



Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR)

Request for Proposals (RFP)

PROJECT TITLE:

Two-Eyed Seeing Knowledge Garden Website – An Immersive Learning Journey

PROPOSAL DUE DATE:

April 12, 2026

Email bids will be accepted

CONTACT PERSON:

Lisa Young

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902-371-0453

CONSULTANT ELIGIBILITY:

Open to those consultants who satisfy the minimum qualifications stated herein and that are available for work in Canada.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Unama’ki Institute of Natural Resources

UINR represents the five Mi’kmaw communities in Unama’ki or what is now referred to as Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. UINR has been actively involved in environmental management since 1999. UINR’s strengths are the ability to weave scientific research with Mi’kmaw knowledge and engage Elders, Knowledge Holders and youth to ensure Mi’kmaw values and knowledge are protected and shared. UINR has an extensive established network of partners. The Mi’kmaw guiding principles of Netukulimk and Etuapmumk are the foundation of UINR’s work.

1.2. Relevant Concepts

Etuapmumk: Elder Dr. Albert Marshall and his late wife, Dr. Murdena Marshall, brought the guiding principle of Etuapmumk, referred to in English as Two-Eyed Seeing (TES), into the Integrative Science program of Cape Breton University in 2004. It is often described as using the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing together with Western approaches and learning to see through both eyes for the benefit of all. In the years that followed the introduction of this principle, its resonance and usage have grown across fields of practice and geographies. Two-Eyed Seeing is widely referenced, making it an ideal time for greater documentation and support. UINR, alongside Elder Dr. Albert Marshall and partners, is well positioned to guide the development and application of Two-Eyed Seeing supports, which will be shaped throughout the project.

Knowledge Gardening: The Two-Eyed Seeing Knowledge Garden will be a living co-learning hub – a collaborative space for exploring Two-Eyed Seeing approaches to Indigenous led nature-based solutions. The concept of knowledge gardening has been woven throughout the many years of research and sharing around TES through the Integrative Science work of Elders Dr. Murdena Marshall and Elder Dr. Albert Marshall alongside Dr. Cheryl Bartlett. “Seeds only germinate when the environmental conditions are appropriate,” says Elder Dr. Albert Marshall. This metaphor will guide our process and understanding of the complexity of generating and sharing knowledge that nourishes growth that is organic, interconnected, and evolving. This heart-centred approach is captured well by the Mi’kmaq word, Tetpaqotmk (Det- bah - goh-dimk) which means to tend to or care for with all your heart. A garden also incorporates principles of Two-Eyed Seeing, the coming together of traditional and science-based knowledge systems for the benefit of all.

Nature-Based Solutions: The Two-Eyed Seeing Knowledge Garden is one of two Indigenous led ‘knowledge and learning hubs’ resourced by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) to contextualize nature-based solutions in Indigenous cultures and responsibility practices. [As defined by ECCC](#), “nature-based solutions use tools such as restoration, conservation, and management of wetlands, grasslands, coastlines and forests, to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change while supporting biodiversity”. From 2024-2029, we are growing and empowering

an ecosystem of Indigenous led nature-based solutions while influencing policies and approaches through a Two-Eyed Seeing lens.

2. Scope of Work

2.1. Purpose and Approach:

The **Two-Eyed Seeing Knowledge Garden Website – An Immersive Learning Journey** is part of a broader initiative to create a Two-Eyed Seeing Co-Learning Hub focused on nature-based solutions.

Through this RFP, UINR is seeking a contract website designer (or team) to bring the vision of Elder Albert Marshall and the Co-Learning Hub to life. The website will offer an immersive, intuitive journey that invites visitors into a transformative learning experience.

The intent is to support users in developing a deeper understanding of Two-Eyed Seeing and to prepare them to apply this perspective in their own work in caring for the Land and working across knowledge systems.

The Knowledge Garden will house stories, research, learning resources, and more. It will be a space to explore Two-Eyed Seeing wise practices through 'seeds of knowledge' from Indigenous-led initiatives that are using natural solutions to build community resilience, protect species and ecosystems, adapt to climate change, and improve traditional food security.

The Two-Eyed Seeing Knowledge Garden has a dedicated space within the broader UINR website, which is currently in development and nearing completion. It will serve as a Two-Eyed Seeing Centre of Excellence, a place where people can engage as they begin or further their personal and professional journey in Two-Eyed Seeing.

2.2. Goals:

The primary goals of this project are to:

- **Create an immersive digital experience** that reflects the spirit and principles of Two-Eyed Seeing and knowledge gardening
- **Translate complex ideas into accessible, engaging formats** for diverse audiences (community members, practitioners, policymakers, educators)
- **Honour Mi'kmaw knowledge systems and protocols** through thoughtful design, storytelling, invoking a sense of place, and user experience
- **Design a flexible and scalable platform** that can grow over time as new “seeds of knowledge” are added

- **Encourage reflection and transformation** through a values and principles-based experience
- **Integrate seamlessly with the existing UINR website** while maintaining a distinct identity and experience
- **Ensure accessibility and usability**, including mobile responsiveness and inclusive design practices
- **Support internal capacity**, ensuring UINR staff are supported by the website and content in their work

2.3. Deliverables And Timing:

All deliverables are to be completed by **September 30, 2026**.

Proponents should outline a clear work plan demonstrating how deliverables will be achieved within this timeframe. Suggested deliverables include, but are not limited to:

Discovery and Concept Development

- Engagement with project team (note that we are currently working with educational design and audio production teams to create foundational content. Touchpoints that link up this work will be important to the work plan)
- Review and synthesis of existing materials and vision
- User experience (UX) strategy and journey mapping
- Conceptual design direction for the Knowledge Garden (guided by educational designer and UINR team)

Design and Prototyping

- Website architecture, site map and layouts/storyboards for key pages and user flows
- Visual design – look, feel and sound that aligns with overall website yet is distinct
- Interactive prototypes to test the immersive journey

Website Development

- Full website build within UINR’s existing platform
- Integration with current UINR website structure
- Responsive design for desktop and mobile and considerations for low-bandwidth users
- Following and/or exceeding requirements set by the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act
- Guidance on usage and citation
- Platform with user-friendly interface that can be maintained in-house with a relatively inexpensive subscription fees

Content Integration

- Templates for stories “seeds of knowledge,” and learning resources
- Support for integrating multimedia content (video, audio, imagery)
- Guidance on content organization and tagging

Testing and Refinement

- User testing and feedback integration
- Performance optimization and debugging
- Final revisions and approvals

Launch and Knowledge Transfer

- Website launch support
- Documentation and training for UINR staff
- Post-launch support (to be specified in proposal)

Project Collaboration

- Regular project team meetings, including kickoff, checkpoints, and final sign-off
- UINR will be an active and collaborative partner throughout the project
- Proponents should outline their approach to collaboration, communication, and incorporating feedback

3. General Information

3.1. Proposal Submission

Interested parties are required to submit their proposal by **April 12, 2026**. UINR assumes no responsibility for delays and all late proposals will be disqualified from further consideration.

Electronic proposals must be emailed as an attachment in Microsoft Word or as a PDF. All communication between the Consultant and the UINR upon release of this RFP shall be with the Executive Director as follows:

Name	Lisa Young
E-Mail Address	rfp.hub@uinr.ca
Mailing Address and Physical Address for Delivery	4102 Shore Road Eskasoni, NS

	B1W 1M4
Phone Number	902) 371-0453

Any other communication will be considered unofficial and non-binding on the UINR.

3.2. Estimated Schedule of Procurement Activities

Issue request for proposals	March 26, 2026
Proposals due	April 12, 2026
Notify “Apparent Successful Contractor”	April 20, 2026
Sign contract and begin work	April 24, 2026
Project Team meetings	As determined
Submit final report and end of contract	September 30, 2026

UINR reserves the right to revise the above schedule if required.

3.3. Proprietary Information/Public Disclosure

Proposals submitted in response to this competitive procurement will become the property of the UINR.

3.4. Revisions to the RFP

If revisions are made to the RFP, addenda will be provided via email to firms and individuals who have made their interest aware to the UINR Executive Director. Please send your name, email address, and telephone number to the Executive Director to receive RFP addenda.

3.5. Responsiveness

All proposals will be reviewed by the Executive Director and UINR staff to determine compliance with administrative requirements and instructions specified in the RFP. Failure to comply with any

part of the RFP may result in rejection of the proposal as non-responsive. UINR also reserves the right to waive minor administrative irregularities.

3.6. Most Favourable Terms

UINR reserves the right to contact a Consultant for clarification or make an award without further discussion of the proposal submitted. Therefore, the proposal should be submitted initially using the most favorable terms the Consultant can propose. There will be no best and final offer procedure.

The Apparent Successful Contractor should be prepared to accept this RFP for incorporation into a contract. Contract negotiations may incorporate some or all of the Consultant's proposal. It is understood that the proposal will become a part of the official procurement file on this matter without obligation to UINR.

3.7. Costs To Propose

UINR will not be liable for any costs incurred by the Consultant in preparation of a proposal submitted in response to this RFP, in conduct of a presentation, or any other activities related to responding to this RFP.

3.8. No Obligation to Contract

This RFP does not obligate UINR to contract for services specified herein.

3.9. Rejection Of Proposals

The UINR reserves the right at its sole discretion to reject any and all proposals received without penalty and a contract as a result of this RFP.

3.10. Commitment Of Funds

The Executive Director of UINR or delegate is the only individual who may legally commit UINR to the expenditures of funds for a contract resulting from this RFP. No cost chargeable to the proposed contract may be incurred before receipt of a fully executed contract.

4. Proposal Contents

The Proposal must contain a comprehensive description of services including the following:

- A. **Project Approach/Methodology** – a complete description of the proposed approach and methodology for the project. The section should convey the Consultant’s understanding of the proposed project and an understanding of Two-Eyed Seeing.
- B. **Work Plan** - Include all project requirements and the proposed tasks, services, activities, etc. necessary to accomplish the scope of the project defined in this RFP. This section must contain sufficient detail for the evaluation team to understand the Consultant’s knowledge of the subject and skills necessary to successfully complete the project. Include any required involvement of UINR staff.
- C. **Project Schedule** - Include a project schedule indicating when the elements of the work will be completed. Project schedule must ensure that any deliverables requested are met.
- D. **Outcomes and Performance Measurement** – Describe the impacts/outcomes proposed to achieve the delivery of these services including how these outcomes would be monitored, measured and reported to UINR.
- E. **Risks** - The Consultant must identify potential risks that are considered significant to the success of the project. Include how the Consultant would propose to effectively monitor and manage these risks, including reporting of risks to the UINR.
- F. **Deliverables** – Fully describe deliverables to be submitted under the proposed contract. Deliverables must support the requirements set forth in Scope of Work.
- G. **Project Management**
 - a. **Project Team Structure/Internal Controls** - Identify key project team members noting the project lead and any partners or subconsultants.
 - b. **Staff Qualifications/Experience** - Identify the responsibilities and qualifications of each of the team members. Brief (maximum 2 pages each) CVs may be included in an appendix. The consultant must commit that staff identified in its proposal will perform the assigned work. Any substitutions must be pre-approved by UINR.
- H. **Experience of the Consultant**
 - a. Indicate the experience the Consultant and any subcontractors have in the following areas:
 - i. **Working in Indigenous contexts**, including approaches that respect Indigenous knowledge systems, cultural protocols, and relationship-building. Experience with story-based or narrative-driven approaches is considered an asset.

- ii. **Understanding and application of Two-Eyed Seeing (Etuaptmumk)**
Proponents should describe their understanding of Two-Eyed Seeing and outline how it will shape their approach to this project. Experience using Two-Eyed Seeing in past work is considered an asset.
- iii. **Designing and delivering immersive digital experiences**, including website design, user experience (UX), and storytelling through digital platforms.
- iv. **Facilitation and collaboration**, including working with diverse partners such as Elders, Knowledge Holders, community members, and project teams in a respectful and inclusive way.
- v. **Translating complex ideas into accessible formats**, including experience with content design, visual storytelling, and creating engaging learning experiences for diverse audiences.
- vi. **Project management and communication**, including coordinating timelines, documenting processes, and maintaining clear and consistent communication with project partners.
- vii. **Other relevant experience** that demonstrates the proponent's qualifications to successfully deliver this project.

- b. Share a **summary of relevant projects** or contracts completed within the past five (5) years, including a brief description of each project, the proponent's role, and how the work relates to the scope of this RFP.

I. References - Provide names, addresses, telephone numbers, fax numbers and email addresses of: three (3) business references for the Consultant and three (3) business references for the lead staff person for whom work has been accomplished and briefly describe the type of service provided. Do not include current UINR staff as references. By submitting a proposal in response to this work request, the vendor and team members grant permission to UINR to contact these references and others, who from UINR's perspective, may have pertinent information. References will be evaluated at UINR's discretion.

J. Identification of Costs - Identify all costs in Canadian dollars including all expenses to be charged to accomplish the objectives of the contract. A fully detailed budget outlining deliverables with staff costs, travel costs, and other costs is required as outlined in the RFP. Note that UINR is an Indigenous organization based in Eskasoni and is therefore HST exempt.

5. Evaluation and Contract Award

Proposals will be evaluated strictly in accordance with the requirements stated in the RFP and any additional addenda. Proposals will be reviewed, evaluated, and ranked by a team designated by UINR.

UINR will notify the Apparently Successful Contractor of their selection in writing following the evaluation process. Individuals or firms not selected for further negotiation or award will be notified separately by email.