe the project scope, work plan approach and timing of the proposed activities that relate to the purpose of the FFP set out above in Section 1 of this RFEOI and the program outline referred to in Section 4 of this RFEOI (the “**Program Outline**”).
- (g) Describe how the anticipated project outcomes are relevant to the FireSmart objectives of your community.

- (h) Identify the linkages to the current FireSmart Plan, if one exists, that recommends the Eligible Activity(ies) to be undertaken as a priority. Describe the work that has already been completed under that FireSmart Plan. If there is no current FireSmart Plan, describe why the proposed Eligible Activity(ies) must be undertaken and provide rationale supporting the priority for completing the proposed Eligible Activity(ies) at this time.
- (i) Describe the applicant's background and any Project Partners as defined in subsection 5.1 of this RFEOL.
- (j) Describe how the community and stakeholders (including government entities in the community) will be involved in the project. Indicate how community members will be advised of and/or engaged in the proposed project.
- (k) Describe and estimate the funding required, including a description of resources required to complete the project as proposed.
- (l) Describe any non-FRIAA funding and/or **in-kind** support from the applicant that directly applies to the proposed project (including permanent staff time for project management, quality control, training, safety training and inspections, financial reporting, and other costs such as vehicle, equipment or hall rentals, printing, tendering, etc.).
- (m) Vegetation/Fuel management activities will require the development of prescriptions in the format required by Alberta Forestry, Parks and Tourism ("**AFPT**") signed by a professional forestry practitioner and acceptance from AFPT prior to implementation of treatment activities.
- (n) Entities undertaking Vegetation/Fuel management activities will require COR, SECOR or equivalent safety certification and a minimum of \$10 million of liability insurance. All other activities will require COR, SECOR or equivalent safety certification and liability insurance in an amount of not less than \$2 million.
- (o) Vegetation/Fuel management projects have a deliverable requirement of the treatment area boundary in a Geographic Information System ("**GIS**") data format and templates, as provided in "**Appendices A, B and C**".

3. EOI ADJUDICATION CRITERIA

- 3.1 EOIs shall be reviewed and evaluated on the basis of the following criteria by an independent committee ("**Review Committee**") established and appointed by the FRIAA Board of Directors as described in subparagraph 1(h) of the Program Outline:
 - (a) EOIs must use the Application Form and follow the template provided for this RFEOL.
 - (b) The EOI must support one or more of the FireSmart disciplines and carry out one or more Eligible Activity(ies). A separate EOI must be submitted for each FireSmart discipline and a separate EOI may be submitted for each different community or geographic area.

- (c) Priority consideration will be given to EOIs that support Eligible Activities including the following:
 - (i) Interagency cooperation and cross-training;
 - (ii) Public Education;
 - (iii) Projects that support
 - A. the development and completion of a FireSmart plan for *at-risk communities* that do not have an existing plan; or
 - B. the implementation of Eligible Activities prescribed in a current FireSmart Plan that have not been implemented to date;
 - (iv) Multi-stakeholder projects that support landscape level planning or activities in the 10-km community zone outside of the direct jurisdiction of the applicant, with consideration for critical infrastructure values-at-risk; and,
 - (v) Vegetation/Fuel Management projects directed at the maintenance of treatment units with previous vegetation/fuel management activities.
- (d) Priority will be given to EOIs with proposed Activity(ies) that leverage FRIAA funding with other sources of funding, including significant in-kind support.
- (e) Applicants who have one or more unfinished projects with outstanding FRIAA funding commitments will receive less favourable consideration. Substantial completion is considered by discipline and includes community engagement activities or, in the case of planning, documents that have received input from AFPT.
- (f) The proposed EOI Activity(ies) must not be located on private land or lands under federal jurisdiction, except that the proposed project may be located on a Reserve or on Métis Settlement, Cooperative, Enterprise or Local lands.
- (g) The EOI must not include any prospective, in-progress or completed work under the Provincial FireSmart Program, Indigenous Services Canada's Emergency Management Assistance Program or any other such funding program.
- (h) The applicant must be able to complete the proposed project economically and efficiently, and in considering this criteria, the Review Committee may take into account the following:
 - (i) The applicant's proximity to the location of the proposed project;
 - (ii) The applicant's experience in performing such projects;
 - (iii) Whether the applicant has, in the past, successfully completed projects funded by FRIAA;
 - (iv) The amount of leverage by way of in-kind contributions of labour, equipment or other resources by the applicant that are directly applicable to the proposed project. Note: The proposed budget cannot include FRIAA funds to be used for existing staff or resources of the applicant; and

- (v) The amount of leverage in direct funding secured by the applicant for the project.
- (i) The EOI must not involve work that will have a significant adverse impact on other forest resources or the environment as a whole and the applicant must agree to carry out the proposed project in an environmentally responsible manner.
- (j) The EOI must not be contrary to the provisions of relevant regulations or legislation or the objects of FRIAA, or FRIAA's bylaws, including but not limited to the following:
 - (i) The EOI must not include any work that is, in the opinion of FRIAA, a responsibility of a timber disposition holder or constitutes a subsidy to the forest industry;
 - (ii) The EOI must not include facility construction, improvement or operations, product research and development, capital road construction, or, the purchase of any capital assets.

4. FRIAA FIRESMART PROGRAM OUTLINE

- 4.1 The [full text](http://www.friaa.ab.ca) of the Program Outline for FFP is available on FRIAA's website (www.friaa.ab.ca).

5. LEGAL NOTICE

- 5.1 By submitting an EOI, you confirm that you have read, understand and accept the information contained in this RFEOI and, that each of you, the applicant and all individuals and entities that collaborate or are otherwise involved in the preparation of the EOI or the delivery of the proposed project ("**Project Partners**") agree as follows:
- (a) FRIAA may at any time withdraw, suspend, cancel, terminate, amend or alter all or any portion of this RFEOI, including but not limited to the EOI requirements, the EOI selection and review process and the EOI adjudication criteria.
 - (b) FRIAA reserves the unqualified right to accept or reject any or all EOIs for any reason. FRIAA is not required to accept the highest ranked EOI nor is it required to accept any EOI for advancement to the full project proposal stage.
 - (c) The final decision with respect to EOIs to be included in a short-list rests solely with the Review Committee. The Review Committee's evaluation of the submission may be based on, but is not in any way limited to, the criteria set out in this RFEOI. The Review Committee 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, program advisors, committee members, agents, servants and their respective successors and assigns (collectively the "**FRIAA Parties**") other than a written notice to the applicant in writing signed by an authorized person for FRIAA, will constitute an acceptance of an EOI.

- (e) EOIs that do not comply with the requirements described in this RFEOI may be rejected in whole or in part or not considered by the Review Committee. FRIAA reserves the unqualified right to accept or reject a non-compliant EOI.
- (f) This RFEOI is an invitation for EOIs only. It is not an offer and the submission of an EOI does not create a contract or agreement of any kind between FRIAA and the applicant.
- (g) Acceptance of an EOI does not create a binding contract between FRIAA and the applicant or an obligation to fund the activities proposed in the EOI. FRIAA shall not be obligated in any manner whatsoever to any applicant until a written agreement between FRIAA and the applicant ("**Project Grant Agreement**") has been duly executed relating to an approved full project proposal.
- (h) As between the parties, the submission and all documents and materials you submit to FRIAA in connection with the EOI and this RFEOI 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 project will be addressed through the Project Grant Agreement and will normally be owned by the applicant.
- (i) You, the applicant and any Project Partners will keep this RFEOI confidential and will not use, reproduce or distribute it, any portion of it, or any data, information, drawings, or specifications included in or provided with it except as necessary to prepare a full project proposal as requested by FRIAA or to apply for additional third party funding for the project.
- (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 RFEOI. You are undertaking the expenditures required to prepare and submit an EOI 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 RFEOI or any EOI 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 RFEOI 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 RFEOI or any submission prepared in response to it.

6. INFORMATION SESSIONS

- 6.1 FRIAA will hold two **Information Sessions by virtual conference** to address questions that may arise with respect to this RFEOI on **January 25** and **January 31, 2023**. Applicants are highly encouraged phone in to one session. Call-in information and the agenda for the sessions are posted on the FRIAA website.

7. EOI SUBMISSION

- 7.1 EOs must be identified as follows: **FRIAA-FFP RFEOI January 2023**
- 7.2 EOs may be submitted on FRIAA's website portal at: <https://friaa.ab.ca/program-submissions/> and must include **FRIAA-FFP RFEOI January 2023** in the "FRIAA Project Number" description box. Only EOs formatted in PDF or Microsoft Word will be accepted.
- 7.3 Submissions may be sent by regular mail to:
- Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta
Box 11094
Main Post Office
Edmonton, AB T5J 3K4
- or by courier to:
- Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta
c/o MNP LLP
Suite 1600, MNP Tower
10235 – 101 Street NW
Edmonton, AB T5J 3G1
- 7.4 EOs submitted by mail or courier must be accompanied by an electronic copy of the EOI on flash drive.
- 7.5 **Deadline for EOs:** Only those EOs received before the close of business at **4:00 p.m.**, local Edmonton time, on **February 17, 2023** will be accepted for evaluation. EOs received any time thereafter will not be accepted for evaluation.
- 7.6 FRIAA is not responsible for EOs 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 EOI by the postal service or a delivery failure of any kind by any delivery service whatsoever. FRIAA is also not responsible for Proposals that are not received as the result of technological issues, including attachment size, internet, email or file transfer technology failure or any other logistical barrier which may impede electronic submission.

8. NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 Applicants whose EOs are rated highly and are well-aligned with FRIAA's mandate will be invited to submit a full project proposal. Further information regarding full project proposal submissions, including evaluation criteria and timelines, will be made available at the time full project proposal invitations are made (Tentative dates: late March 2023 – notification of shortlisted EOs; early May 2023 – submission of full proposals; early June 2023 - notification of successful proposals; late June 2023 - project start up).
- 8.2 Applicants whose EOs are not short-listed for full project proposal invitation will be notified when the RFEOI review process is completed. Applicants who wish to receive feedback regarding their EOI can set up a phone call with FRIAA to do so and further information will be provided in the notification letter.