

Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta



REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

REFERENCE:

FRIAA – FRIP DATA STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION SOLUTION RFEOI

Issue Date:	October 3, 2024
Closing Date/Time:	November 21, 2024 14:00 hrs (MST)
Information Call:	October 16, 2024 – 13:00 hrs
Submission Portal:	https://friaa.ab.ca/program-submissions/
Inquiry Email:	admin@friaa.ab.ca
Website:	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**”) is inviting the submission of Expressions of Interest (“**EOI**”) for the Data Storage and Distribution Solution Initiative (the “**Initiative**”) for the Forest Resource Improvement Program (the “**FRIP**”). The following information outlines the intent of this request for expressions of interest (“**RFEOI**”) and provides instructions to prospective Applicants.

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 primary purpose, FRIAA is committed to the administration and delivery of FRIP. The purpose of FRIP is to benefit all Albertans by:
 - (a) Enhancing the forest resources of Alberta;
 - (b) Promoting the enhanced management of the forest resources of Alberta;
 - (c) Improving the sustained yield of the forest resources of Alberta; and
 - (d) Promoting integrated resource management.
- 2.2 The type of work carried out under FRIP covers a wide range of activities related to operational field activities, inventory and planning, applied research, education and public awareness and others.
- 2.3 Over the years several FRIP projects have involved the collection of large spatial datasets across the province of Alberta. FRIAA is inviting the submission of EOIs to store, manage and distribute the data collected (and continues to be collected) under FRIP for forestry-related projects that enhance Alberta’s forest resources or the management of Alberta’s forest resources. The following information outlines the intent of this RFEOI and provides instructions to prospective Applicants. The current RFEOI would be to store, manage, and distribute the data for a five year term, with options for long-term solutions.
- 2.4 To date the FRIP program has gathered over 150 TB of spatial data across Alberta, and continues to capture spatial data across the province. Managing the data for various users to be able to search and obtain data by location, by project, by data type or other category will be beneficial for end users.
- 2.5 FRIAA is seeking a vendor who can:
 - (a) Index and store data collected to date in a data catalog. Data to be stored may include:
 - (i) 2D orthophotography;
 - (ii) 3D stereophotography;
 - (iii) LiDAR .LAZ and .LAS;
 - (iv) shapefile .shp and geodatabases .gdb; and

- (v) other common spatial data formats
 - (b) Add additional data sets to the data catalog as they become available.
 - (c) Provide the structure for third parties to search and request data by various categories such as geographic location, data type, year, FRIAA project number, etc.
 - (d) Provide the data to third parties with data licence agreements in a timely manner. Data requests would still need to go through FRIAA at this time for third parties to obtain data licence agreement. A description of how this process could work should be outlined in the RFEOI.
 - (e) Provide long-term sustainment options to ensure data integrity and access availability well into the future.
- 2.6 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 EOI.

3. EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1 EOIs will only be accepted from Applicants who have responded to the RFEOI Initiative published October 3, 2024 and submitted before EOI closing on November 21, 2024 at 14:00 hrs.
- 3.2 Applicants are advised to pay careful attention to the information provided in this RFEOI and the Program Outline. Failure to satisfy any term, condition or mandatory requirement of this RFEOI or the Program Outline may result in the rejection of the EOI.
- 3.3 EOIs must be clear and concisely describe the components of the proposed project, including each of the EOI Requirements set out in subsections 3.4.4 and 3.53.5 below.
- 3.4 **Application Form**
- (a) Provide contact information for the Authorized Representative (name, title, phone number, email and address) of the:
 - (i) Applicant organization and the individual(s) authorized to represent the Applicant and commit the Applicant to the execution of a Project Grant Agreement and
 - (ii) the individual who will manage the project.
 - (b) Provide the total amount of funding requested.
 - (c) Indicate if you participated in the Information Session, detailed in Section 8 of this RFEOI.
 - (d) Briefly describe your understanding of the proposed project.
 - (e) The Authorized Representative must sign the Application Form. Signing the Application Form binds the Applicant to the terms and conditions attached thereto.

3.5 Application Template

- (a) Describe the project delivery approach that demonstrates the Applicant's understanding of the scope, objectives, priorities and requirements presented in this RFEOI and that the proposed project aligns with the terms, conditions, requirements, and Application Template (the "**Template**") provided with this RFEOI.
- (b) Describe any assumptions as to the scope or nature of the work, or any significant factors upon which changes in resource effort, timing or budget may result.
- (c) Identify and describe the risks applicable to the proposed project and achievement of the expected outcomes. Propose and describe strategies to mitigate such risks.
- (d) Prepare a work plan that identifies how the data storage method and means for distributing and sharing the data. Include an outline of how data search and requests will be completed. How you intend on working with FRIAA to execute Data Licence Agreements for new users, or amendments for existing users requesting additional data. The workplan should outline initial start up requirements and duration. Workplan should also include what ongoing maintenance is required throughout the term of the data storage as well as options for long-term sustainment of the data.

The work plan and project budget should be clearly linked.

- (e) Describe the approach for project management and quality control throughout the duration of the project.
- (f) Provide a brief description of up to three key team members who will be involved on the project.
- (g) Provide up to three similar projects that have been executed by the project team. Project examples should include long term data storage housing and/or large data distribution.
- (h) Provide a maximum price to complete the proposed project assuming a 5 year term. Provide an estimate of long-term solution options available to FRIAA. Provide a cost breakdown with sufficient details to demonstrate an understanding of the various steps to complete the project.

Generalized administration fees, contingency fees and "percentage markup" will not be accepted (build this into your maximum price).

GST may be claimed on subcontractors and third-party invoices, however Applicant resources are covered by grant funding (no GST is charged).

- (i) Include a description of the leverage by way of in-kind contributions of labour, or other resources by the Applicant. Previously completed work, or projects being funded under other FRIAA programs are not considered "in-kind".
- (j) The outcomes and deliverables are listed below. Describe the Applicant's understanding of the expected outcomes and deliverables for the proposed project.

4. EOI EVALUATION

- 4.1 EOI's will be evaluated based on the EOI Adjudication Criteria and the requirements set out in this RFEOI, the completion of the Application Form and Template, as well as available funding.
- 4.2 FRIAA reserves the right to consider additional criteria in the evaluation of EOI's.
- 4.3 FRIAA will in its sole discretion determine which EOI's will be accepted and approved for funding under the FRIP.
- 4.4 FRIAA is not obligated to accept or approve any EOI's for funding or give reasons for the selection or rejection of any EOI's or to allocate funds under the FRIP in respect of any EOI's. All decisions made by FRIAA in respect of any or all EOI's, project selections and funding allocations are final and binding.
- 4.5 Please note that by submitting an EOI and signed application, the Applicant accepts and agrees to be bound by all of the terms and conditions set out in this RFEOI and the Applicant is the organization, company or individual that will be responsible for all aspects of the project and that the Applicant will enter into a Project Grant Agreement with FRIAA.
- 4.6 FRIAA will determine how much funding may be available for projects and will be making allocations based on the available funding level.
- 4.7 All matters of administration and accountability for a project shall be the sole responsibility of the Applicant.

5. EOI ADJUDICATION CRITERIA

- 5.1 EOI's submitted to FRIAA shall be ranked based on the following criteria and the EOI Requirements set out in Section 3.
- 5.2 EOI's must contemplate the carrying out of one or more Eligible Activities as defined in the FRIP. Any activities related to the following items are not eligible for funding:
 - (a) facility construction, improvement or operations;
 - (b) product research and development;
 - (c) road construction, repair and maintenance; and
 - (d) the purchase of any capital assets.
- 5.3 The expenses set out in the EOI must be reasonable in all the circumstances and must not exceed the fair market value of the goods and services being provided.
- 5.4 The EOI must not be contrary to the provisions of relevant regulation or legislation or the objects of FRIAA, or FRIAA's bylaws, including but not limited to the following:
 - (a) any work that, in the opinion of FRIAA, a responsibility of a disposition holder or constitutes a subsidy to the forest industry, energy industry or other industry; and
 - (b) must not, in the opinion of FRIAA, have a significant adverse impact on other forest resources or the environment as a whole.
- 5.5 The Applicant must be able to complete the proposed project economically and efficiently and in considering this criterion, FRIAA may take into account the Applicant's experience in performing such projects, the availability of resources to

the Applicant, and if applicable, whether the Applicant has in the past complied with the *Forest Resources Improvement Regulation* and other requirements and obligations as determined by FRIAA including making prompt payment of all required timber dues and FRIAA dues and fees.

- 5.6 EOIs that leverage FRIAA funds with funds from other sources to complete the proposed project or associated with the proposed project will be favoured.

6. FOREST RESOURCE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM OUTLINE

- 6.1 The full text of the Program Outline for the FRIP is available on FRIAA's website (www.friaa.ab.ca).

7. LEGAL NOTICE

- 7.1 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 RFEOI 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 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 any EOIs nor is it required to accept any EOIs for funding.
- (c) FRIAA's evaluation of the EOIs may be based on, but is not in any way limited to, the criteria set out in this RFEOI. 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 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. 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 EOIs 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. FRIAA shall not be obligated in any manner whatsoever to any Applicant until a written agreement between FRIAA and the Applicant ("**Program Grant Agreement**") has been duly executed relating to an approved EOI. This document is available for your referral in the FRIP DATA STORAGE RFEOI 2024 "zip" folder available for download at www.friaa.ab.ca.

- (h) As between the parties, the EOI 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. Intellectual property developed during the course of the project will be addressed through the Project Grant Agreement.
- (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 an EOI to FRIAA in response to it 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 EOI prepared in response to it.

8. INFORMATION SESSION

- 8.1 FRIAA will hold an Information Session to address questions that may arise with respect to this RFEOI on **October 16, 2024**. Contact details, the time of, and how to participate in the Information Session will be posted on FRIAA's website. Interested Applicants are strongly encouraged to participate. Applicants are encouraged to request clarifications and **submit any questions in writing** regarding this RFEOI, **by 2:00 p.m. on October 15, 2024**, to admin@friaa.ab.ca.
- 8.2 **Follow-up questions** arising from the information session and submitted in writing **will be accepted until 4:00 pm** local Edmonton time on **November 18, 2024**. Answers will be posted to the FRIAA website within 24 hours after receipt and will not be accepted at any time thereafter.

9. EOI SUBMISSIONS

- 9.1 EOIs may be submitted on FRIAA's website portal at: <https://friaa.ab.ca/program-submissions/>. In the Submission Portal, select **FRIAA – FRIP Data Storage and Distribution Solution** as the application opportunity.

- 9.2 Only documents formatted in PDF will be accepted.
- 9.3 EOI submissions must include a completed “Application Form” and a completed “Application Template” in the format provided.
- 9.4 EOIs sent directly to any FRIAA representatives will not be accepted, unless the applicant is unable to submit through the portal then FRIAA is willing to accept via email to admin@friaa.ab.ca.

10. DEADLINE FOR EOIs

- 10.1 Only those **EOIs received prior to 2:00 p.m.**, local time as observed in the City of Edmonton, on **November 21, 2024** will be accepted for evaluation. EOIs received any time thereafter will not be accepted for evaluation.
- 10.2 FRIAA is not responsible for EOIs that are not received as the result of technological issues, attachment size or any other logistical barrier which may impede electronic submission.

11. NEXT STEPS

- 11.1 Applicants whose EOIs are selected by the Panel will be invited to submit a full project proposal to FRIAA. 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.
- 11.2 Applicants whose EOIs 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 short debrief phone call with FRIAA. Information about arranging this discussion will be provided in the notification letter.