

Atlantic Canada FDI In-Market Mission

Request for Proposals

June 2025

Ref 06-20-25- IMM



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL-
Notice to Prospective Consultants**

June 20th, 2025

You are invited to review and respond to this Request for Proposal (RFP), providing consulting services related to hosting an ***Atlantic Canada FDI In-Market Mission 2025***. In submitting your proposal, you must comply with these instructions.

Please note that no verbal information given will be binding unless such information is issued in writing as an official addendum.

In the opinion of the Atlantic Association of Community Business Development Corporations, this RFP is complete and without the need for explanation. However, if you have questions, or should you need any clarifying information, the contact person for this RFP is:

Joe Brennan
(Atlantic Association of Community Business Development Corporations)
902-747-2232 (Office)
902-631-2397 (Cell)
joe.brennan@cbdc.ca

Please note we require all responses to this RFP to be based on fixed-priced quotes, no estimated quotes will be considered.



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1.0 Introduction

The Atlantic Association of Community Business Development Corporations (AACBDCs) invites qualified firms or consultants to submit proposals in response to this Request for Proposal (RFP) for consulting services to support the planning and execution of an Atlantic Canada FDI In-Market Mission in Europe, scheduled for October 2025.

2.0 Contracting Agency

For this contract, the AACBDC will be the contracting agency.

The AACBDC is engaged in community-based business development through a network of autonomous, not-for-profit organizations that work with all levels of government and the private sector to meet the needs of small and medium enterprises.

In Atlantic Canada, there are 41 corporations dedicated to assisting small and medium enterprises including start-up, expansion, modernization, and maintenance of business entities in all sectors of the economy.

The AACBDC administers, on behalf of its 41 member CBDCs, several programs and initiatives. AACBDC is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors that is selected by each of the Atlantic provinces to provide oversight and governance of the affairs of the organization.

3.0 Background

3.1 Atlantic Growth Strategy

The Government of Canada and the Provinces of New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island (Atlantic Provinces) recognize that trade and investment are key economic drivers in the Atlantic region.

Through an all-inclusive, pan-Atlantic, whole-of-government approach - the Atlantic Growth Strategy (AGS) (<http://www.acoa-apec.ca/ags-sca/Eng/atlantic-growth.html>) undertakes cooperative actions aimed at stimulating economic growth in the region.

3.2 Atlantic Trade and Investment Growth Strategy (ATIGS)

One pillar of the AGS is the Atlantic Trade and Investment Growth Strategy (ATIGS) which was first launched in 2017 and was renewed in 2022. The new strategy builds on successes and lessons learned and aims to strengthen the implementation of firm-focused, growth-oriented trade and investment activities in a coordinated manner.

Under the new ATIGS, the core federal and provincial partners will work with partners to achieve the following three main objectives:

- Increase the number of Atlantic firms engaging in international business activity.
- Increase the capacity of Atlantic firms to strategically enter new, sustain, or increase their activity, in international markets.

- Strengthen the region's capacity to attract FDI.

In support of the updated ATIGS, the federal and provincial partners have renewed their commitment to trade and investment in Atlantic Canada by signing a joint Atlantic Trade and Investment Growth Agreement (ATIGA). Under the ATIGA the partners will invest close to \$20 million over five years to implement firm-focused, strategic market development plans to expand Atlantic Canada's international business activities.

The ATIGS Management Committee (MC) has created an FDI Team that has been given the mandate to collaborate on projects that will focus on increasing FDI in Atlantic Canada. FDI is defined as investment transactions with individuals/entities outside of Canada.

The FDI Team aims to strategically market the region by displaying the best it has to offer to:

- Attract new global investments.
- Attract investments from existing companies already established in Canada that are considering expansion.
- Ensure regional investment stakeholders have the information and training required to respond to incoming foreign interests.
- Encourage the coordination and leveraging of federal and provincial resources to close more foreign investment deals in Atlantic Canada.

3.3 Project Background

In the fall of 2023, the four Atlantic Canadian provinces, in partnership with ACOA through ATIGS, successfully delivered an in-market foreign direct investment (FDI) mission along the West Coast of the United States. The delegation, comprised of representatives from each Atlantic province and the Trade Commissioner Service, hosted events in Portland, Oregon; Seattle, Washington; and Irvine, California. Over three days, the team engaged with 85 companies.

Building on this momentum, the FDI team led a second mission in 2024 to the United Kingdom, with stops in London, England and Glasgow, Scotland. The delegation, which included representatives from Atlantic Canada and the High Commission of Canada, held meetings with 76 companies across both cities.

The consultants retained for these missions was responsible for identifying C-suite executives from companies with revenues between \$30 million and \$100 million and demonstrated interest in expansion within an 18-month to five-year window. These prospects were categorized as follows:

- **Tier 1:** Expansion expected within 18 months
- **Tier 2:** Expansion expected within 18 months to 3 years
- **Tier 3:** Expansion expected within 3 to 5 years

The consultants also facilitated 20–30-minute G2B meetings at each event, enabling companies to showcase their expansion strategies while giving provincial representatives a platform to highlight their unique value propositions, available incentives, and investment opportunities.

Looking ahead, the four Atlantic provinces and ACOA, through ATIGS, will build on the momentum of previous missions by organizing a third in-market FDI mission to Europe in the fall of 2025. The FDI team has identified Germany and Belgium as priority target countries for the upcoming mission. The specific cities to be targeted will be determined based on market intelligence gathered in collaboration with Invest in Canada and the Trade Commissioner Service.

To support this effort, a consultant will conduct sample lead generation activities in key cities across both countries. This will help identify the top three cities with the highest potential for engagement. In these selected markets, the lead generation consultant will arrange qualified meetings with companies that are actively considering expansion into Atlantic Canada within the next five years.

This project aligns with ATIGS's objective of increasing Atlantic Canada's capacity to attract foreign direct investment. The core of the mission will be G2B (government-to-business) meetings, supported by receptions at each venue to enable networking before and after formal sessions.

Participants from Atlantic Canada will include representatives from Innovation PEI, Invest Nova Scotia, Opportunities New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Industry, Energy and Technology, ACOA, and the Atlantic Association of CBDCs. Global Affairs Canada will play a coordinating role, supporting both from headquarters in Ottawa and via in-market Trade Commissioner Service offices.

Each mission location will include G2B meetings and networking receptions. The targeted business audience will consist primarily of C-level executives or business owners from companies with revenues exceeding \$10 million and expansion plans into North America within the next five years.

In terms of sector priorities, we're proposing that each province will be asked to complete an lead generation investor profile sheet to define their ideal lead. These profiles will be shared with the lead generation consultant supporting this project to ensure that the leads generated are well-aligned with each province's specific needs.

The selected consultant must demonstrate strong knowledge of Atlantic Canada's investment value proposition as well as a deep understanding of international markets and investment attraction strategies.

Please note: *Companies and sectors not being targeted for this project include but are not limited to financially distressed companies, companies seeking a sales location, retail, wholesale, call centers, data centers, gambling, online casinos, pornography, and firearms manufacturers.*

3.4 Engagement Oversight

The AACBDC has appointed Joe Brennan as Program Manager to liaise with the consultant(s) for ongoing information and project management requirements. For the length of this engagement, the consultant will report to the Program Manager.

Additional oversight may be provided by the project team, which is comprised of:

- Two representatives from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA).
- One representative from each of the four Atlantic provinces (Provincial EDOs).
- One representative from the AACBDC.

3.5 Consultant Exclusivity and Non-Compete Agreement

The selected consultant agrees to dedicate their services to the Atlantic Association of CBDCs for the duration of the contract outlined in this Request for Proposal (RFP). Furthermore, the consultant warrants that they are not engaged in any consulting or contractual agreements with any competing jurisdiction or Canadian entity that could pose a conflict of interest with the objectives of this project.

Note to Bidders: Bidders are requested to confirm in their proposals that they do not have existing contractual obligations with competing jurisdictions or Canadian entities that would prevent them from fully committing to this project. Failure to disclose such conflicts of interest may result in disqualification from consideration.

4.0 Description of Initiative

4.1 Attendees

A consultant will be engaged to identify C-suite executives from companies with annual revenues of \$10 million or more and demonstrated plans to expand within an 18-month to five-year timeframe. These prospects will be categorized as follows:

- **Tier 1:** Expansion anticipated within 18 months
- **Tier 2:** Expansion anticipated within 18 months to 3 years
- **Tier 3:** Expansion anticipated within 3 to 5 years

Confirmation of these criteria will qualify the company as a lead.

To support this initiative, the project team will engage an in-market lead generation consultant to identify suitable investment prospects within the selected region. The consultant must outline a clear and effective methodology for sourcing, vetting, and prioritizing leads, incorporating feedback from the project team to refine the target list. The primary objective is to identify, qualify, and advance foreign direct investment (FDI) opportunities within the mission's designated priority sectors identified by each provinces.

As part of this engagement the consultant will:

- Submit a preliminary lead list for review and approval by each province prior to outreach or sending invitations.
- Invite approved leads, share information about the Atlantic region, and coordinate G2B meetings.
- Provide lead details to the project team within two weeks of the event, including company name, sector focus, engagement opportunity, and how the Economic Development Organization (EDO) can add value.
- Attend the event and collaborate with the project team and Trade Commissioners to ensure successful outcomes.
- Deliver a final report summarizing the mission's results and key outcomes.

4.2 Event Format

The primary focus of the event will be one-on-one Government-to-Business (G2B) meetings. To facilitate these discussions, dedicated meeting rooms will be secured at the venue, ensuring a private and professional setting for candid conversations between government representatives and prospective leads. Specifically, four meeting rooms will be required for provincial representatives and one for the Trade Commissioner Service. Additionally, a designated reception area will be available to support informal networking, providing space for participants to connect and socialize before and after the scheduled meetings.

Attendees will be scheduled into pre-arranged 30-minute individual meetings with ATIGS representatives, coordinated by the consultant. These meetings will take place in private rooms, with the aim of ensuring each province secures six to eight meetings per city, each of which must have a confirmed interest in expansion.

During these sessions, company representatives will outline their growth and expansion plans, while ATIGS representatives will present relevant opportunities within Atlantic Canada that could support those plans. The meetings will follow a relaxed, conversational format, and all shared information will remain confidential.

In addition to the formal meetings, each city's event will include an evening reception or dinner, co-hosted with the Trade Commissioner Service. Local economic development organizations will also be invited to foster broader collaboration and networking with regional stakeholders.

The G2B meetings is expected to accomodate approximately 80 participants, including up to 65 business attendees and no more than 15 government representatives. To ensure balance, each partner organization should be limited to a maximum of three government attendees.

Draft Event Agenda:

- **12:00 PM** – Reception area opens

- **1:00 PM** – G2B meetings begin (30-minute sessions)
- **5:00 PM** – G2B meetings conclude
- **6:00 PM** – Evening networking reception

The consultant will be responsible for arranging between 18-24 government-to-business (G2B) meetings between qualified business leads and representatives from each of the four Atlantic Provinces' ATIGS team representatives. Meetings should be distributed equitably among the provincial representatives to ensure balanced participation and engagement.

4.3 Venue

The project team has been advised to hold the events in unconventional venues, as those tend to be stronger draws than hotel conference rooms or corporate offices. Examples include art galleries, law firm offices, and golf clubs. A large room for the reception area and individual rooms for the G2B meetings will be required.

5.0 Deliverables and Milestones

The mission is planned for October 2025, and Germany and Belgium have been identified as target regions. Final decisions regarding host cities and event dates would be contingent on market intelligence gathered by the team in collaboration with Invest in Canada, the Trade Commissioner Service, and the consultant engaged for this initiative.

In terms of sector priorities, we're proposing that each province will be asked to complete an lead generation investor profile sheet to define their ideal lead. These profiles will be shared with the lead generation consultant supporting this project to ensure that the leads generated are well-aligned with each province's specific needs.

Outlined below is a detailed breakdown of the activities the project team will undertake in preparation for the mission.

Project Milestone	Timeline	Outcome
Engagement of Consultant	July 2025	The consultant has been identified, and project onboarding has commenced.
Venue Identification	July - August 2025	Consultant to provide suggestions and assist the project team in securing venues, food/catering, and AV services for the event.
Lead Generation	July - September 2025	The consultant will be responsible for lead generation for the event. <i>(Provide a prospective list of leads for review and approval by the</i>

		<i>project team before contacting or sending the invitation).</i>
Leads Invited to the Event	September-October 2025	Consultant will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invite leads to the event. 2. Provide leads with information on the Atlantic region. 3. Establish G2B meetings with leads.
Supply Intermediary Profiles of Leads to the Project team	October 2025	The consultant will (<i>two weeks in advance of the event</i>): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide the project team with the name and description of the lead. Including sector(s) of focus, description of the engagement opportunity, and how the EDO can add value.
Event Execution	October 2025	The consultant will be required to be in attendance each day of the event to work with the project team and the Trade Commissioners to ensure an optimal outcome is achieved.
Final Project Report	December 2025	The consultant will provide a report on the mission's outcomes.

6.0 Proposal Structure

Table 1: Response Structure	
Introduction	This section should briefly describe the firm, its capabilities, and its experience in handling an assignment of this nature.
Understanding the issue	This section should explain the consultant's understanding and interpretation of the objectives and requirements of this project. The successful consultant(s) will have demonstrated a good understanding of the work to be undertaken.

Work plan and methodology	<p>This section should include the consultant's work plan, methodology, and understanding of the objectives and tasks outlined in section 4.0 above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight the firm's connections within the target geographical markets.
Summary of qualifications and experience	<p>This section must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A brief résumé of the qualifications and experience of the consulting firm as they relate to this RFP. It should clearly outline corporate knowledge of the sector and regional knowledge. • A list of key project personnel to be used in the project outlining their roles and responsibilities. • (If applicable) a list of any subcontractors (individual or organization) that the consultant intends to use when providing services under this RFP. • Corporate profiles and short-form résumés of key project personnel, as well as references for related work to be included as an appendix. Provide two reference projects where the company has undertaken work of similar scope and scale.
Pricing	<p>Pricing is to be detailed in a table and should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lump sum total covering all professional fees for the consultants to execute the mission across three cities. Additionally, please provide a breakdown of the cost per city, in case the mission is limited to two cities instead of three. • Estimated travel expenses related to participation in the mission. • Any other associated costs.

7.0 Project Schedule

The project schedule should assume an approximate starting date of Monday, July 28th, 2025. The term of the contract is anticipated to be up to and including December 1st, 2025.

8.0 Submission of Proposal and Vendor Information

Proposals must be received by the AACBDC contact no later than 4:00 pm on July 14th, 2025.

- Proposals should not exceed twenty (20) pages, excluding appendices. Appendices are acceptable as outlined previously.
- A digital copy is required.
- The successful proponent will be contacted within 14 business days of the RFP closing.
- Please submit an electronic version of the proposal in Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) to the following email address: joe.brennan@cbdc.ca.

9.0 Proposal Evaluation

The AACBDC will evaluate the proposals. The lowest-priced proposal may not necessarily be accepted. The AACBDC reserves the right to recommend rejection of all proposals and either cancel or re-issue the RFP if necessary.

The qualifications, commitment, related experience, and knowledge of the project personnel will be key evaluation factors. The experience of the consulting team in undertaking assignments of this nature and magnitude will be a significant factor in proposal selection. The evaluation framework outlined in Table 2 will be used in the selection with special attention given to the methodology, the project management, and the delivery plan. The criteria used to evaluate proposals fall into the following categories as referenced in Section 6:

	Factor	Scoring
1.	Consultant (s) experience demonstrates the ability to provide requested services	15
2.	Consultant (s) demonstrates an understanding of the project and its objectives	25
3.	Completeness and suitability of approach (proposed methodology)	20
4.	Capacity (relevant skills and experience by the individual(s))	15
5.	Pricing	25
	Total	100

Please note: we may choose to interview a shortlist of consultants as part of the evaluation process.

10.0 Awarding of Contract

The resulting contract will contain such reasonable terms as the AACBDC may require.

The award of the contract will be made by the AACBDC, based upon the results of the evaluation of submitted proposals. The AACBDC will notify the successful consultant in writing via electronic means. Those who are not successful will receive a written notification via electronic correspondence as soon as possible once the award of the contract has been accepted and the negotiations have been concluded with the successful consultant.

11.0 Contact

All inquiries and requests for clarification must be submitted via email. Requests for clarification should be directed to joe.brennan@cbdc.ca.

The AACBDC will administer the contract for this project. Contact for this RFP is:

Name: Joe Brennan

Organization: Atlantic Association of CBDCs

Address: 459 Murray Street, Mulgrave, NS B0E 2G0

Email: joe.brennan@cbdc.ca

Telephone: (902) 747-2232 Ext 202 or (902) 631-2397 Cell

12.0 General Conditions

Verbal information or representations shall not be binding on the AACBDC. Only changes, alterations, modifications, or clarifications approved in writing will be binding. To be valid all such changes, alterations, modifications, or clarifications shall be issued in the form of addenda and all such addenda shall become a part of this RFP.

The proposal of the successful consultant will form part of any resultant contract agreement by attachment and incorporation by reference. Claims made in the proposal will constitute contractual commitments. Any provision in the proposal may be included in the resultant contract as a direct provision thereof. The successful consultant, as a condition of submitting its proposal, accepts a customized contract that will be negotiated.

Any resultant contract from this RFP will be governed by the by-laws of the AACBDC and shall be issued in the name of the successful consultant exactly as that successful consultant's personal or corporate name is stated in the RFP response document. Funds payable for materials delivered under any resultant contract shall be paid only to the consultant who is so listed as a party to any resultant contract. Only legally registered names of Proponents are acceptable.

The proposal will contain the signature, name, and title of the person authorized to sign on behalf of the consultant on the proposal submitted in response to this RFP.

The responsibility rests with the consultant to submit a complete proposal, with proper and adequate detail to substantiate all aspects of its proposal. Incomplete proposals shall be deemed to be non-compliant. A complete proposal should include but not be limited to:

- Legal name and status: The proposal shall state the correct legal name and legal status of the proposing entity and the correct mailing address.
- Consultant contact: The name, title, telephone and fax numbers, e-mail address and civic address of a representative who may be contacted for clarification or other matters relating to the proposal shall be provided.
- Content: The proposal will be clear, and concise, and must include sufficient detail for effective evaluation and for substantiating the validity of stated claims. The proposal shall

not simply rephrase or restate the requirements but rather shall provide a convincing rationale to demonstrate how the consultant intends to meet these requirements.

The successful consultant must be licensed to conduct business in its jurisdiction and may be required to produce a certificate of good standing for that jurisdiction.

All terms and conditions will apply to all subcontractors and the consultant will be responsible for subcontractors' compliance. The consultant will be responsible for all work done by the subcontractors. The consultant will be responsible for all damages and will complete any work unfinished by the subcontractors.

The following constitutes the release of payment by the AACBDC for this engagement:

1. 10% released upon signing of the contract.
2. 50% released upon completion of the venue identification and leads invited to the event.
3. 40% released upon successful event execution and presentation of the final report.

13.0 Intellectual Property and Disclosure

All proposals and any intellectual property that is developed as a result of this project, including all data, specifications, concept plans, designs, rationales, presentation materials, economic and technical reports, and related information produced by the consultant in completing this work submitted shall become the property of the AACBDC. By submitting a proposal, the consultant hereby grants the AACBDC a license to distribute, copy, print, or translate the proposal for the invitation and completion of the project, including to the members and representatives of ATIGS.

All documents submitted by partner agencies shall remain the property of the issuing organization. All information is proprietary and as such shall be treated as confidential. Information obtained by the consultant as a result of participation in this project is confidential and must not be disclosed without written authorization.