



## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

### **NB Fish Leather Processing Facility Feasibility Study**

For professional services to assist the North Shore Mi'kmaq Tribal Council in completion of a feasibility study for a sustainable fish leather production and processing facility in New Brunswick. The objectives of this project are to characterize the state of the global fish leather industry and to determine whether and how a viable, profitable fish leather processing facility, using natural dyes and tannins, and low-impact processing methods, could be built in New Brunswick. The Consultant will detail the following:

- Market analysis: research and document national and international markets for sustainable fish leather.
- Research and document the fish leather industry – i.e. competition and their markets and market share, from small scale artisanal facilities to business-as-usual producers.
- Research and document the process of creating sustainable fish leather: ongoing, reliable sources of fish skins; requisite manual and automated processes for cleaning skins and creating leather from regionally available species of fish skins and natural dyes and tannins (e.g. without harmful materials or chemicals such as plastics, PFAS, chromium; efficient, low-impact use of water and energy; etc.); transportation and storage of skins pre- and post-tanning; facility requirements and costs including building, equipment, materials (skins, tannins, oils, dyes; water; energy; etc.); transportation, storage, shipping, waste production and disposal, etc.
- Research and characterize the potential to produce natural tannins locally, e.g. from the bark of mill ends of forestry industry in New Brunswick.
- Compare and contrast different scales and models of production.
- Analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the feasibility of a fish leather processing facility in New Brunswick. Document findings including market analysis, competitors, production, local tanning production, business models and scales, start-up costs and projection of revenues.
- Final product: Report on the Feasibility of a Fish Leather Processing Facility in New Brunswick.

The overall project will take place between April 15, 2026 and August 31, 2026, and includes the following:

#### **Market Analysis**

The fashion industry, among others, is increasingly interested in sustainable textiles and may represent a reliable market for fish leather. This market has high standards in terms of durability, consistency, colour-fastness and other aspects of product performance. Other markets may include but are not limited to artisans who make small batch or one-of-a-kind items; sporting goods equipment producers; upholsterers; vehicle manufacturers.

The market analysis should provide details on different markets, their location(s), scales of activity, and reliability of short-to-long-term demand.

### **Industry Analysis**

Inventory and document fish leather processing facilities at local, regional, national and international scales; characterize and document their markets and market shares. Characterize and document their activities: scale of production, source(s) of skins, sustainability, stability, maturity/age of company, etc.

### **Sustainable Fish Leather Production**

Leather production using natural dyes and tannins is often carried out at small scales. Here, we are interested in understanding the opportunities and limitations associated with scaling up production without compromising environmental standards. Are such processes possible, is information about the detailed chemistry publicly available, where are they carried out, are they cost effective and profitable, is there ongoing research in this field, is it possible and feasible to produce tannins in New Brunswick from mill ends from the forestry industry?

### **Feasibility Study**

- Analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the feasibility of a fish leather processing facility in New Brunswick. Document findings including market analysis, competitors, production, local tanning production, business models and scales, start-up costs and projection of revenues.
- Final product - *Report on the Feasibility of a Fish Leather Processing Facility in New Brunswick* including but not limited to the following sections: Executive Summary, Project Description and Background, Market Analysis, Technical Feasibility, Operational Feasibility, Financial Feasibility, Risk Analysis and Mitigation, Conclusion and Recommendations.

**RFP Reference Number:** NSMTC-ES-RFP-26.001

**RFP Title:** NB Fish Leather Processing Facility Feasibility Study

**Release Date:** March 16, 2026

**Closing Date:** April 1, 2026

**RFP Contact:**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The North Shore Mi'kmaq Tribal Council (NSMTC) is engaged in a short-term project entitled *NB Fish Leather Processing Facility Feasibility Study*. Fish leather is an increasingly desirable product, sought by the fashion industry, artisans, and crafters as a sustainable textile produced from materials that would otherwise generally be a waste product.

The NSMTC has been awarded funding from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and the NB Fisheries Fund to carry out a feasibility study to determine whether it would be possible and profitable to create a fish leather processing facility in New Brunswick. Production and use of fish leather is an ancient but largely lost practice, and one which is currently seeing a renaissance; it is also in keeping with Indigenous culture and values, in which nothing is wasted and materials derived from local ecosystems sustain and enhance our communities.

There are several questions that must be addressed to determine if this is a viable business for one or more of NSMTC's member communities. These have to do with the following primary areas of inquiry:

- 1) What and where are the existing or potential markets for fish leather, from artisans to large customers such as fashion production houses?
- 2) Are there reliable, ongoing sources of fish skins in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island? What species of fish are they, can the skins readily be tanned and dyed, and what would be the costs to acquire and transport the skins?
- 3) What are the requirements of a processing facility, including specific sustainable tanning methods for producing fish leather at scale; physical infrastructure and equipment requirements; and shipping the product to market?
- 4) Who and where are potential competitors or collaborators; how are their leathers produced; who/where are their markets?
- 5) What are the costs of production and potential revenues from sales?

There is a need to conduct a detailed feasibility study in order to determine whether and how to move forward with this project. While the prospect of creating a fish leather processing facility in New Brunswick is promising, it is important that any development results in a viable and sustainable business opportunity for NSMTC member communities. Thus, the intention of this work is to evaluate the costs and benefits of starting and maintaining a fish leather processing facility.

## 2. ABOUT US

The NSMTC is a not-for-profit First Nations Tribal Council formed in 1987 and acts as a technical and capacity resource hub supporting the communities of Ugpi'ganjig (Eel River Bar), Oinpegitjoig (Pabineau), Natoaganeg (Eel Ground), Metepenagiag (Red Bank), L'nui Menikuk (Indian Island), Tjipögtötjig (Buctouche), and Amlamgog (Fort Folly) First Nations.

## 3. RFP OVERVIEW AND CLARIFICATIONS

The NSMTC solicits proposals from qualified professional services firms (the "Consultant") for the

production of the project deliverable over the cycle of this project, April 15 – August 28, 2026.

The Consultant will provide technical expertise for execution of the project including:

- 1) Market analysis and characterization
- 2) Industry analysis and characterization
- 3) Sustainable fish leather production techniques
- 4) Written feasibility study
- 5) Attend and support project-related meetings as needed

**Deliverable**

**Report: NB Fish Leather Processing Facility Feasibility Study**

**4. PROJECT SCHEDULE**

The RFP and Project Schedule are defined in Table 1 below. The Consultant will be responsible for development of a schedule of milestones and deliverables, in consultation with NSMTC, as part of Project Kick-off.

The Project Completion deadline is firm and is non-negotiable.

Item	Date
RFP Release	March 16, 2026
RFP Closing	April 1, 2026
Project Award	April 15, 2026
Project Kickoff	April 20, 2026
Check-in meetings (virtual)	Bi-weekly April 20-August 28, 2026
Present project to NSMTC management & member communities (with NSMTC project staff)	July 15-30, 2026
Draft of Feasibility Study	August 10, 2026
Feedback on draft provided to consultants	August 17, 2026
Completed feasibility study submitted to NSMTC	August 28, 2026
Completed feasibility study submitted by NSMTC to funders	August 31, 2026

Table 1. RFP and Project Schedule

**5. PROJECT FUNDING**

Funding available for this project is capped at a maximum of \$75,000 CAD. Proposals that exceed this amount will not be considered. Taxes are exempt for this project.

## 6. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

To ensure a proposal is considered for evaluation it must include all the information requested below. The maximum page limit for proposal submissions is 10 pages not including the cover page, project team and references.

### 6.1. Cover Letter

- 6.1.1. The Consultant shall provide a Cover Letter, dated and signed by a person authorized to negotiate and make commitments on behalf of the Consultant.
- 6.1.2. Within the Cover Letter, provide:
  - A statement indicating the Consultant's understanding of the proposed project,
  - Acknowledgement of the deliverables required within the defined timelines,
  - A list of sub-Consultant(s), if applicable, that will be used to form the Consultant Team, and the role that each firm will play in this project,
  - Any clarifications or points to be highlighted with respect to the submitted proposal.

### 6.2. Project Understanding and Indigenous Project Experience

- 6.2.1. The Consultant shall demonstrate their understanding of the project scope and how the project objectives shall be met.
- 6.2.2. The Consultant shall demonstrate experience working with First Nation/Indigenous communities and organizations, and are asked to provide a summary of projects undertaken with First Nation/Indigenous communities and organizations in the past five (5) years.
- 6.2.3. The Consultant shall demonstrate their knowledge of the textiles/leather industry in general and fish leather production in particular.
- 6.2.4. The Consultant shall demonstrate their knowledge of business development, in particular feasibility studies and business planning at industrial scales.
- 6.2.5. The Consultant shall demonstrate their knowledge of contemporary **sustainable** fish leather production.

### 6.3. Proposed Project Plan

- 6.3.1. The Consultant will provide a proposed project plan. The proposed plan should be concisely worded with clearly described objectives, methods, budget, schedule, and deliverables. The proposal should include a workplan outlining how all the tasks will be approached.
- 6.3.2. The project plan will also show the assignment of specific team members to project tasks/deliverables. The use of sub-Consultants and/or specialized services (where applicable) should also be shown.
- 6.3.3. The Consultant will designate one individual as the single contact between the Consultant and NSMTC throughout the project.

### 6.4. Consultant Team Qualifications and Experience

- 6.4.1. The Consultant must identify the lead project manager and provide a breakdown of qualifications for each member of the project team including:
  - Name
  - Role
  - Responsibility

- Resume showing:
    - Education
    - Professional Certifications
    - Type and length of experience
- 6.4.2. If the Consultant employs a sub-consultant, a copy of the sub-consultant resume(s) must also be included in the Consultant’s proposal. The Consultant should clearly demonstrate their experience working with selected sub-consultant(s), and the role that each organization will play in this project

**6.5. Reference Projects**

- 6.5.1. The Consultant shall provide Project Summaries for three (3) reference projects completed in the past five (5) years, with similar complexity and scope.
- 6.5.2. For each Project Summary, provide the name, address, phone number and email address for at least one contact person who can speak to the project success.

**7. EVALUATION**

NSMTC will form a Bid Evaluation Committee. Evaluation criteria are established by Table 2 below.  
*Table 2 - Bid Evaluation Criteria*

Factor	Weight
<b>Experience and Knowledge:</b> Qualifications, experience and capabilities of the company and delivery team. Demonstration of knowledge relevant to this project.	30%
<b>Project Plan, Approach and Methodology:</b> Respondent demonstrates an understanding of the project requirements and has outlined a comprehensive and effective work plan. Proposal describes the objectives, methodology, milestones and deliverables, and a sound approach in undertaking this project. Communication format and frequency between the Respondent and Project Leads are clearly described. Respondent describes an achievable schedule and demonstrates the ability to complete the work on or before the desired completion date.	40%
<b>Indigenous Project Experience:</b> Demonstrated experience working with Indigenous organizations and businesses.	10%
<b>Value:</b> Value proposed activities contribute to project success is demonstrated in the methodology.	10%
<b>Proposal Presentation and Organization:</b> The proposal includes all RFP requirements and tasks, demonstrates attention to clarity, grammar, presentation, and comprehensibility.	10%
<b>Total</b>	100%

**8. SUBMISSIONS**

Proposals are to be submitted to [shawndalton@nsmtc.ca](mailto:shawndalton@nsmtc.ca) on or before 4:00pm Atlantic time on April 1, 2026.

A single electronic document is sufficient. Please ensure the proposal or cover letter is signed by an officer or equivalent with authority to bind the respondent to the statements made in the proposal.

### **8.1. Evaluation and Acceptance of Proposals**

- 8.1.1. The RFP neither expresses nor implies any obligation on the part of NSMTC to enter a contract with any consultant submitting a proposal or proposals for this RFP.
- 8.1.2. The Planning Committee will review the proposals submitted within fifteen (15) days of the deadline date and make a recommendation for awarding based on the proposals received.
- 8.1.3. NSMTC will not be responsible for any costs incurred by the Consultant in preparing and submitting proposals and / or attending interviews.
- 8.1.4. NSMTC accepts no liability of any kind to the Consultant prior to the signing of a contract.
- 8.1.5. After the submission of a proposal for this event NSMTC may request further information from the consultants for the basis of decisions in awarding a contract to a consultant.
- 8.1.6. NSMTC holds the right to negotiate further with any consultant(s) that have submitted a proposal for acceptance to this RFP, if necessary, in successfully awarding a contract with a consultant(s).
- 8.1.7. RFP Amendments: NSMTC reserves the right to amend or supplement this RFP, giving equal information and cooperation by way of issued addendum to the consultants due to such an amendment.
- 8.1.8. Prices quoted are to be held firm for a minimum of 120 days following the RFP closing date and shall remain in effect through the duration of an agreement.
- 8.1.9. Submission of a proposal shall not obligate, nor should it be construed as obligating NSMTC to accept any such proposal or to proceed further with the project. NSMTC may, in their sole discretion, elect not to proceed with the project, and may elect not to accept any or all proposals for any reason.
- 8.1.10. Proposals submitted shall be final and may not be altered by subsequent offerings, discussions, or commitments unless the Consultant is requested to do so by NSMTC.
- 8.1.11. Consultants may withdraw their proposals by way of emailed notice to NSMTC.
- 8.1.12. NSMTC reserves the right to cancel and / or re-issue this RFP at any time for any reason without penalty.
- 8.1.13. The Consultant must identify any information in its proposal that it considers to be confidential or proprietary.
- 8.1.14. By submitting a proposal, the Consultant acknowledges and accepts all terms and conditions outlined in this Request for Proposal, and these terms shall be deemed incorporated into the Consultant's submission.

### **8.2. Rejection of Proposals**

- 8.2.1. NSMTC has the right to reject or accept any or all proposals submitted for this RFP.
- 8.2.2. Consultants may be eliminated from consideration if there is a failure to comply with any of the specifications of this RFP.

### **8.3. Budget Specifics**

- 8.3.1. The Consultant's proposed budget must be inclusive of all costs required to complete the work outlined in this RFP. This includes, but is not limited to, professional fees, travel expenses, engagement activities, materials, accommodation, administrative costs, and any applicable sub-consultant costs.

- 8.3.2. No additional funding beyond the stated maximum allocation will be made available. Proposals that do not account for all costs within the specified budget may not be considered.
- 8.3.3. The Consultant shall be responsible for any cost overages incurred during the project.

**8.4. Method of Payment**

- 8.4.1. Payment will be made on the basis of invoices submitted for work completed. The proposal should suggest a payment schedule linked to specific steps in the planning and delivery of the project
- 8.4.2. A final payment schedule will be negotiated between the Consultant and NSMTC and will be included in the project contract.