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**Request for Proposals:
Development of Strategic Resources – First Nations Business Directory (FNBD)
Portal**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

You are invited to submit a proposal to the Chiefs of Ontario (COO) to provide services for the **development of strategic resources to support the First Nations Business Directory (FNBD) Portal and its associated verification, certification, and procurement support functions.**

This Project will focus on the creation of **strategic documents, operational guidelines, and resource materials** that will support the effective implementation, governance, and long-term sustainability of the FNBD.

The proposal must demonstrate how the proponent will support First Nations data governance principles, OCAP® standards, and First Nations-led verification and certification standard operating procedures.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Chiefs of Ontario is developing Ontario's first, **First Nation-led and First Nation-certified Business Directory.**

The FNBD is designed to:

- Register, verify, and certify First Nation-owned businesses in Ontario;
- Support procurement, supply chain mapping, and economic development; and
- ensure First Nations control their data in accordance with **OCAP® principles** and related data governance frameworks.

The FNBD portal and its associated verification and certification system require a set of **strategic and operational resources** that will guide:

- verification and certification processes
- business registration and participation
- procurement and buyer engagement
- governance and oversight structures
- portal usage and operational management

The Chiefs of Ontario is seeking a qualified consultant or consulting team to develop **strategic resources and operational guidance materials** to support the FNBD portal and its broader economic development objectives.

GOAL

The goal of this project is to develop **a comprehensive set of strategic and operational resources that support the FNBD portal, verification and certification processes, and procurement engagement with First Nation businesses.**

These resources will:

- guide the implementation and management of the FNBD
- support First Nation businesses participating in the portal
- support procurement partners seeking to engage with First Nation businesses
- strengthen transparency and consistency in verification and certification
- support long-term sustainability and governance of the FNBD
- The resources developed through this project will become **core operational documents used by the Chiefs of Ontario and FNBD staff.**

PROCESS

Reporting to the **Director of Economic Development /Project Team Lead in the COO Economic Development Sector**, the selected consultant will work closely with:

- the FNBD project team
- the COO Economic Development Sector
- the COO Communications and IT teams
- existing consultants and advisors working on the FNBD project
- external partners involved in procurement and economic development

The consultant will:

- review existing FNBD materials, research, Standard Operating Procedures and operational work completed to date
- consult with FNBD project staff to understand operational needs
- develop strategic resource documents to support FNBD and Verification and Certification implementation

- refine resources through feedback from the project team
- submit finalized resources and guidance materials

OBJECTIVES AND KEY DELIVERABLES

The consultant will develop a **set of strategic and operational resources** to support the verification and Certification process and the FNBD portal.

These resources may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Verification and Certification Resources:

Development of guidance materials supporting FNBD verification and certification processes, including:

- Verification and Certification Guidelines for the FNBD
- Verification and Certification Operational Framework
- Verification Documentation Requirements Guide and check lists
- Appeals and Review Process Guidelines
- Verification Governance and Oversight Framework
- Auditing Procedures of the registered businesses
- Auditing and Annual Review procedures

Business Participation and Registration Resources

Development of materials to support First Nation businesses engaging with the FNBD, including:

- FNBD Business Registration Guide
- Applicant Documentation Requirements Guide
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Businesses
- User Guide for Businesses Using the FNBD Portal

Procurement and Buyer Engagement Resources

Development of materials supporting procurement partners and buyers using the FNBD portal, including:

- Buyer Engagement Guide for Procurement Partners

- Procurement and Supplier Business Discovery Guide
- Guidance for Governments and Industry on Working with First Nation Businesses

Portal Operations and Governance Resources

Development of internal operational resources for the Chiefs of Ontario, including:

- FNBD Operational Manual
- Data Governance and Data Management Guidelines
- Portal Governance and Oversight Framework
- Data Access and Usage Guidelines

Communication and Outreach Resources

Development of materials to support awareness and engagement with the FNBD, including:

- FNBD Overview and Information Package
- Outreach Materials for First Nation Communities
- Information Package for Procurement Partners and Industry

Additional Strategic Resources

Proponents may recommend additional strategic resources that would support the successful implementation and long-term sustainability of the FNBD.

Additional deliverables may be proposed based on the proponent's experience and understanding of the project scope.

Final Deliverables

The consultant will provide:

- A complete set of **strategic resource documents supporting the FNBD portal as indicated above**
- Editable versions of all resources
- A **final summary report outlining developed resources and recommendations**

METHODOLOGY

Proponents must include a proposed work plan outlining:

- Review of existing FNBD documentation and research
- consultation with FNBD project staff
- development of draft strategic resources
- review and revision based on feedback
- finalization of deliverables

This project will be housed under the **Chiefs of Ontario Economic Development Sector**, and the consultant will receive directions from the **Director of Economic Development and FNBD Project Lead**.

DEADLINES

The project is expected to start in June 2026 and be completed within an agreed timeline, to be proposed by the Consultant. Key milestones and final completion dates must be included in the proposal.

Submission Deadline: June 15, 2026

QUALIFICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL FEES

Proposals must demonstrate capacity to deliver this work, including:

- experience developing **strategic frameworks and operational guidelines**
- experience supporting **business directories, certification systems, or registries**
- experience in **economic development and procurement initiatives**
- experience working with **Indigenous organizations or governments**
- understanding of **OCAP® principles and Indigenous data governance**

Applicants are to complete the Fee Schedule as fully as possible by replicating the table below in their proposal. Do not include HST in fee quote, but specify where HST is

applicable. The fees quoted should be the applicant's best and only price. The estimated cost is the estimated hours multiplied by the hourly rate. All travel expenses must be included in the Proposal Fee Schedule.

Work Components	Estimated Hours	Hourly Rates	Est. Cost (Hours times Rates)	Est. Time Completion
Please fill per your project proposal				
Please fill per your project proposal				
Please fill per your project proposal				
Total Cost & Completion Dates				

Additional points for applicants to consider:

- The Consultant must commit to a firm price for the entire contract. No increases during the course of the contract will be allowed. All subcontractors' fees must be included in the quoted fees.
- Expenses should be estimated and explained with the Professional Fee schedule.

EVALUATION AND SELECTION

The Evaluation Committee may shortlist qualified proponents and request interviews or presentations.

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- experience with strategic policy or operational framework development
- experience with Indigenous organizations and economic development initiatives
- quality of methodology and proposed work plan
- demonstrated understanding of FNBD objectives
- proposed budget and timeline

Proposals must include:

- project overview and methodology

- detailed work plan
- fee schedule and budget
- CVs and references

RECEIPT OF PROPOSALS

Submission Deadline: June 15, 2026, at 5:00 PM EST

Packages to be clearly marked:

“RFP: Development of Strategic Resources – FNBD Portal”

Legal Name:	
Address:	
Telephone Number:	
Facsimile Number:	
Email Address:	

Send Proposal to:

Economic Development Sector

Attn: Arvind Sharma, **Director of Economic Development**

Chiefs of Ontario

468 Queen St. E – Suite 400

Toronto, ON M5A 1T7

Email: Arvind.sharma@coo.org with Cc to Nima.Nikouie@coo.org

A proposal must be submitted as a PDF file by email to the Chiefs of Ontario. The proposal must be received by the Chiefs of Ontario no later than the deadline date.

A proposal submitted in any other manner or late may be disqualified.

The proposal shall be irrevocably open for acceptance and binding on the Facilitator for fourteen (14) days after the Submission Deadline date.

COO RESERVES THE RIGHT TO:

- Reject any or all proposals;
- Negotiate with one or more proponents;
- Accept any proposal in whole or in part;
- Cancel, modify or reissue this document at any time;

- Verify any information provided.

For questions and other inquiries please contact

