



Squamish Nation

External Audit and Tax Services

Request for Proposal



Summary of Key Information

RFP Title External Audit and Tax Services
RFP # 2 - 0201

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1. Request for Proposal

The purpose and intent of this RFP is to solicit Proposals from qualified Proponents to provide external audit and tax services to the Squamish Nation (the “Nation”) and its subsidiary entities.

Specifically, the Nation would like the scope of the Services to include annual financial statement audits for the following entities:

Squamish Nation (Consolidated)
Mosquito Creek Marina Limited Partnership
Lynnwood Marina Limited Partnership
Lynnwood Industrial Estates Holding Company Ltd.
Squamish Valley Gas Limited Partnership
SN New Brighton Dock Ltd.
Sqomish Forestry Limited Partnership
Northwest Squamish Forestry Limited Partnership
Capilano River R.V Park Limited Partnership

(the “**Audits**”)

The Nation would like the scope of the Services to also include the preparation of annual income tax filings for the following entities:

Mosquito Creek Marina Limited Partnership
Lynnwood Marina Limited Partnership
Lynnwood Industrial Estates Holding Company Ltd.
Squamish Valley Gas Limited Partnership
SN New Brighton Dock Ltd.
Sqomish Forestry Limited Partnership
Northwest Squamish Forestry Limited Partnership
Capilano River R.V Park Limited Partnership
SN Forestry LP

The successful Proponent will be invited to negotiate a contract for audit and tax services with the Squamish Nation. The term of the contract will be for a period of one (1) year, commencing with the 2019/2020 fiscal year, with four (4) one-year options for renewal. The renewal will be subject to the agreement of both parties.

Proponents are advised to pay careful attention to the wording used throughout the RFP. Failure to satisfy any term or condition of this RFP may result in a non-compliant Proposal. In particular pay careful attention to 4.2 Submission Requirements.



1.1. *Definitions*

Evaluation Committee means the individuals who will evaluate the Proposals on behalf of the Squamish Nation. This will consist of members of Council and the Director of Finance.

Nation means the Squamish Nation (also known as the Squamish Indian Band).

Proponents means an individual, business entity, organization or Proponent Team responding to this RFP with a Proposal.

Proposal means the Proponent’s response to the RFP and includes all of the Proponent’s attachments and presentation materials.

PST means Pacific Standard Time.

Services means the functions, duties, tasks and responsibilities to be provided by the Proponent as described in the RFP.

2. **Background, Objectives and Scope**

2.1. *About the Squamish Nation*

The Squamish Nation (the “Nation”) is comprised of descendants of the Coast Salish Aboriginal peoples who lived in the present day Greater Vancouver area; Gibsons Landing and Squamish River watershed. The Squamish Nation have occupied and governed their territory since beyond recorded history. Total area of Squamish Nation Traditional Territory is 6,921 sq. km. (~692,100 hectares).

The Nation consists of 23 villages encompassing 21.2 sq. km. (~2,120 hectares). The percentage of Squamish Nation Traditional Territory allotted to the people is 0.4230%. These parcels of land are scattered from North Vancouver, Gibsons Landing to the area north of Howe Sound. The Nation has over 4,000 members, approximately 50% of whom live on reserve.

The Squamish Nation Council (“Council”) is comprised of 16 elected Councillors led by two Council-appointed Co-Chairs. The Council typically meets Tuesday each week and participates in a number of committees. The Nation’s senior staff consists of two Managing Directors and 11 Directors overseeing a team of approximately 350 employees. The Nation has a Financial Administration Bylaw (“FAB”) developed using standards established by the First Nations Financial Management Board. The Managing Directors and the Director of Finance are responsible for implementation of the FAB.

The Squamish Nation currently has an annual consolidated operating budget of approximately \$75 million (FY20), provides services to members through numerous



functions, and operates several commercial enterprises. The Nation organizes its functions into the following departments:

1. Finance and Administration
2. Health and Recreation
3. Child and Family Services
4. Human Resources and IT
5. Community Operations
6. Education, Employment and Training
7. Language and Cultural Affairs
8. Member Services
9. Housing and Capital Projects
10. Rights and Title
11. Business Revenue Services

Individual functions are funded through a combination of transfer agreements, various government grants, and own source revenues. Proponents are encouraged to visit the Nation’s website at www.squamish.net for a more detailed overview of the Nation’s characteristics and activities.

2.2. Accounting Principles

The Squamish Nation presents its consolidated financial statements in accordance with Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards. Many of the Nation’s subsidiaries present their financial statements in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards.

2.3. Key Financial Systems and Statistics

The Squamish Nation currently uses ORACLE JD Edwards as its software solution for all budgeting and accounting functions and reporting.

The following table illustrates the total approximate revenue and number of vouchers for the Squamish Nation and its subsidiary entities for the most recent completed fiscal period:

Entity	Revenue (CDN\$)	# Vouchers
Squamish Nation	95,350,000	36,000
Mosquito Creek Marina LP	5,700,000	1,000
Lynnwood Marina LP	6,650,000	2,100
Lynnwood Industrial Estates Holdings Ltd. (Consolidated)	6,650,000	10 (unique)
Squamish Valley Gas LP	11,600,000	1,800
SN New Brighton Dock Ltd.	63,000	30
Sqomish Forestry LP	11,100,000	2,115



Northwest Squamish Forestry LP (Consolidated)	10,740,000	10 (unique)
Capilano River R.V. Park LP	1,700,000	500

The Squamish Nation entity revenue can be further categorized as follows:

Category	Amount
Government Transfers and Other Grants	37,500,000
Leasing	26,700,000
Taxation	10,700,000
Lands and Resource Accommodation	13,800,000
Retail	4,350,000
Other (Interest, Royalties, Etc.)	2,300,000

2.4. *Responsibility of Work Performed by Squamish Nation Staff*

The Director of Finance is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and co-ordination with the audit and tax advisors.

The Squamish Nation staff prepare the financial statements, as well as the normal reconciliations and analysis identified by the audit and tax advisors, as necessary for the completion of the external financial audits and income tax returns.

2.5. *Finance and Audit Committee*

The Nation's Finance and Audit Committee ("FAC"), comprised of five (5) voting members (Councillors) and the Director of Finance (non-voting), is charged with the responsibility of reviewing the annual financial statements prior to submission and recommendation to Council, and with receiving reports from the Auditor. The FAC meets twice monthly. The Auditor will be required to meet with the Finance and Audit Committee.

3. **Services Required ("Services")**

3.1. *Financial Statement Audit*

The successful Proponent (the "Auditor") shall perform the Audits for the 2019/2020 fiscal year and prepare an auditor's report in respect thereof in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards ("GAAS").

Subject to the approval of the Nation, and the Auditor each year, the Auditor will perform the Audits for the Nation for each of the four (4) fiscal years subsequent to 2019/2020.



3.2. Scope of the Audits

The Squamish Nation is an Indian Band as defined in the Indian Act. The Nation receives federal and provincial transfers to assist in the provision of services to its membership. The Council, in its role as the governing body of the Nation, has high expectations that the Nation staff are acting on behalf of membership and will conduct business in a proper and prudent manner, disbursing Nation funds wisely and with probity. The Auditor should remain alert during the engagements for:

- lack of accountability in the use and management of Nation funds;
- instances of waste or misuse of Nation resources;
- lack of probity in behaviour; or
- lack of compliance with Squamish Nation policies or funding agreement requirements

3.3. Reports and Timing

The Auditor will:

- I. Prepare auditor’s reports and management letters having a format and content consistent with GAAS;
- II. Discuss the auditor’s reports and management letters with the Nation’s management and the Finance and Audit Committee prior to their distribution; and
- III. Meet any audit or reporting requirement dates as set out by the Timeline of Key Events tables below.

The expected Timeline of Key Events dates relating to the Audits are as follows. These dates should be considered as indicative only:

Nation Audit (Fiscal year end March 31)

Description of Events	Key Audit Dates
Present audit plan to Director of Finance (and FAC as necessary)	November 2019 (may be different in year one as mutually agreed by the parties)
Conduct interim audit field work (as needed)	November 2019 (may be different in year one as mutually agreed by the parties)
Conduct year end field work	May 2020
Present Audited Financial Statements to the Finance and Audit Committee	July 2020
Present Audited Financial Statements to Council (including audit report and management letter)	July 2020
Present Audited Financial Statements to membership	September 2020



Nation Subsidiary Audits (Fiscal year end December 31)

Description of Events	Key Audit Dates
Present audit plan to Director of Finance (and FAC as necessary)	Last week of October 2019 (may be different in year one as mutually agreed by the parties)
Conduct interim audit field work (as needed)	November 2019 (may be different in year one as mutually agreed by the parties)
Conduct year end field work	February 2020
Present Audited Financial Statements to the Finance and Audit Committee	April 2020
Present Audited Financial Statements to Council (including audit reports and management letters)	April 2020

3.4. Management Letter

The Auditor is expected to provide a management letters that identify areas of concern or weaknesses encountered during the performance of the Audits, recommendations for improvement, and management’s response to any such concerns raised.

3.5. Tax Services

As a part of the engagement the Proponent will be required to provide indirect tax and income tax assistance/guidance and to prepare required income tax filings in accordance with relevant legislation.

4. Proposal Submission and Format

4.1. Proposal Preparation and Submission

All Proponents responding to this RFP are expected to comply with the preparation instructions and submission requirements presented in this section and section 4.2 for content and format. Failure to comply with these instructions and requirements may result in the disqualification of the Proponent’s Proposal from further consideration.

It is the Proponent’s responsibility to ensure that they have a complete and thorough understanding of all the requirements, expressed or implied, regarding the specifications of the RFP prior to submission of the Proposal.

Proposals shall be enclosed in a single sealed package plainly marked with the words “PROPOSAL FOR EXTERNAL AUDIT AND TAX SERVICES”. The Proposals may be delivered by hand or courier. A digital copy of the Proposal in a .pdf format must be submitted via email



to the Contact Person noted in Summary of Key Information. Proposals must be signed by an officer of the Proponent who is authorized to bind the Proponent.

The Closing Date and Time for this RFP is October 4, 2019 at 16:00 hours PST. Proposals must be received by the Squamish Nation before October 4, 2019 at 16:00 hours PST.

4.2. *Submission Requirements*

Mandatory RFP requirements

Only Proponents who demonstrate all of the following criteria are invited to submit Proposals:

- Have current contracts with First Nation governments; experience and demonstrated understanding of auditing and taxation requirements for First Nation government similar in size and scope;
- Proponents must be able to comply with applicable codes of professional ethics concerning auditor independence;
- Have sufficient staffing, facilities, financial resources and expertise to address the scope of Services; and
- Demonstrate a commitment to providing reasonable annual continuity of experienced and qualified personnel.

Proponents must provide sufficient detail in their Proposal to substantiate compliance with the RFP's minimum requirements. In addition, Proponents must provide cross reference to any parts of the Proposal that contain information that they wish to be considered in the evaluation of any given requirement. Proposals not meeting all mandatory RFP criteria may be rejected without further consideration.

To achieve a uniform review process and obtain the maximum degree of comparability, please organize your Proposal in the following manner:

1. Title Page
2. Letter of Transmittal
3. Table of Contents
4. Company Profile and Contact
5. Experience with First Nations Audits and Tax Services
6. Audit Staff and Tax Staff
7. Proposed Implementation Methodology
8. Other Services
9. Assumptions
10. Quality Control
11. References
12. Pricing



4.2.1 Title Page

Clearly identifies the RFP being responded to and the submitting Proponent(s), referencing the RFP number and title, the firm's name and address, the name, telephone number and email address of the contact person and the date of the Proposal.

4.2.2 Letter of Transmittal

A signed letter briefly stating the Proponent's understanding of the purpose and objective of the RFP, the benefits they bring to the Nation, and any potential issues or constraints and how they would be dealt with. Any additions to the RFP or proposed deletions must be separately identified in the letter. This should be on company letterhead, signed by the submitting Proponent and addressed to:

Contact Person: Chris Mullen, Director of Finance

Email Address: chris_mullen@squamish.net

4.2.3 Table of Contents

This should follow the structures as listed above in this section of this RFP.

4.2.4 Company Profile and Contact

A brief profile of your firm (1 to 2 pages) indicating the scope of its practices, the range of activities performed by the firm such as auditing, tax service, accounting or management services. Identify the Proponent's contact person, phone number and email address. State the local office address as well as the address and phone number of the office that will manage or assist in managing the Audits and tax services. Identify the number of staff located locally.

4.2.5 Experience with First Nation Audits and Tax Services

List current and past First Nation audit and tax clients and indicate the number of years your firm has been the auditor/tax service provider of each client. Drawing from your current and past First Nation audit and tax client experiences, describe your familiarity and experience with accounting, auditing, and tax standards/legislation relevant to the Squamish Nation.

4.2.6 Audit Staff and Tax Staff

Name and brief resume of the partner(s), manager(s) and other key staff who would be assigned to the Audits and tax services. Resume must include: biography, education, professional designations, First Nations experience, and years of experience providing audit and/or tax services.



4.2.7 Proposed Implementation Methodology

Proposals must clearly show the firm’s understanding of the work to be performed, audit approach and commitment to perform the work within the time period specified in section 3.3. This would include the approach to be used to gain an understanding of the Nation’s structure and systems as well as a proposed schedule and any specific techniques or processes to be used for the interim and annual Audits. Implementation methodology is not a necessary requirement for tax services.

4.2.8 Other Services

Description and the methodology used for keeping the Nation up-to-date on any changes in accounting and tax principles or legislation which would impact the annual financial statements or tax filings or requirements.

Description of non-auditing professional services provided to other local government clients and innovative products offered by your firm as well as any specific pricing structure for such services.

4.2.9 Assumptions

This section of the Proponent’s Proposal should include a general discussion of any assumptions the Proponent has made about the information or arrangements to be provided by the Nation.

4.2.10 Quality Control

This section will include a copy of the Proponent’s quality control plan (i.e. Professional Practice Management Plan) that explains how the plan will ensure quality results.

4.2.11 References

This section will include three (3) reference including a description of the project, client name, and client contact name and details (phone number/email).

The Squamish Nation may, at its sole discretion, contact some or all of the cited references and may contact any source other than the cited references. The Squamish Nation reserves the right to reject a Proponent’s Proposal if a reference’s responses are deemed unsatisfactory.



4.2.12 Pricing

The Proposal must contain detailed pricing information for the performance of the Audits. The total cost must include all direct and indirect costs excluding out of pocket expenses and applicable taxes. Detailed pricing information must include rates by individual and estimated hours.

The Proposal must also contain separate and detailed pricing information for the tax services including hourly rates for assistance/guidance services.

All Proponents submitting Proposals agree that their pricing is valid for a minimum of ninety (90) days after the Closing Date and Time of the RFP.

4.3. Questions and Clarification of RFP

Proponents who want clarification on the RFP should contact the Contact Person noted in the Summary of Key Information. If information additional to that disclosed in the RFP is requested, this information will be provided to all Proponents.

All questions must be submitted to the Squamish Nation no later than September 24, 2019 at 16:00 hours PST. Answers will be provided to all Proponents by September 27, 2019.

4.4. Proposal Return

The Proposal and any accompanying documentation submitted by the Proponents are the property of the Squamish Nation and will not be returned.

4.5. Withdrawals or Addendums

Proponents may amend or rescind their Proposal prior to the RFP closing date and time by submitting a clear and detailed written notice to the Squamish Nation in accordance with section 4.1 and subject to section 4.3.

In either of the following circumstances:

- (a) The Proponent has rescinded a Proposal prior to the RFP closing date and time; or
- (b) The Squamish Nation has received the Proposal after the RFP closing date and time;

Such Proposal will, at the Proponent's choice, either be returned to the Proponent at the Proponent's expense after the RFP Closing Date and Time, or destroyed by the Squamish Nation after the RFP Closing Date and Time.



4.6. *Anticipated Timeline*

The Nation’s anticipated schedule for this RFP is as follows:

Action	Date*
RFP Release	September 17, 2019
Deadline for inquiries	September 24, 2019
Closing Date and Time	October 4, 2019, 16:00 PST
Selection of Auditor	October 11, 2019

* The dates listed above are estimates and the Nation reserves the discretion to change any of the above dates.

5. Evaluation

5.1. *Proposal Evaluation*

The **Evaluation Committee** will evaluate Proposals in the sequence identified below.

During the evaluation process, Proponents may be required to provide additional information to clarify statements made in their Proposals or other information as may be deemed necessary by the Squamish Nation.

Each Proposal shall be evaluated separately against the RFP’s requirements.

5.2. *Evaluation Sequence*

Criteria

The Evaluation Committee will further evaluate Proposals of Proponents who meet all of the mandatory RFP requirements against the following evaluation criteria:

- Qualifications of the Proponent and its proposed team. The Proponent’s and its proposed team’s combined expertise and experience with conducting financial statement audits for First Nation governments and related commercial entities, and with providing advice and opinions to First Nation governments.
- Methodology and approach
- Fees and pricing is market competitive.



Scoring

The RFP evaluation criteria will be distributed within the following categories:

Evaluation Categories		Weight
1.	Capability and Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualifications and Relevant Experience • 3 References • Quality of Proposal (format, layout and completeness) 	45%
2.	Methodology and Approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation Services Detail • Handling and Approach 	30%
3.	Pricing	25%
Total		100%

Proponents may be invited for an interview to confirm expectations of the Nation will be met; and:

- a) Interview(s) will be scored if meeting with more than one Proponent;
- b) References may be verified.

6. Limitations

This RFP does not constitute an offer and will not be considered a contract with the Nation. The Nation is not obligated to accept any Proposal or to engage the services of any Proponent, and reserves the right, in its absolute discretion, to accept or reject any and all Proposals (or portions thereof) and to negotiate the terms set forth in any Proposal. The successful Proponent will not be retained by the Nation until the Nation and the Proponent have entered into a contract for services (“**Contract for Services**”) in a form acceptable to the Nation, in its discretion.

Any Proponent submitting a Proposal under this RFP is solely responsible for their own expenses in preparing, delivering or presenting a Proposal, and their own expenses, legal or otherwise, incurred in negotiating and entering into a Contract for Services with the Nation. Under no circumstances will the Nation be liable for any losses or damages arising from the Nation’s rejection of any Proposal for any reason whatsoever.

7. Confidentiality

All of the information provided by the Nation to the Proponent shall be kept confidential. The invitees and subsequently selected Proponent may not issue any information whatsoever regarding this project without prior written approval of the Nation.

