

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC UTILITIES
INVITATION FOR PROPOSALS
COMMUNICATION SERVICES
TERMS OF REFERENCE
APRIL 2023

1. PURPOSE

The Board of Commissioners of Public Utilities is seeking proposals from communication specialists to assist the Board in developing and implementing a comprehensive communication strategy and plan.

2. BACKGROUND

The Board is an independent, quasi-judicial regulatory body appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, and is constituted under the authority of the **Public Utilities Act**. The Board is comprised of four full-time Board members, including the Chair and Chief Executive Officer and Vice-Chair. In addition to the Board members, there are a small number of professional staff, currently 14, who provide advice and support to the members, and administer the operations of the Board.

The Board has responsibilities with respect to the regulation of public utilities, automobile insurance rates, maximum prices of petroleum products, motor carrier licensing and expropriation, in accordance with the **Public Utilities Act, Electrical Power Control Act, Automobile Insurance Act, Insurance Companies Act, Petroleum Products Act, Motor Carrier Act, and Expropriation Act**.

The Board's responsibilities involve a wide variety of matters which are of importance to its stakeholders which include regulated industries, consumers and the public generally. Most of the Board's work involves technical subject matter which is often very complex with multiple issues and considerations. In addition the Board is obliged to observe the formalities and requirements associated with the discharge of its mandate as a quasi-judicial body.

Consulting Services

The Board is looking for an experienced consultant to review its current communication strategy; advise as to opportunities to better inform and engage stakeholders; to develop a forward-looking communications plan; and support the implementation of the plan which may include training and coaching staff (the "Services").

The objective of this engagement will be to assist the Board in developing approaches to communications which will increase transparency and accessibility for its stakeholders. This may

involve increased engagement across marketing platforms/social media, a stronger brand identity, new engagement activities using new communications strategies and tools. The result is expected to be improved communication and stronger relationships with stakeholders.

3. SCOPE AND REQUIREMENTS

The Proponent will be reporting to and working closely with the Board's Senior Executive Team. The scope of work will focus on the following key areas:

1. Review the Board's current communications strategy, which may include:
 - i) Review existing communications tools and tactics.
 - ii) Research and consultation to better understand opportunities and challenges. This may involve consultation with Board members and staff, other regulatory Boards, and stakeholders.
 - iii) Identify available approaches and actions (including possible social media growth strategy and engagement).
 - iv) Report potential approaches and recommendations.
2. Develop a three-year communications strategy and plan, with emphasis on first year deliverables, which may include:
 - i) A media relations strategy.
 - ii) Stakeholder and community outreach strategies.
 - iii) A brand identity.
 - iv) Changes to the Board's website.
 - v) Templates for communications.
 - vi) Engagement measurement tools.
3. Support Implementation of the communication strategy and plan, which may include:
 - i) Oversight of the execution of the plan.
 - ii) Coaching and Training for Board members and staff.
 - iii) Measuring increases in engagement.

4. ELIGIBILITY

Proponents are required to have:

- i) the professional qualifications necessary to perform the Services.
- ii) significant experience with projects of similar type and scope.
- iii) sufficient staff and other resources to provide the Services.
- iv) the demonstrated ability to meet timelines.
- v) no conflict of interest.

5. PROPOSAL CONTENT

Proposals should include:

- (i) A description of the qualifications and special expertise of the firm and the names and qualifications of the individuals within the firm that will be assigned to perform the Services.
- (ii) A description of the experience of the firm and designated individuals in providing services similar to those being requested by the Board, including, to the extent possible, measures of success in providing these services.
- (iii) A description of the proposed approach to providing the Services setting out the timelines and schedule for completion of tasks.
- (iv) The hourly rates proposed, for all services to be rendered, including meeting time and presentations. The proposal should include a quotation for the maximum fees to be charged for each of the three years. The quotation should identify the estimated time for each task and the staff person assigned. Incidental expenses and disbursements should be stated separately.
- (v) Alternative and additional approaches may be suggested by the proponent to better achieve the stated objectives of the Board. This should include a description of the different approaches, the timelines and schedule and the associated fees.
- (vi) Disclosure of all potential conflicts.
- (vii) The name, title and contact information, including mailing address, phone number and Email of the person whom the Board should contact regarding the proposal.
- (viii) References – The name, title and contact information (including phone and Email) for three (3) current or former clients that can speak the proponent's experience and qualifications.
- (ix) Sample Materials - At least one example of a communications plan prepared in a prior engagement, with supporting materials as appropriate.

6. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT

If your firm has performed services for electrical utilities, automobile insurance companies or petroleum distribution companies operating in this province you may be in conflict of interest.

Please consult the Board before submitting your proposal if you are unsure whether a conflict of interest exists.

7. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of the following factors:

- i) educational, professional and technical qualifications of the firm and assigned personnel.
- ii) the experience of the firm in providing similar services.
- iii) access to an appropriate level of administrative resources and support.
- iv) demonstrated ability to meet timelines.
- v) the absence of conflict of interest.
- vi) proposed hourly rates and the fees for the Services.

8. TERM OF ENGAGEMENT AND MONITORING PERFORMANCE

The firm chosen will be engaged for a one-year period with an option of renewal based on performance for two additional one year terms.

During the term of the engagement, the proponent's performance will be evaluated on quality of work, adherence to agreed schedules, service, and fees.

The Board will not pay fees greater than the maximum fees set out in the proposal without prior written consent of the Board based on a proposed revised budget from the consultant with a full explanation as to the reason for the revision.

Reasonable out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with Board policies, including but not limited to travel by the most economical means, accommodations, and other disbursements customary in engagements of this nature.

The Board reserves the right to terminate the contract if performance, fees, or any other aspects of the service are unsatisfactory.

9. DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE

Copies of the relevant legislation, orders of the Board and other information may be viewed on the Board's website www.pub.nl.ca.

10. CONDITIONS

The Board makes no claim, expressed or implied, with regard to the volume of work that may result from the acceptance of a proposal for the provision of these professional services.

The lowest cost proposal or any proposal will not necessarily be accepted. The Board reserves the right to request additional information from proponents submitting proposals, and to decline any or all proposals.

The Board will not be liable for any fees, expenses or other costs incurred by the proponents in the presentation of their response to this request for proposals.

11. PROPOSAL TIMELINE AND PROCESS

The deadline for the receipt of proposals is 3:00 P.M. on April 17, 2023. Proposals may be dropped off, mailed or emailed as follows:

PROPOSAL FOR COMMUNICATION SERVICES

Cheryl Blundon, Board Secretary
Board of Commissioners of Public Utilities
P. O. Box 21040
Suite E-210, 120 Torbay Road
St. John's, NL A1A 5B2
Email: cblundon@pub.nl.ca

Before finalizing the selection, a proponent may be required to make a presentation to the Board.

Additional information can be provided, if necessary, by telephone or email or by interviews. Please contact Cheryl Blundon, Board Secretary, at (709) 726-8600 or cblundon@pub.nl.ca.

Cheryl Blundon
Executive Director & Board Secretary