Request for Proposal: Economic Impact Study

Organization Background

The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture (NSFA) was established in 1895 and is a general farm organization incorporated under the *Federations of Agriculture Act*. The NSFA represents farms and farmers who vary in region, size, commodities, production methods, income levels, and demographics. The membership of the NSFA is a voluntary enrollment and consists of nearly 2,000 registered farms. The NSFA is governed by a 12-person Council of Leaders (Council) elected from the membership. Representing over 90% of primary agriculture production and bringing together registered farms, industry stakeholders, and government partners, the NSFA supports farm families and businesses through advocacy efforts and the delivery of programs and services.

Our mission is to influence and effect change for the continual success of agriculture in Nova Scotia.

Our vision is a prosperous and sustainable future for Nova Scotia farms and farmers.

Our Values

Collaboration: We bring people together to better the agriculture industry

Integrity: We are rooted in transparency, honesty, and our member's best interests

Equity and Inclusion: We create a place for everyone at the table which makes us all stronger, together

Innovation: We encourage new approaches that help us grow and thrive

Our members: We are dedicated to helping our members grow Nova Scotia agriculture

General Information

The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture (NSFA) is accepting proposals for the "Economic Impact Study" project.

1. Should any item in this request for proposal be unclear, please contact John Rix, Director of Policy and Advocacy at 902-893-2293 for clarification. Any changes to this proposal will be made by written addendum to be effective.

2. The project duration is approximately four months, and the report is expected to be completed by October 31, 2025. There will be a requirement to present results at the Annual General Meeting of the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture anticipated to take place December 4th and 5th, 2025 in Truro.

3. Proposals must be in PDF format and submitted to policy@nsfa-fane.ca by June 27th, 2025 at 1:00pm Atlantic Time (no later).

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Proposal Principles

1. NSFA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or parts thereof, and the lowest price will not necessarily be selected.

2. Incomplete proposals will not be evaluated, and late proposals will not be accepted.

3. The proponent must be prepared to include in the contract for services any oral or written representations, undertakings, or guarantees that are made prior to the final agreements, including the complete response to this RFP or parts thereof.

4. No fees or other payments will be made to the successful Proponent for any costs incurred in preparing and submitting proposals or participating in the RFP process.

5. The RFP and its supporting documents must be considered proprietary and confidential.

6. Any contractual relationship to be established between the parties will be governed by the provisions of the agreement.

7. NSFA may at its discretion:
    a. Select any one proposal;
    b. Select more than one proposal with specified services provided by different consultants;
    c. In selecting a proposal, not choose the lowest price; or
    d. Reject all proposals and, in so doing, develop additional evaluation criteria

8. To ensure a fair and transparent process, all responses to questions submitted to NSFA for clarification will be posted on the NSFA website www.nsfa-fane.ca/rfp.

9. All proposals and pricing shall remain in effect until the initial agreement is complete.

10. The tentative project start will be July 7th, 2025.

11. All charges for carrying out the services outlined in this proposal call must be clearly identified.

12. Each proposal should include the name and title of one individual who may be contacted if further clarification of the proposal is required.

Project Overview

Current Situation

Nova Scotia's agriculture sector is at a critical juncture after years of turbulence in the market. From supply chain disruptions to the COVID-19 pandemic, to rising geopolitical tensions, and an increase in severe weather affected by climate change, there are rising concerns about the industry's long-term sustainability. This is also amplified due to many farmers expecting to transition their farm to the next

generation, and aging farmers need buyers who are interested in keeping the farm in agricultural production to support the province's food security.

The agriculture industry is vital to the economic success of Nova Scotia and the backbone of rural communities. Despite increases to farm cash receipts, the industry has posted negative net farm income since 2017 and now is the time for an assessment of the industry's economic status. Nova Scotia is the only province to continuously post negative net income numbers in Canada since 2017. Compounding these challenges, the industry continues to face significant workforce shortages, with ongoing labour gaps across primary production, processing, and support services. Difficulty in attracting and retaining skilled workers, along with increasing competition for labour across industries, poses a critical barrier to operational sustainability and sector growth.

Project Objective

To conduct an objective economic impact assessment of the status of Nova Scotia's agriculture industry to evaluate its contributions to the provincial economy along with key challenges and opportunities. This study should leverage existing data to analyze economic contributions, employment, farm productivity, and market dynamics, providing a foundation for evidence-based programming and policy recommendations that support the sector's long-term sustainability and competitiveness.

Project Scope

The economic impact assessment will provide industry leaders with insights into the state of the agriculture sector and its economic contribution to Nova Scotia. The consultant will be required to analyze the data, describe what it means for the future of the industry in the short, medium, and long-term. The following metrics will be incorporated into the analysis and report.

Quantifying Economic Contributions: Measure the direct and indirect GDP contributions of agriculture in Nova Scotia, including its role in supporting related industries.

Workforce Trends & Economic Impact: Assess the economic contributions of the agricultural workforce and the impact of their earnings.

Financial Viability of Farm Operations: Examine profitability and financial trends to understand economic pressures and sustainability of farm operations.

Regional and Sectoral Insights: Where possible, disaggregate findings by region, farm type, or commodity group to identify unique challenges and opportunities across Nova Scotia's diverse agricultural landscape.

- Optional Costing for Regional or Commodity-Level Analysis:
  NSFA may request additional analysis focused on specific commodities or regions within Nova Scotia. Proponents are encouraged to include optional costing to support this level of

disaggregation, should it be required during the course of the project.

Productivity & Competitiveness Challenges: Quantify and analyze the factors influencing farm productivity and competitiveness in Nova Scotia to understand their impact on the sector's viability and economic performance.

Market Analysis: Assess the economic contributions of sales channels from direct-to-consumer, wholesale, retail, and analyze import, export, and interprovincial trade trends to understand market dynamics.

Total Impact of Supply Chain & Industry Linkage: Evaluate connections within Nova Scotia's agriculture supply chain, including relationships between primary production, processing, distribution, input suppliers and transportation services to understand the broader economic footprint of the sector and key dependencies.

Additional Metrics as Needed: Incorporate other key economic indicators as recommended by the consultant and agreed to by NSFA.

Identification of Data Gaps: Assess limitations in available data and identify areas where further research or data collection is needed to support future decision-making.

Project Management

Project Deliverables

The core project deliverables for the consultant will include the following:

1. Comprehensive Report – Provide a comprehensive report that includes the findings, analysis, and recommendations derived from the economic impact assessment.
2. Summary Report – A high-level synthesis for industry stakeholders and government.
3. Presentation Deck – A visually engaging slide deck summarizing findings for use in meetings.
4. Presentation at NSFA Annual General Meeting: Present results of the project to NSFA membership at the Annual General Meeting in Truro, NS anticipated to take place December 4th-5th.
5. Methodology & Data Report – methodology report detailing data sources, assumptions, and economic modeling approaches used in the assessment.

All deliverables must be professionally formatted, clearly structured, and submitted in an editable format (e.g., Word and PowerPoint) along with a final PDF version. All reports and presentations must adhere to NSFA branding guidelines with provided templates and appropriate recognition given to the consultant for their contributions to the study.

Project Administration Responsibilities

Kickoff Meeting: The NSFA Project Lead shall arrange and chair a Project Start-Up Meeting.

Progress Reports: The Consultant shall prepare and submit a monthly progress report to the NSFA Project Lead. Progress reports should be no more than two pages long and include sections on current progress, issues encountered, and next steps.

Progress Meetings: The NSFA Project Lead shall arrange and chair Project Progress Meetings. The Consultant shall attend the meetings, record decisions and issues, as well as prepare and distribute meeting notes.

Project Approach Guidelines

- The consultant will conduct an economic impact assessment appropriate for analyzing the agriculture sector's economic contributions, financial viability, and industry linkages.
- The consultant is responsible for providing data-driven insights that support evidence-based programming and policy recommendations for NSFA.
- The consultant is responsible for all data collection, sourcing, and purchasing (as needed) to complete the assessment.
- Any proprietary data, modeling tools, or reports required for the project must be acquired by the consultant at their own cost.
- The consultant must ensure that data sources are credible, current, and relevant to Nova Scotia's agriculture industry.
- The consultant must maintain regular communication with NSFA, including scheduled check-ins at key milestones.
- Any anticipated delays or challenges must be communicated promptly to ensure project timelines remain on track.
- The consultant is expected to provide clear documentation of methods, sources, and assumptions used in the assessment.
- To ensure a thorough and collaborative review, the consultant must provide NSFA with ample time to review draft materials. The review process will include:
    - Initial Findings & Analysis Review – The consultant must provide a preliminary report or summary of key findings following data collection and initial analysis. NSFA will review the findings and provide feedback to refine the direction of the final report.
    - Draft Report Review – The consultant must submit a full draft of the economic impact report for NSFA's review. NSFA will provide feedback on content, clarity, and any necessary refinements before finalization.
    - Final Report & Presentation Review – The consultant will submit the final report incorporating NSFA's feedback. Prior to the final presentation, NSFA will have the opportunity to review the presentation materials to ensure key messages align with organizational priorities.

Timeline

The NSFA anticipates the project to commence on July 7th, 2025 with the report to be complete by October 31, 2025.

Budget

As a not-for-profit organization, NSFA has limited financial resources. While no specific budget range is being disclosed, proposals should reflect a realistic, efficient approach that delivers high-quality results within a reasonable cost framework.

- Cost Breakdown: A detailed cost breakdown, including labour, materials, travel, and any other relevant expenses.
- Payment Schedule: NSFA will provide an initial payment upon signing, with the remainder payable upon project completion, or as otherwise negotiated.
- Phased Approach (Optional): Proponents are welcome to propose a phased or staged delivery model if it supports achieving project goals within limited resources.
- Scope Alignment: NSFA reserves the right to negotiate scope and deliverables if proposals exceed available budget while maintaining the intent and objectives of the project.

Evaluation Criteria

NSFA is committed to the fair and transparent evaluation of the Economic Impact Study Proposal review process. A minimum of three people will evaluate each proposal. Once each proposal has been evaluated using this scoring system, the proposals with the highest scores will be selected for further consideration. The evaluation committee may request further information or interviews to make the final decision.

Evaluation Criteria Weighting
Proposed Methodology: 35%
Experience and Expertise: 25%
Budget: 15%
Deliverables & Risk Management: 15%
Timeline: 10%

All proposals must meet the mandatory criteria and clearly demonstrate that these criteria are met. If a proposal fails to meet any of these criteria, it will be deemed non-compliant and will be rejected.

The proposed project team must include the following:

- An individual(s) with experience in economics, data analysis, and economic modeling.
- An individual(s) with an understanding of the landscape impacting Nova Scotia agriculture, including provincial and federal policies, programs, taxation, and regulatory frameworks.
- A proposed project manager with a minimum of five years of demonstrated experience.

1. Proposed Methodology (35 points)
    - The proposal clearly outlines the approach and processes to be used, including detailed steps and methodologies including data collection methods.
    - The proposed approach is realistic and achievable within the project timeline and budget.
    - The approach demonstrates creativity and innovation in addressing the project's objectives.
2. Experience and Expertise (25 points)
    - The proposal demonstrates a deep understanding of the technical subject matter relevant to the research project.

- The proponent has a proven track record of successfully completing similar projects, supported by high-quality references from reputable sources.
- Experience in Nova and/or in Nova Scotia agriculture would be considered an asset to the project team.

3. Budget (15 points)
    - The pricing is competitive and provides good value for money considering the proposed approach and expertise.
    - The proposed budget aligns with the project's financial constraints and demonstrates a clear understanding of the required resources.
4. Deliverables and Risk Management (15 points)
    - The proposal outlines a robust process for ensuring high-quality deliverables, including any relevant standards or best practices.
    - The proposal identifies potential risks to the project and provides effective mitigation strategies, demonstrating an understanding of the project's complexities.
5. Timeline (10 points)
    - The proposed timeline is realistic and considers all project phases, including potential delays.
    - Clear identification of key milestones and deadlines, with a well-structured plan to meet them.

Submission of Proposals

1. Proposal submissions must be submitted via email to:
   policy@nsfa-fane.ca
   Subject: Economic Impact Study

   Please ensure your proposal includes the following documents:
    - Cover letter
    - Detailed methodology
    - Budget Breakdown
    - References
    - Resumes of Key Personnel

2. If any clarification on specific requirements is needed, please contact John Rix via email at policy@nsfa-fane.ca or call 902-893-2293. If connecting via email, please include Economic Impact Inquiry in the subject line.

3. Proposals must be submitted in PDF format via email and marked "Economic Impact Study".

4. Proposals are due no later than 1:00 pm (Atlantic) on June 27th, 2025.

5. The successful proponent will be selected and notified no later than July 4th, 2025.

6. All proponents will be contacted regarding the outcome of the competition.

NOVA SCOTIA
NSFA
FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

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