

SCHEDULE A
APPROVED BY MPF COMMITTEE – JUNE 2014



REQUEST FOR GRANT – PREDA MUNICIPAL PROJECT FUND

Application Form

Member Municipality Name: County of Northern Lights

Project name: Economic Development & Communication Strategy Refresher Requested

dollar amount: \$10,000.00

Application Deadline May 30, 2014

Funded by PREDA and its members in order to support economic development initiatives and enhance the quality of life for PREDA member communities.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Incorporated (*Legal*) Name of Municipality (*must match provincial incorporation name*):

__ County of Northern Lights _____

Mailing Address of Municipal Organization: __ Box 10 _____ **

All correspondence and cheques will be mailed to this address.

Municipality: Manning _____

Province: Alberta _____

Postal Code: T0H 2M0

Physical Address: 600 – 7th Ave NW, Manning, Alberta

CONTACT INFORMATION

Project Contact (*this is the person we will call for project information*)

Name: Eleanor Miclette _____

Title: Manager, Economic Development & Community Services

Daytime Phone: 780-836-3348 ext. 229

E-mail: miclettee@countyofnorthernlights.com

Cell: 780-836-0973

Alternate contact Information: _____

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Name: Refresher to the Marketing/Economic Development Strategy for the County of Northern Lights.

Funding Criteria - see Terms of Reference for more details (*Check any that apply*)

Business Retention and Expansion ☒

Opportunity Identification/Investment Attraction ☒

Community Lifestyle Development ☒

Funding Request - (*Check one*)



Does the project take place in the PREDA region or a member community?

Yes

No

Please specify (list all communities):

The economic development and communication strategy will focus on the County of Northern Lights and tie into economic development activity in our direct region (Northern Sunrise County, Peace River, MD of Peace, Mac Kenzie County etc.)

Does this project have any other funding partners?

If yes, please provide details.

Project Name	Amount	Year	From

How will you acknowledge support from PREDA? _PREDA will be acknowledged in our media coverage, at stake holder engagement , website, Facebook and in print material related to this project.

PROJECT LOCATION

Project Description

Last Updated: 30 May 2014

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- a. Explain what you will do with the funds. This includes a description of the issues and benefit to the community. Please be specific.

The strategy will include a review of the current economic development strategy, developed in 2009, and provide an action oriented and innovative refresher outlining goals and outcomes for Economic Development in the County of Northern Lights. The goals and outcomes will support action steps in achieving an environment that is conducive to attracting and retaining current, new, and diverse investment that will create employment, increase tax assessment, and generate wealth throughout the County. The final strategy will include:

- i. A review of current economic development strategy and the goals & objectives set out in this plan.
 - ii. Update internal and external situational analysis based on the changing environment that currently exists within the County and the immediate region. Identify suitable alternatives and measures that could be taken to better position the municipality with respect to economic development.
 - iii. Recommendations on ways the County can enhance the image and profile of the municipality with respect to industry, other governments in building on its current marketing strategies.
 - iv. Establish an effective communication strategy for disseminating information regarding economic development.
 - v. Identify tools, training opportunities/incentives that could be provided to local residents and/or local businesses to promote economic development in the region.
 - vi. Develop criteria or identify markers to measure and/or assess the effectiveness of the economic development effort over both the short and long run.
- b. How many people do you estimate or know will benefit from this grant? Will this create any additional employment in the project region? 5000 plus people would benefit from this plan directly and indirectly. The economic development strategy looks at benefiting the county and the region as a whole, promoting economic growth and job creation.
- c. Would you like to make a presentation to the funding committee? Yes ☒ No ☐
- d. If your grant is successful, what is the timeframe of your project from inception to completion? * NOTE: All projects must be completed by the end of the year the grant was received. Extensions for project completion available upon written request.
- Project to commence on June 9th, 2014 , to be completed by October , 2014.

Estimated Total Project Cost

LABOUR/SERVICES	\$ <u>41,875</u>
MATERIAL/EQUIPMENT	\$ _____
OTHER COSTS (advertisement, shipping)	\$ <u>7,000</u>

ESTIMATED TOTAL PROJECT COST \$ <u>48,875</u> <i>This figure should be the sum of the above figures and be equal to the Estimated Total Project Funding.</i>
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PROJECT FINANCING

Proposed Method of Funding & details

AMOUNT REQUESTED FROM THIS PROGRAM \$ 10,000.00

DONATED LABOUR/SERVICES \$ _____

DONATED MATERIAL/EQUIPMENT \$ _____

CASH (INTERNAL SOURCES, FUNDRAISING) \$ 38,875.00

OTHER GOVERNMENT FUNDING \$ _____
 (Including Municipal & name of grant/funder)

TOTAL PROJECT FUNDING \$ 48,875.00

This figure should be the sum of the above figures and be equal to the Total Project Cost.

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Attachment Checklist

- ☒ List of Municipal contact persons (include complete list with daytime phone number and email, if available)
- ☒ Detailed list of donated labour/services/equipment
- ☒ Other Supporting Documentation (e.g. estimates and supplier quotations)

☒ I have read the Municipal Project Fund Terms of Reference

Eleanor Micklethwait

Manager, Economic Development & Community Services



Proposal: Refresher of a Marketing/Economic Development Strategy for the County of Northern Lights

RFP: 2014-002

Submitted to:

Eleanor Miclette Manager, Economic Development and
Community Services
County of Northern Lights
600-7 Ave. NW
Manning, AB T0H 2M0

Submitted by:

Natalie Gibson
InnoVisions and Associates
#115, 203-304 Main Street
Airdrie, AB T4B 3C3
Phone: (403) 948-2110

April 28, 2014

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PROPRIETARY NOTICE

All information provided in this proposal to the County of Northern Lights is CONFIDENTIAL. We ask that the content and methodology not be duplicated, used or disclosed, in whole or in part, for any purposes other than to evaluate this proposal.

As this proposal contains commercial and/or financial information related to consulting services normally provided by InnoVisions & Associates, please note that it has been provided in confidence. Public access to information contained herein is protected under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

April 25, 2014

Cover Letter

April 25, 2014

Eleanor Milette

Manager, Economic Development and Community Services
County of Northern Lights
600-7 Ave. NW
Manning, AB T0H 2M0

Re: Refresher of the Marketing/Economic Strategy for the County of Northern Lights

Reference # 2014-002 Dear Ms. Milette:

On behalf of InnoVisions and Associates (InnoVisions), I am pleased to provide the County of Northern Lights with the attached proposal to provide a refresher of the Marketing/Economic Development Strategy for the County of Northern Lights.

InnoVisions is a consulting firm specializing in the field of community economic development. We use a team approach to ensure the best work for our clients. Our highly accomplished and experienced colleagues are skilled in community economic development work including: business retention, expansion and attraction strategies; strategic planning; economic recovery and resiliency; stakeholder facilitation; market research; brand strategy development; leadership development; and market planning for the development of locally based businesses and regional organizations.

InnoVisions is a consulting firm that offers clients an innovative and customized approach. To this project, InnoVisions will bring experts with a proven track record in business attraction and development, strategic planning, and facilitating discussion and engagement among multiple stakeholders while working to create an implementable plan that different leaders and community groups can understand and act upon for successful outcomes. This particular InnoVisions team brings a deep understanding of:

- The importance of a strategic Community Economic Development plan and its role in creating and sustaining communities in rural settings in Alberta;
- The effectiveness of a research based approach to achieve best outcomes;
- How to encourage proactive discussion while gathering primary data from a very diverse groups of stakeholders; and

April 25, 2014

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- How 'best practices' in economic development can be utilized to ensure the best possible strategic and tactical plan for the region specific to business retention and expansion and business investment attraction.

In this proposal, we have provided a practical methodology to define goals, and identify key opportunities through research that will update the existing strategic plan while also including new and innovative activities that are relevant to the stakeholders. Leading this project and accepting overall responsibility for its delivery will be Natalie Gibson, President of InnoVisions and Associates. An additional team member, Carolyn Guichon, has been selected to join Natalie on this project. Additional details about our proposed team can be found in the Team Profiles section.

Our core team has specific firsthand experience in: community economic development; tourism; marketing and branding; strategic planning; professional facilitation; and community investment readiness (CIR) processes including business retention and expansion (BRE) and business investment and attraction (BI&A). In addition, they understand Northern Alberta communities, having worked in many of them. They know the people, the assets, the opportunities and the issues.

We are confident that our proposal demonstrates the best combination of specialized expertise, experience, creativity and connections to create a dynamic and exciting marketing and economic development strategy for the County of Northern Lights.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with this proposal.

Sincerely,



Natalie Gibson

InnoVisions and Associates
Suite #115, 203 - 304 Main Street
Airdrie, AB T4B 3C3
Tel: (403) 948-2110
Email: nataliegibson@shaw.ca
Website: www.innovisions.co

April 25, 2014

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Proposal Integrity Check List

The checklist below is an indication of InnoVisions understanding of your Request for Proposal (RFP).

Requirements in RFP	Included
Letter of Transmittal:	Yes
Executive Summary includes: ▪ Understanding of the project overview and identifiable requirements ▪ Project approach and methodology ▪ Work plan tactics to achieve deliverables ▪ Project schedule and budget ▪ Value for dollars	Yes
Corporate Profile: ▪ InnoVisions history and assigned project team. ▪ Legal name, address, etc. of proponent	Yes
Response to Requirements: ☐ Scope of work, tasks and timeframe to execute the process	Yes
Certification: ☐ Signed certification by both Team members	Yes
Project Team: ▪ Project Manager – Natalie Gibson ▪ Project team's capabilities, experience, team profiles, responsibilities, etc. ▪ Hours each team member is projected to contribute	Yes
Related Experience and Expertise: ▪ Innovation and Creativity: <i>InnoVisions</i> has previous Community Investment Readiness and Network Development experience in Northern Alberta. <i>InnoVisions</i> has demonstrated leadership and creativity in projects similar in nature to this project. ▪ <i>InnoVisions</i> is knowledgeable in the development of tools, communication processes, and education of the human resources relevant to this project. ▪ Business retention, expansion, attraction and foreign direct investment activities. ☐ <i>InnoVisions</i> has demonstrated knowledge of marketing, communication plans and tools reaching internal and external audiences, as well as experience engaging communities and businesses in the strategic planning process.	Yes
References: ☐ Three references for each team member	Yes
Pricing: ☐ Cost broken down as per phase and in the scope of work	Yes

Executive Summary

InnoVisions is pleased to submit the following proposal to engage our team for “Refresher to the Marketing/Economic Development Strategy” for the County of Northern Lights.

We are excited about the potential of this project and the opportunity to work with you on updating and revising the County’s Marketing and Economic Development Plan. Our approach will:

- Take into account the current economic development plan as a starting point;
- Complete consultation interviews and focus groups to pinpoint regional opportunities and challenges as identified by community leaders and stakeholders;
- Complete two stages of research to confirm opportunities and gaps;
- Identify and recommend several foundational strategies, and develop activities with to achieve the strategy goals;
- Identify partnerships and projects that could be leverage to increase awareness, participation, engagement and commitment to the regional strategy;
- Identify measureable timelines and outcomes relevant to the region and your community stakeholders.

The total price budget could range between \$48,468.75 to \$50,968.76 based on either six or nine days of travel. The additional travel days can be determined by the project manager and InnoVisions depending on the level of community engagement, momentum (or time to encourage momentum) in the project and the need to build awareness. At the end of the project the County of Northern Lights will have:

- A ‘living document’ Marketing and Economic Development Strategy with a three to five year reach in which various community leaders and stakeholders can participate in;
- An effective Communication Plan that engages internal and external audiences and builds awareness of the County’s profile, ongoing projects and the role of economic development in sustaining the region;
- Knowledge of the gaps and opportunities that exist for future consideration;
- Defined tools, training opportunities and/or incentives that could be provided to local residents and businesses to help them thrive and grow; and
- Benchmarks to measure and/or assess the short- and long-term outcomes of the economic development strategies.

Primary and secondary research will be completed by August 15, 2014, public consultation and round table focus groups to confirm opportunities by September 30, 2014 and a draft Marketing and Economic Development Strategy by October 30, 2014.

We will strive to position the area relative to opportunities and challenges, and provide a vision for the future that will be unique to Alberta and set you apart from the many communities working on similar initiatives. It will also provide a path to success by developing strategies that align with your capacity as a County and staff resources. It will also seek and find the partnerships that could expand your resources and/or capacity as time goes on.

Plans are easy to generate; implementation is the hard part. We understand this and so we ensure that those left to implement have the tools to do so. We will create a plan that reflects the goals of your community, and that can be implemented because the tactics are clear and concise; community champions have been engaged and the benchmarks for success are clear.

Project Description

Similar to many Alberta communities and regions the County of Northern Lights has identified economic development as one of their key strategic priorities. In 2009, the County Council committed resources, funds and staff to achieve the goals outlined in their Marketing and Economic Development plan.

In 2011, the County was home to over 3,500 residents and is now gaining in population and business opportunities. Strategically managing this growth, while positioning the county to retain and attract business to the region will further increase the tax base and ultimately the quality of life in the region.

The goal of this initiative is to furnish the Economic Development and Community Services staff with the strategy, tools and direction to achieve positive economic growth outcomes.

Corporate Profile

InnoVisions and Associates is an international economic development and marketing consultancy firm based in Airdrie. *InnoVisions* utilizes a network of consultants and experts from across Canada and the USA.

Natalie Gibson is certified in both Marketing and Economic Development. As President of *InnoVisions* and Associates, economic development troubleshooting and community development strategies are her specialty.

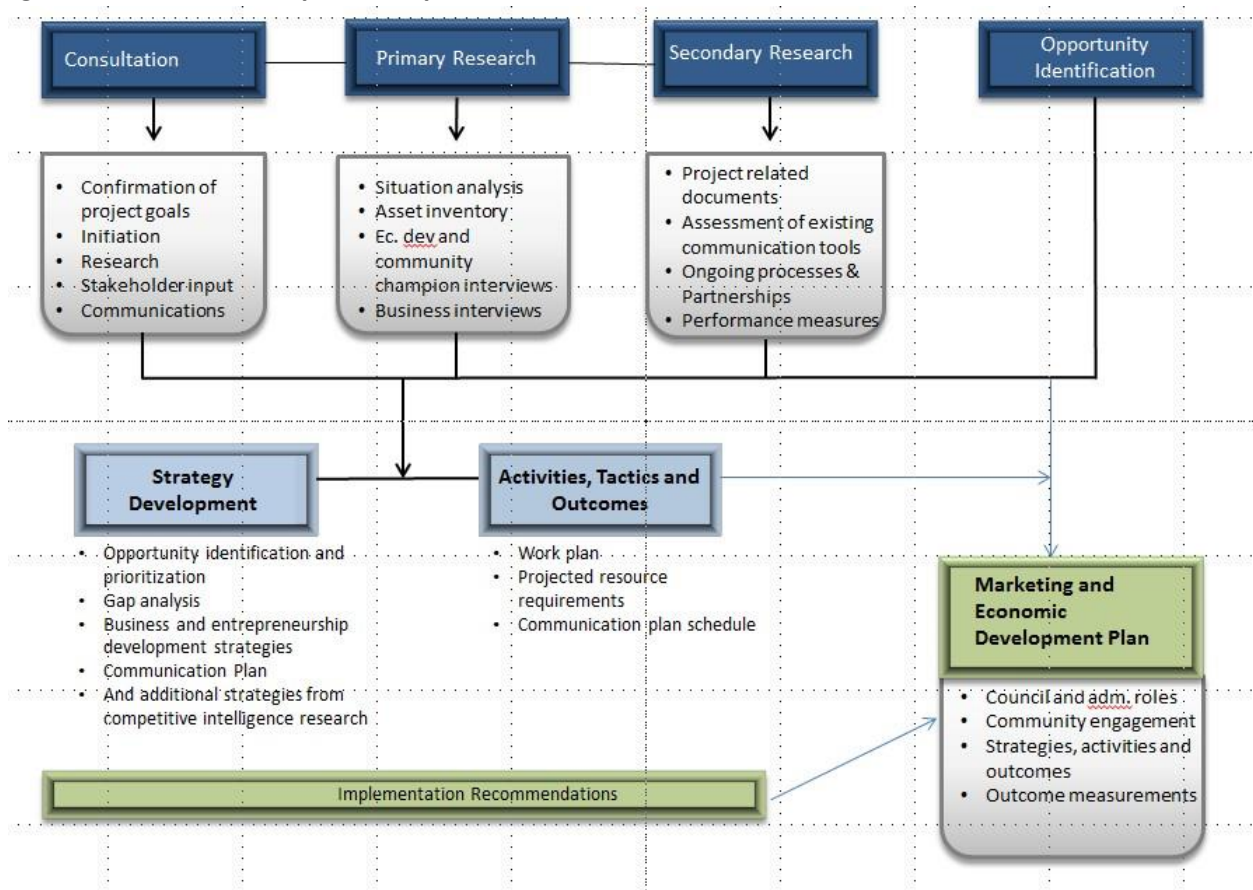
For this project, *InnoVisions* will utilize two senior consultants, Natalie Gibson and Carolyn Guichon. Collectively they have specific firsthand experience in: community economic development; tourism; marketing and branding; strategic planning; professional facilitation; and community investment readiness (CIR) processes including business retention and expansion (BRE) and business investment and attraction (BI&A). In particular, our experts know and

understand Northern Alberta and many of its respective communities. Having worked in most of these communities we know the people, the assets, the opportunities and the issues.

Response to Requirements

The following visual is a representation of the methodology and potential outcomes InnoVisions proposes for the Marketing and Economic Development Strategy for the County of Northern Lights.

Figure 1: InnoVisions Proposed Scope of Work Process



Detailed Scope of Work

InnoVisions proposes a collaborative and multidisciplinary team approach to complete this assignment. Such an approach will ensure that the County receives the highest value and participation for its budget and the staff capacity associated with this project. Specifically our work will entail the following:

Table 1: Detailed Work Plan, Tactics and Timeframe

Scope of Work	Work Plan, Tactics & Timeframe
<u>Secondary Research</u> □ Review and evaluate relevant municipal studies, reports and initiatives to understand local strengths, partnerships to be leveraged and relationship to the overall implementation plan.	<u>Tactics</u> - Comprehensive analysis of what exists and the information gaps in terms of useful documents/reports etc. - Work conducted by Natalie and Carolyn, both of whom are experts in data analysis especially as it pertains to investment attraction <i>Work completed by June 30, 2014</i>
<u>Compile Data</u> □ Develop and expand the County's current demographic and economic profile (print format and web) from reliable sources to understand key economic drivers and build a profile of the community as a means to develop the County's value proposition.	<u>Tactics</u> - Determine the statistical information needed using the professional services of our former university librarians who work exclusively for us. - Work to be done by Carolyn <i>Work completed by June 30, 2014</i>
<u>Primary Research</u> □ Conduct Interviews with the County's senior management team members, stakeholders identified in the RFP and external stakeholders to determine opportunities and challenges facing business and investment growth (approx. 10-15 interviews).	<u>Tactics</u> - In consultation with the County's project manager the preferred method will be decided; either one-on-one interviews, a round table forum or a workshop format with a training component on capacity for stakeholders. - Work to be done by Natalie <i>Work completed by August 30, 2014</i> Depending on the methodology, round table forums with business could occur in September 2014.
<u>Conduct a SWOT</u> □ Based on the information gleaned from the three tasks above, identify opportunities and gaps.	<u>Tactics</u> □ Analysis of all the data collected and the results of the interaction with the stakeholders will be compiled in a SWOT document that would be completed and presented to the Town contacts
Scope of Work	Work Plan, Tactics & Timeframe

	who would verify that this part of the work is on track and that there is an interest in the target selected. ☐ Work would be completed by Carolyn and Natalie <i>Work completed by July 30, 2014</i>
<u>Consider the Value Chain and determine the NAICS Codes</u> - Identify the sectors and sub-sectors that show a high degree of concentration in Northern Lights County, and a competitive advantage for these sectors, suggest activities for supporting existing business and their value-chains. Identify underrepresented sub-sectors for which there may be opportunities for expansion by local businesses. Identification of corresponding NAICS codes will be required for input into the County's existing business visitation data. - Identify, Analyze and Present Solutions. - Identify Supply Chain gaps within target sectors and analyze components that are not in present County and then present possible solutions to create and attract clusters of supporting enterprises.	<u>Tactics</u> - Prepare a business case for the markets selected based on the competitive advantage. - Identify the corresponding NAICS codes. - Ensure that solutions are presented in the business case. - Work done by Natalie and Carolyn <i>Work completed by July 31, 2014</i>
<u>Establish an effective communication plan.</u> ☐ Develop the criteria to reach internal and external stakeholders and build community engagement.	<u>Tactics</u> - Review existing marketing and promotion material. - Analyze ways to increase and maximize the reach of existing communication tools, (e.g., County Facts Flier, Report to Ratepayers, etc.) while expanding on the reach of new tools and content (e.g. content from the business visitation and Info- graph to business). - Segment content relevant to various audiences. E.g., internal community, entrepreneurs, big business, government, etc. - Recommend ways the County can enhance the image and profile of the municipality. - Recommend additional methods for expanding

Scope of Work	Work Plan, Tactics & Timeframe
	regional awareness, engagement and momentum.
<u>Identify tools, training opportunities and incentives to promote economic development in the region.</u> □ Based on results of the above activities, analyze and describe the most effective tools, training opportunities and incentives to encourage business and community engagement.	<u>Tactics</u> • Match the needs and wants of the targeted sectors by determining the value proposition and the corresponding positioning of the County. • Facilitate round table and/or 'Community Café' sessions to validate face-to face interviews. Number of sessions to be determined at the outset of this project in consultation with the PM on one or two topics. • Create a summary of key findings; analyze the data to prepare a summary for larger group sessions. • Build the agenda for the group round table discussions with a key focus on partnerships and regional projects. • During the cafes participants will determine the potential role they might play, determine who is missing from the network, what the resources are and 'what is manageable'. • Engage regional partners and their corresponding projects. E.g., ThinkLocalMarket. • Engage the community 'Champions' in the value proposition work and build enthusiasm and understanding. • Work to be done by Carolyn and Natalie <i>October 30, 2014 report</i>

<u>Draft a Marketing and Economic Development Strategy</u> □ Develop an overview of two to three strategies to capitalize on growth sectors, and/or opportunities. E.g., for each of the identified sectors include: the current size and scope; trends in growth; investment patterns; regional variations and realities; employment patterns; site selection criteria and educational training linkages.	<u>Tactics</u> • Prepare a document that provides an overview of specific strategies that identify market potential, activities to develop the strategies and outcomes for the Project Manager to review. • Develop an Action Plan – consider phases of implementation. Provide direction that is practical and relevant based on the stakeholder’s existing resources, will to commit, and engagement. • Provide a framework for the stakeholders to measure success as they move forward. • Most important action will be identifying the wants and needs of that market and determining the match within the community of Region.
Scope of Work	Work Plan, Tactics & Timeframe
	• Identify internal and external stakeholders to include in the communication plan. • Work completed by Natalie <i>Work completed by October 15, 2014</i>
<u>Final Report</u> □ Prepare a report outlining the strategies, activities and outcomes to assess the effectiveness of the economic development efforts and the result of the work completed to date.	<u>Tactics</u> • Finalize the document. • Provide clear strategies, align the activities and implementation process with the Council’s vision, opportunities and staff capacity. • Provide recommendations with criteria to measure outcomes, effectiveness of efforts and annual benchmarks. • Work completed by Natalie <i>Final report delivered October 30, 2014</i>

Certification

Natalie Gibson

(Failure to complete, sign and submit this certification with the RFP package may disqualify a Proposal.)

We, InnoVisions and Associates _____
(Legal Company Name)

Of #115, 203-304 Main Street _____
(Business Address)

Airdrie, Alberta Canada T4B 3C3 _____

(403) 948-3755 _____
(Telephone Number) (Fax Number)

Name of Contact: Natalie Gibson _____

Having examined and read the Request for Proposal documents for RFP #_2014-002_ as issued by the County of Northern Lights, do hereby bid and agree to provide the services/products in accordance with the Proposal /RFP documents, and do hereby agree to accept the terms and conditions set out in this Request for Proposal.

Executed this 24 day of April, 2014.



(Signature of Authorized Representative)

President
(Position Held)

The personal information provided to you is being collected under the authority of the *Municipal Government Act* and will be used for the purposes under that Act. The personal information that you provide may be made public, subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Project Team

The Advantage of Working with *InnoVisions and Associates*

InnoVisions is known for its ability to create unique, dynamic teams for the projects it undertakes. For this project we will provide two senior consultants: Natalie Gibson and Carolyn Guichon. This particular Team has been selected because:

- We recognize and understand the uniqueness of each community and region. We recognize the differences between each community and the factors that can bring them together with potential partners. This knowledge will be incorporated into the plan and make possible the implementation.
- We understand the bigger picture in strategic plans: We know that strategic planning outcomes must be practical and relevant to those who implement the activities. We understand that there are always more projects than resources and that expectations need to be managed in a way that encourages active participation by the stakeholders. Carolyn, in her role as an educator, has managed the development of hundreds of implementable plans to create or sustain business activity.
- We work to create resource networks for our clients: Every community has limited resources and needs to leverage what they can by forming alliances and partnerships with each other. They need the tools to find and manage the resources that may already exist within their reach.
- We know what works and doesn't work in facilitation: our colleagues are experienced in developing processes for active audience participation including drafting questions and facilitating both energetic and lethargic groups. Carolyn's background in educating large and boisterous classes at the University of Calgary guarantee that any community engagement sessions will be interesting and purposeful.
- We are experts at communicating what needs to be done and motivating those who will implement the plan to achieve the desired outcomes.
- We have in-depth knowledge of Community Economic Development: Each of our team members will play an important role in creating the best possible plan for the County.
- We know what works and doesn't work: The extensive knowledge and experience of our team means that time won't be wasted and opportunities won't be missed. We always bring the right people at the right time to address each issue.
- We always work to create short term wins as well as long term plans: The steps that the County of Northern Lights takes today will prepare them for the future. Community engagement is key in building capacity, resiliency and confidence. The County needs the kind of short term wins that build excitement and capacity for economic and community development strategies, and the confidence that the longer term wins will come to fruition because they have the right plan.

Table 2: Project Team's Work Scope and Projected Hours per Task

Scope of Work	Work Plan Tactics & Timeframe	Hours
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Secondary Research	Work to be done by Natalie and Carolyn	25 hours pp/50 hours
Compile Data	Work to be done by Carolyn	20 hours
Primary Research	Work to be done by Natalie	50 hours
Conduct a SWOT	Work to be done by Natalie and Carolyn	25 pp/50 hours
Value-chain analysis	Work to be done by Natalie	15 hours
Establish an effective communication plan.	Work to be done by Natalie and Carolyn	25 hours pp/50 hours
Identify tools, training opportunities/incentives to promote economic development in the region.	Work to be done by Natalie and Carolyn	20 hours pp/40 hours
Draft a Marketing and Economic Development Strategy	Work to be completed by Natalie	50 hours
Final Report	Work to be completed by Natalie	20 hours

Related Experience and Expertise

Natalie Gibson

Natalie Gibson: Natalie is a specialist in economic development and marketing. As the President of *InnoVisions* and Associates, she has had the opportunity to work with dozens of Canadian communities. For over 20 years, Natalie has worked locally, regionally and nationally, helping organizations develop and plan their business retention strategies and expansion plans; creating business visitation programs; and working with municipalities to find and create opportunities that will benefit their communities. She is a talented public speaker and a dynamic presenter.

Developed and Implemented Community-based Business Retention, Expansion and Investment (BR&E) Programs

- Comprehensive BR&E programs developed for Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, the City of Airdrie and the Town of Cochrane.
- Developed training programs on 'how to effectively interview' and an Ambassador Visitation Program (both public and private), effectively linked to the business visitation process to ensure programs are sustainable in the long-term.

- Utilized extensive knowledge of economic development opportunities and challenges to develop survey questions for different industry sectors, train business visitation ambassadors and conduct business intelligence interviews as a basis for collating research on business needs in both the City of Airdrie and the Town of Cochrane.
- Employed analytical thinking to record, collate and analyze data to identify cohort business challenges. Key findings were moved forward to policy and procedure recommendations, resource allocation and refinement of government departments and council business development strategies.
- Used business visitation program (BVP) cumulative data over two, three and five years to form the basis of business attraction marketing data, marketing messages and website testimonials.

Result: All programs experienced an exceptionally high level of community and business engagement and support. Cochrane's BVP won an international award through the Business Retention and Expansion International organization in 2010.

Community Investment Readiness (CIR) Pilot Project for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

InnoVisions was engaged by Alberta Enterprise and Advanced Education (AEAE) to develop, facilitate and coach communities through a three-stage Community Investment Readiness (CIR) Pilot Project to improve community economic development organizations' (CEDOs'), knowledge and capacity to attract business investment and to develop or strengthen investment lead development and response networks. In total, 35 CEDOs in Northern Alberta participated. Based on the Pilot Project participant interaction, evaluations and testimonials the project was a success.

Natalie has a wide range of experience in working on investment attraction projects, including working with site selectors and companies investing in Alberta through joint venture partnerships. She worked with the CAEP team to develop the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) content for the website, and presented to a number of site selectors on investment opportunities. Natalie and Carolyn developed a Community Investment Readiness framework and coached 23 communities through investment attraction processes in 2013. In January 2014, Natalie completed a FDI Lead Generation and Response protocol for Calgary Economic Development's Business Development Team including the categorization of six sectors using NAICS codes, filtering of companies based on clusters and direct connections to prioritized leads. She developed an expert understanding of Site Selector programs through CED contract.

The 'Creating Opportunities Project' – Adding Value to Agri-Food Value Chain

The Creating Opportunities project was designed to encourage diversification of the agriculture sector. The objective was to inspire agriculture industry farmers as entrepreneurs (agripreneurs) to be innovative in developing value-added products, reach new markets and

increase profitability. This unique project included 16 municipal, government and trade organizations as project partners. Natalie led this initiative as the project manager developing and implementing the project strategies and work plan.

During this project, over 100 Peace Region 'agri-preneurs' were interviewed, providing a snapshot of the unique, northern challenges and opportunities identified by local producers. That information was then used to create a network to support the agri-business including links to buyers and suppliers, a directory of Peace Region agri-preneurs that has been distributed to more than 200 people to date and facilitated access to new markets. Business coaches were added to the project and they worked with 21 'agri-preneurs' to resolve their specific growth challenges. Over 380 referrals were made to for the agri-businesses to new market opportunities, or resources.

Carolyn Guichon, BA, CTC, MBA

Carolyn is the Principal of Strategic Solutions, a firm that provides corporations, governments, and non-profit organizations with project oriented business strategy, market research and planning, new product development and general management assistance. This consulting service works with entities in the fields of economic development, wholesale and retail travel and tourism, retailing, not-for-profit services, new venture start-ups, health care delivery and education. Her expertise includes, but is not limited to, marketing strategy, business development, market research, fund raising strategy, internet marketing, executive development, board governance, sales seminars, communications and the development of strategic business plans, marketing plans and communications plans.

Carolyn taught at the Haskayne School of Business at the University of Calgary for over 19 years, teaching marketing courses at both the undergraduate and graduate level. She has also taught tourism management courses. She has been nominated eleven times for Excellence in Teaching Awards. She continued her interest in higher education by serving six years as a Senator of the University of Calgary.

Recent relevant activity includes working mostly in the area of economic development; providing research and market analysis, broad strategy development and complex problem solving on a series of projects in communities in Alberta. Recent contracts include:

- Developing and writing the course to train Alberta Elected Officials in the theory and practice of Economic Development;
- Writing the marketing and governance plan for Grande Prairie's Destination Marketing Fund;
- Determining the viability of a new hotel project in Consort;
- Providing strategic direction for tourism development for the County of Big Horn;

- Determining the governance model for a multi-stakeholder, local-food initiative project in the Edmonton Capital Region; and
- Revamping the entire course offerings of Economic Developers Alberta (EDA) with a team of skilled trainers. These courses are part of the University of Waterloo program of Economic Developers of Canada, offered throughout Alberta through EDA and also in conjunction with the University of Calgary.

Professional References

Table 3: Professional References

Natalie Gibson	<i>City of Airdrie, Business Retention and Expansion Program</i> Kent Rupert, Manager Airdrie Economic Development Telephone: (403) 948-8844 Email: kent.rupert@airdrie.ca
	<i>Community Futures Agri-Value Cluster Project</i> Holly Sorgen, Executive Director Community Futures Grande Prairie Phone: (780) 814-5340 Email: holly@cfofgp.com
Carolyn Guichon	<i>University of Calgary Senate</i> Jody Elliott, Executive Assistant to the Chancellor University of Calgary Phone: (403) 220-6581 Email: elliottj@ucalgary.ca
	<i>The University of Calgary, Haskayne School of Business</i> Lynne Ricker, Associate Dean Haskayne School of Business Phone: (403) 220-5685 Email: lricker@ucalgary.ca
Natalie Gibson & Carolyn Guichon	<i>Community Investment Readiness and Lead Development Network Pilot Project</i> Mark Vandenberghe, North Region Project Officer Alberta Innovation and Advanced Education Tel: (780) 427-6450 Email: mark.vandenberghe@gov.ab.ca

Pricing Form

InnoVisions has calculated two different pricing options. The first is based on nine days of travel in and around Manning and the second option is based on six days. These options are presented for your consideration and as a contingency in the event that more community residents and/or businesses wish to be a part of the engagement process than originally projected. **Table 4:**

Consulting Fees, Disbursements for Nine Days of Travel

Request for Proposal		
	Total Price	\$50,968.75
Individual Rates		
	Disbursements	\$7,000
	Per Kilometer	.050
	Per Diems	\$50 per day per person
	Hourly Rates	\$125.00 pp
	Daily Rate	\$1,000 per day pp
Other, specify	GST	\$2093.75

Print Name: Natalie Gibson

Signature: 

OR Table 5: Consulting Fees, Disbursements for Six Days of Travel

Request for Proposal		
	Total Price	\$48,468.75
Individual Rates		
	Disbursements	\$4,500
	Per Kilometer	.050
	Per Diems	\$50 per day per person
	Hourly Rates	\$125.00 pp

	Daily Rate	\$1,000 per day pp
Other, specify	GST	\$2093.75

Table 6: Project Team's Work Scope and Projected Hours per Task

Scope of Work	Hours	Cost
Secondary Research	25 hours pp/50 hours	\$6,250
Compile Data	20 hours	2500
Primary Research	50 hours	6250
Conduct a SWOT and situation analysis	25 pp/50 hours	6250
Value-chain analysis	15 hours	1875
Establish an effective communication plan.	25 hours pp/50 hours	5000
Identify tools, training opportunities/incentives to promote economic development in the region.	20 hours pp/40 hours	5000
Draft a Marketing and Economic Development Strategy	50 hours	6250
Final Report	20 hours	2500
Total		\$41,875

Project Outcomes & Deliverables

This proposal is based on InnoVisions understanding of your needs and our recommended approach. You will find that we are committed to working closely with you throughout this project. At the end of the project the County of Northern Lights will have:

- A 'living document' Marketing and Economic Development Strategy with a three to five year reach;

- An effective Communication Plan that engages internal and external audiences and builds awareness of the County's profile, ongoing projects and the role of economic development in sustaining the region;
- Knowledge of the gaps and opportunities that exist for future consideration;
- Defined tools, training opportunities and/or incentives that could be provided to local residents and business to help them thrive and grow; and
- Benchmarks to measure and/or assess the short- and long-term outcomes of the economic development strategies.

Terms and Conditions

This proposal is valid for 30 days from April 30, 2014. In the event that an agreement is concluded after April 30, 2014, the schedule for deliverables may have to be adjusted. As a condition of this contract, *InnoVisions* would require that there be one appointed contact from the County of Northern Lights. Once that person is selected, he or she will become the sole contact for *InnoVisions* on all matters related to this project. Natalie Gibson, as the Project Manager, will be the sole contact for this project from *InnoVisions*.

- Anticipated Start Date: May 15, 2014
- Anticipated End Date: October 30, 2014

InnoVisions is open to any changes in the proposal or report methodology; however, amendments or changes to this proposal will be made in writing and be signed off by both parties as any change could impact the budget or expenses.

Thank you for requesting a proposal from *InnoVisions and Associates*. We sincerely appreciate the opportunity to work with the County of Northern Lights.

Respectfully submitted,



Natalie Gibson, President
InnoVisions and Associates
115, 203-304 Main Street
Airdrie, Alberta T4B 3C3