



**Community Forests International**  
10 School Lane  
Sackville, New Brunswick  
Canada, E4L 3J9

## Request for Proposals

# Talent Strategy Design & Delivery

Client: Community Forests International  
Budget: \$150,000 – \$280,000 CAD (inclusive of categories below)  
Timeline: ~24 Months  
Submission: ~~April 16, 2026~~ (17:00 Eastern Time UTC -5)  
**April 23, 2026**

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## 1. Organizational Context

Community Forests International is a nonprofit headquartered in New Brunswick, Canada with international operations and an annual portfolio of \$10 million CAD in active contracts. We operate a twin structure composed of a registered charity in Canada and a sister nonprofit in Zanzibar, employing over 40 staff members alongside a volunteer Board of Directors. Our mission is to restore the Earth's climate by enabling people and forests to thrive together.

We are currently in a growth phase, managing a multi-partner expansion of our Wabanaki forest conservation & climate work in the Maritimes and launching a commercial execution unit to advance our spice forest program in Zanzibar. The foundation of this growth is our cross-cultural approach and prioritization of continually renewing and maintaining trust with Indigenous and Zanzibari partners and rural communities—even when it means making significant adaptations and changing our organization. We are a founder-led organization and our guiding principles are **Trust, Community, Justice, and Courage.**

### Challenge:

Our operational growth and complexity have outpaced our talent infrastructure and team size. Our founders (Executive Director & Program Director) in particular are currently covering the additional duties of unfilled senior roles such as CFO and Directors of HR, Development, Operations and Communications which is creating a bottleneck that risks slowing down our momentum. Furthermore, we need to ensure that our staffing structure—from local field staff through to senior management and Board—is calibrated to support our unique approach and origins, as well as our successful "Acorns to Oaks" impact strategy through to 2030. We are an organization that encourages staff growth and learning, operates with relatively little emphasis on hierarchy, and reflects aspect of a matrix organizational structure. It is our hope to find a consulting partner that is values-aligned and also brings new appropriate ideas and extensions to our existing strategy.

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## 2. Engagement Standards

To ensure a successful partnership, this engagement will be guided by the following principles:

- **The Multiplier Effect:** We expect our consulting partner to act as a multiplying factor to the outputs and capacity of our existing team and organization. We will provide access, data, explanation and transparency; in return, we expect the partner to elevate this material, not merely reorganize it. Proposals must demonstrate how your team will deliver value addition to ensure our internal staff are not re-doing work that was assigned to you. Apologies in advance for being blunt, this is not a commentary on your own work and professionalism but rather a safeguard we have learned needs to be stated explicitly from the outset.
- **Validate, Then Innovate:** Our founders and most senior staff have successfully built this organization over 17 years using learned entrepreneurial methods. We require a partner who will first download, understand and validate our existing knowledge, context, and principles before making precise recommendations (no broad recommendations please). We are looking for alignment and acceleration, not a generic playbook that overlooks our reality—for example, our current shift to Indigenous governance models, Land Back, and organization back.

**\*Note:** We are very open to alternative recommendations. If you believe our current management practices are limiting us, we invite you to challenge them—but only after you have demonstrated (in Phase 1) that you fully understand why we operate the way we do. We will follow the best idea, provided it is based on an accurate understanding of our reality as well as clear logic and ethical alignment.

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## 3. Project Objectives & Phases

The successful partner will deliver on three distinct phases. Phase 1 includes a mandatory Validation Gate where we verify the consultant's understanding of the organization before Phase 2 begins.

### **Phase 1: Validation, Strategy, and Organizational Design** (Months 1–2)

The objective of this phase is to download our context and design a structure that supports the entire team, from field staff to the Board.

- **Reverse Onboarding & Knowledge Audit:**
  - Conduct a review of our history, current successes, and core principles.
  - Deliverable: A Context Validation Report where the consultant articulates back to us our own strategy, culture, and challenges. This serves as a test to prove you have fully understood our experience and business.
- **Organizational Mapping:**
  - **Current State:** Produce a clear mapping of the current organization structure, documenting all roles (including field staff in Canada and Zanzibar), reporting lines, and gaps.
  - **Future State Roadmap:** Design an optimal org chart to pursue. This must include recommendations for the Board of Directors, Senior Management, and Field Operations and reflect our organizational priority to continue decolonizing our operations and governance (e.g. structural changes to replace practices that privilege Eurocentric perspectives in favour of more locally grounded and Indigenous approaches).
  - **Sequencing Plan:** Provide a timeline and sequence for adding new positions that prioritizes immediate relief for the founders as well as early multipliers that alleviate strain and enable further recruitment and onboarding. Successful recruitment and onboarding is one of the most taxing duties currently held by the founders.
- **The Validation Gate:** At the end of Phase 1, Community Forests International will review the Context Validation Report. If the partner has not demonstrated a precise and genuine understanding of our context, we reserve the right to pause or terminate the engagement at that point with no hard feelings.

## **Phase 2: Infrastructure and Recruitment (Months 4–9)**

The objective of this phase is to secure high-quality permanent staff for the priority roles identified in Phase 1.

- **Executive Search:** Execute the recruitment process for the immediate priority roles (e.g., anticipated to include an HR Lead and Social Enterprise Manager but specific roles are to be identified and validated in Phase 1).
- **HR Infrastructure Development:** Draft, update and finalize internal policies to support the entire organization, not just new hires. This includes remote work policies, compensation frameworks, and performance management systems that apply equitably

and appropriately to staff in different regions and roles in Canada, Zanzibar and elsewhere. All recent policies have been developed in consultation and collaboration with all levels of staff, reflecting our unique organizational character, and we ask our consulting partner to follow this same participatory approach so that we do not lose our best qualities as we build out a more “professionalized” process.

### **Phase 3: Integration and Performance Measurement (Months 10–24)**

The objective of this phase is to ensure the continued growth and retention of both existing and new staff and the achievement of specific organizational KPIs. The indicators below are a suggested starting point to provide clarity and guidance, but Community Forests welcomes suggested improvements or additions as the assignment progresses.

- **New Staff Coaching:** Provide structured coaching for new senior hires (6–12 months) to help them successfully integrate into their new role, including any specific mentoring required to navigate the transition into a high performing founder-led organization if that is not something they have experienced before.
- **Executive Support:** Provide advisory and direct support to existing founders and long-standing team leaders to assist them in managing the added duties of onboarding new senior hires as well as steadily handing over key duties to these new hires in a de-risked environment.
- **Board Development:** Execute the recruitment of 2–3 new Board Members to add strategic and financial depth and improve governance continuity. Work with current Mi’kmaq and Wolastoqey Board members and other incoming Indigenous or diaspora Board members to ensure that new Board members and processes align with Wabanakik processes, worldviews, and long-term goals of the organization for reconciliation, decolonization, and Land Back.
- **Success Metrics (KPIs):** The consultant will be held accountable for helping us achieve the following specific outcomes derived from our strategic goals, or equivalent refined outcomes following discussions with the consultant about appropriate pacing and scope:
  - **Role Fill Rate:** At least two (2) additional board positions and two (2) additional key senior staff roles filled by Month 9.
  - **Founder Transition:** Measurable handover of key operational functions from the Executive Director/Program Director to new staff by Month 12.
  - **Internal Mobility:** Evidence of increased mentorship and mobility, such as at least two (2) additional internal promotions for existing staff successfully

designed and accomplished, with those staff performing well in their increased role.

- **Board Continuity:** Evidence of successful board member succession plan where newly recruited board members are fully onboarded before the terms of their predecessors expire.

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## 4. Submission Requirements

To allow us to evaluate your fit as a strategic partner, please submit a proposal addressing the priorities outlined throughout this RfP as well as the following specific questions:

- I. **Assurance of Effort:** We have high internal capacity and expect our consultants to match it. How will you ensure your team does the heavy lifting rather than relying on our staff to drive the process?
- II. **Context Alignment:** Describe your specific process for learning a client's culture and history. How do you ensure you don't waste time rediscovering things we already know?
- III. **Founder Transition:** Provide an example where you managed a founder handover successfully. How did you handle the specific challenge of preserving the founders' tacit institutional knowledge through practice as well as on paper? What is your methodology for founder-to-professionalized management transitions?
- IV. **Relevant Experience:** Provide the bios and relevant experience of the project team who will be most actively involved in the assignment. Share at least one specific and detailed case study where you helped a non-profit organization of similar scope and context as Community Forests to scale their recruitment and / or operations significantly. Please describe the organizational design work you completed (covering the full staff structure) and how you supported the integration of new leaders. The closer your case study matches Community Forests' specific sector, structure and context the better.
- V. **Cross-Cultural Capacity:** Share relevant aptitudes (e.g. through consultant bios, case studies, references or relevant portfolio work) that align with Community Forests' cross-cultural origins and continued international and multicultural operations, as well as ongoing organizational priorities to decolonize policies, approaches and governance.
- VI. **Strategy & Execution:** We are looking for firms that excel in both Management Consulting (organizational strategy and design) as well as Talent Search (recruitment and onboarding). Could you share what percentage of your firm's revenue or workload comes from organizational design vs. executive search and related services? Provide an

example of a project where you managed the entire administrative burden of recruitment (scheduling, vetting, follow-ups) rather than just presenting a shortlist of candidates.

- VII. **Post-Hire Support:** Define your retention guarantees. If a senior placement leaves within the first year, what recourse do you offer?
- VIII. **References:** Please provide two references for clients you have completed similar assignments for that we can speak with to understand more about your approach and delivery.
- IX. **Fee Structure:** Complete and submit the following table to illustrate your bid price.

Phase	Pricing Model	Deliverable / Milestone	Hours / Units	Proposed Fee (CAD)
Phase 1: Validation	Fixed Fee	Context Validation Report, Org Chart Design & Future-State Roadmap		\$
Phase 2: Infrastructure	Fixed Fee	Finalized Internal HR Policies, Handbooks, & Onboarding Frameworks		\$
Phase 2: Recruitment	Per-Placement	Successful Hire 1: [Senior Role] (includes vetting & admin)		\$
Phase 2: Recruitment	Per-Placement	Successful Hire 2: [Senior Role] (includes vetting & admin)		\$
Phase 3: Integration	Monthly Retainer	Executive Coaching & Founder Support (Months 10–24)		\$ /mo
Phase 3: Board Dev	Success Fee	Sourcing and Appointment of 2–3 New Board Members		\$
Expenses	Cap	Travel, Advertising/Job Board Fees, and Admin costs		\$
Total Bid:				

\*Please note that when drafting a contract with the successful firm, Community Forest may suggest stage gates and performance checks in addition to those noted above with corresponding criteria and schedules for phased payments.

Send proposals to: [jobs@forestsinternational.org](mailto:jobs@forestsinternational.org) with “Talent Strategy RFP [Firm Name]” in the subject line.

Deadline: ~~April 16, 2026~~ (17:00 Eastern Time UTC -5)  
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## 4.1 Requests for Clarifications

Bidders may submit questions regarding this RFP via email to [jobs@forestsinternational.org](mailto:jobs@forestsinternational.org) with "Talent Strategy Questions [Firm Name]" in the subject line.

- Deadline for Questions: **March 23**, 2026 (17:00 Eastern Time UTC -5)
- Response Method: To ensure a level playing field while maintaining momentum, Community Forests will issue an anonymized **Rolling Addenda**. This will be shared with all firms who have expressed interest or posted publicly.
- Final Addendum: A final consolidated Addendum will be posted on ~~March 31, 2026.~~  
**April 7, 2026**
- Restricted Communication: From the date of issuance until the contract award, bidders **shall not contact** any Community Forests International staff or Board members regarding this RFP, other than through the designated email address above.