Ontario Centre of Innovation –
OVIN Skills, Talent & Workforce Development: Program Evaluation of the Regional Future Workforce Program

Request for Proposals | 12 June 2023

Deadline for submission of proposals: 12 July 2023

Proponent Session: June 26, 2023 at 10 am ET

Link to Register:
https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0ocuigpzouG9W_SHqaPdALd3bC6BW2oT3R#/registration

1. Organization Description

The Ontario Centre of Innovation (OCI), established in 1987, is a leading not-for-profit organization that works with industry, academia, and government. OCI focuses on ensuring that the people of Ontario reap the personal and economic benefits of leading-edge research underway at our publicly funded universities, colleges, and research hospitals - research that can be transformed into technologies and services that enhance quality of life and help build a globally competitive, job-creating economy in Ontario.

Specifically, OCI supports the commercialization of academic intellectual property (IP), industry-academic collaborations, and the development and adoption of emerging technologies. This includes overseeing the execution of advanced technology platforms that will equip Ontario companies to compete in a competitive global digital economy. The organization also contributes to the development and retention of talent to ensure that industry has access to personnel with the most advanced skills and knowledge and that highly trained personnel find opportunities to apply their expertise in Ontario.

OCI leads the Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network (OVIN) initiative on behalf of the Government of Ontario. OVIN’s mandate is to accelerate the development of the next generation of electric, connected, and autonomous vehicle and mobility technologies and lead the sector through significant change.

OVIN builds upon Ontario’s position as a world-leading automotive manufacturing and supply jurisdiction in addition to the large cluster of information and communication technology companies operating in the province. Ontario’s high-quality post-secondary institutions, first class talent, innovative small and medium sized enterprises, and infrastructure to support entrepreneurship ensure that the province is uniquely
positioned to capture the economic opportunity of the connected and automated vehicle (C/AV) and mobility technology space and lead the global mobility transformation.

Through resources such as research and development (R&D) funding, talent development, technology acceleration, business and technical supports, and demonstration grounds, OVIN provides a competitive advantage to Ontario-based automotive and mobility companies – allowing Ontario to reinforce its position as a global leader in transformative automotive technologies, as well as transportation and infrastructure systems.

OVIN’s five objectives are to: foster the commercialization of Ontario-made advanced automotive technologies and smart mobility solutions; showcase Ontario as the leader in the development, testing, piloting and adoption of the latest transportation and infrastructure technologies; drive innovation and collaboration among the growing network of stakeholders at the convergence of automotive and technology; leverage and retain Ontario’s highly skilled talent; harness Ontario’s regional strengths and capabilities, and support its automotive and technology clusters.

OVIN is supported by Ontario’s Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade (MEDJCT), Ministry of Transportation (MTO), and Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD).

2. Objectives

Ontario’s automotive and mobility sector is facing significant technological disruptions driven by the priority to transition to the low carbon economy, as well as improvements in digital and automation technologies. Key drivers contributing to this evolution include factors like environmental sustainability, digitalization, infrastructure demands, and increased expectations for safety and concerns over cybersecurity. As a result, the occupational and skills requirements for the sector are shifting to include an increased demand for: technological skills (e.g., use of software tools and software development), data analysis skills (e.g.: machine learning and AI (Artificial Intelligence)), as well as EV (Electric Vehicle) and EV infrastructure skills (e.g., mechatronics, battery chemistry repair).

In response to these shifts, the Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network (OVIN), as part of the Ontario Centre of Innovation (OCI), developed a Talent Strategy & Roadmap to help position the sector for long-term global success and a Skills & Career Navigator for Ontarians who are interested in careers in the sector. Currently, OVIN is deploying new programming to further inform Ontarians about the automotive sector and its various career opportunities.

The Regional Future Workforce (RFW) Program is an OVIN pilot program designed to encourage students of all ages (K-12 and post-secondary), across all regions of Ontario, to pursue careers in the automotive and mobility sector. The RFW program aims to bridge the gap between all ages of students and the automotive and mobility industry. The goals of OVIN’s Regional Future Workforce Program are:

- To increase exposure to automotive and mobility sector opportunities and learning programs among students across Ontario regions and grade levels (kindergarten to post-secondary)
- To increase the number of equity-deserving and underrepresented groups exploring careers, learning and development opportunities in the automotive and mobility sector
- To identify opportunities to build sustainable programs based on pilot programming
• To facilitate collaboration across Ontario between non-profit organizations, academic institutions, and the automotive and mobility industry to build a strong talent pipeline.
• The program will also provide further insights about the gaps between industry and academia to then inform future initiatives that will equip the next generation of talent with the skills and knowledge required for the sector’s evolution.

OVIN has approved a selected list of project grantees who will carry out this portfolio of work in collaboration with other sector stakeholders across Ontario. Eligible project grantees include post-secondary institutions, schools/school boards and non-profit organizations. All project grantees who have been approved are partnering with at least one industry partner in the automotive and mobility sector.

To learn more about the applicants and the RFW program, check the below press release:

The immediate outcomes of the RFW program should include the following:
• Student engagement in the automotive and mobility sector as a result of the program (including students from equity-deserving and underrepresented groups)
• Participant satisfaction with the design and deployment of the program (including participants from equity-deserving and underrepresented groups)
• Successful integration of equity, diversity and inclusion considerations into program
• Increased awareness of the automotive and mobility sector among students in regions across Ontario
• Change in student perception of career opportunities in the automotive and mobility sector as a direct result of participation in the program
• Interest in pursuing a career in the automotive and mobility sector by students (including students belonging to equity-deserving and underrepresented groups)
• Interest/participation of students (including students from equity-deserving and underrepresented groups) in other opportunities related to the automotive and mobility sector
• Successful collaborations facilitated with partners across Ontario to help build a talent pipeline for the automotive and mobility sector

A core objective of the RFW program is to encourage candidates belonging to equity-deserving and underrepresented groups to consider career opportunities in the automotive and mobility sector – an industry they may not have otherwise considered due to systemic barriers or perceived skill gaps. By increasing interest in the levels of diverse talent, the industry can begin to cultivate a more diverse and inclusive culture. Underrepresented groups should include (but are not limited to):

- Women/ individuals who identify as women
- Black, Indigenous & people of colour (BIPOC) communities
- 2SGLBTQ+ communities
- People with disabilities
- Immigrants/refugees/newcomers to Canada
- French-speakers
- Those living in remote areas (E.g.: Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal settlements, villages or cities as well as long-term commercial outposts and camps for mining, fishing and forestry activities)
Those living in under-served communities (in this context, populations of people who face additional barriers to accessing learning or educational opportunities such as those with low socio-economic status)

To measure all of these outcomes, OVIN is calling on interested and qualified consultants and evaluators to submit a proposal to conduct an evaluation to measure the impacts of this program throughout its lifecycle. The work consists of the components outlined under the scope of work below.

3. Scope of Work

- In terms of scope, this project must include (but is not limited to) the following segments: develop evaluation framework, data collection tools (e.g., online survey questionnaires, interview and focus group guides, and participant consent forms), and protocols to measure outcomes and implementation of programming.
- Initiate and implement data collection process in collaboration with OVIN’s RFW project grantees running programs.
- Establish coordinated data collection and management system that integrates with project data collected directly from OVIN’s project grantees.
- Engage project partners to participate in evaluation activities (e.g., OVIN’s project grantees and their participants: students/teachers/parents, industry and program partners) to measure participant outcomes.
- Carry out consultations and a process evaluation with delivery partners and project stakeholders to identify key success factors in implementation.
- Carry out ongoing and final reporting, communicating key findings regarding program effectiveness, implementation, and next steps/recommendations.
- The preliminary evaluation questions are:
  - What are the current perceptions/interest? Does the program change a student’s interest/awareness/perception of careers in the automotive and mobility sector (kindergarten to post-secondary), particularly those belonging to equity-deserving and underrepresented groups?
  - Does participation in the program lead to increased interest/participation in other opportunities related to the automotive and mobility sector?
  - Will the collaborations facilitated between industry and academia for this program help build a talent pipeline for the sector?
- Some preliminary indicators include:
  - # of students participated in X activity
  - # of students engaged by age and grade
  - # of students by Ontario region
  - # of partners/stakeholders engaged
  - % of students reporting improved perception/interest/participation in career opportunities in the automotive and mobility sector and other outcome/impact-based indicators

4. Timeline of Deliverables

This program’s duration is roughly 8 months, from July 2023 and March 2024.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Action Item</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1 (July 2023)- FY 2023-24</td>
<td>Project kickoff with OVIN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q2 (Aug-Nov 2023) FY 2023-24</td>
<td>Develop evaluation plan of performance measures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q2 (Aug-Nov 2023) FY 2023-24</td>
<td>Refine the evaluation framework and design data collection tools and protocols</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q2-Q3 (Aug 2023 – Jan 2024) FY 2023-24</td>
<td>Collect stakeholder feedback on programming</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q3 (Jan– Feb 2024) FY 2023-24</td>
<td>Learning Report delivered</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q3 (Jan- March 2024) FY 2023-24</td>
<td>Final Evaluation Report delivered</td>
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- The Consultant will share proposed methodologies for each deliverable. Each of these plans must be signed-off and agreed upon by OVIN prior to development and implementation stages. Where applicable, the consultant will host planning and design workshops. In the design and implementation of this project, the Consultant will effectively consider the confidentiality and privacy of user data and information security as outlined in PIPEDA and any other Canadian Legal Standards. The Consultant will ensure that data storage, content elements and software elements related to this work will be sustainable beyond the scope of this project.

5. Selection Criteria

The successful recipient of this contract will demonstrate the following in its response:

- Experience designing and implementing data collection systems to support complex evaluations
- Expertise in implementing rigorous, independent evaluation while collaborating with multiple project partners and stakeholders
- Experience working with students, educators, or training practitioners to test innovative models
- Experience working on parallel projects at the same time
- Organization with demonstrated commitment to diversity and equity
- Experience where your organization have measured outcomes for underserved groups
- Results-oriented approach to perform the services described as part of this project
- Preliminary project timeline.
- Approximate total budget
- Valid proof of insurance
6. Project Management

As part of the project management activities, the Consultant will prepare for a kick-off meeting, develop a workplan with detailed timelines for all project deliverables and deliver a status and/or weekly update meeting for the OVIN team. The Consultant will work closely with and provide updates to the OVIN Project Lead, Skills Development, and the wider OVIN team as needed.

7. Summary of Deliverables

The deliverables for this scope are summarized in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Specific deliverable</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deadline for proposal submissions</td>
<td>1. Proponents will submit proposals to OCI</td>
<td>PDF</td>
<td>12 July 2023</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Decision by OCI</td>
<td>Email with formal contract PDF</td>
<td>August 2023</td>
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<td>Decision by OCI</td>
<td>3. Project kick-off deck</td>
<td>PowerPoint</td>
<td>August 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Management</td>
<td>4. Project plan including schedule</td>
<td>PowerPoint and/or PDF</td>
<td>August 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Bi-weekly project status updates</td>
<td>PowerPoint and/or PDF</td>
<td>August 2023 to March 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope of Work</td>
<td>1. Proposed evaluation framework (detailing assumptions and approach)</td>
<td>Word or PDF</td>
<td>August 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Data collection – all data will be owned by OCI</td>
<td>Word and Excel</td>
<td>Sep 2023 – Jan 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Data visualized in data chart format (bar charts, pie charts and/or map for geographical)</td>
<td>Excel and PowerPoint</td>
<td>Sep 2023 – Jan 2024</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Bidding Requirements

a. Financial. Must include a breakdown of costs by activity (including things like different plug-ins required and enhancement options, etc.). Daily rate for the project including any estimated expenses is to be provided. Any expenses or additional cost must be approved by OCI in advance and in writing.

b. Firm Fixed-cost Proposal. Descriptions of the approach and methodology. Detailed timelines and deliverables are to be provided. 30-minute interviews including a presentation on approach and methodology and Q&A may be scheduled with short-listed candidates.

c. Collaborative Bids. Proponents are welcome to submit collaborative bids in partnership with other vendors.

d. Service Level. Delivery of milestones on time and of a quality acceptable to OCI.

e. Terms and Conditions.

   o Any information provided by OCI either in this RFP or in subsequent verbal or written communications shall be considered confidential and for express use in the preparation of this proposal.

   o All proposals submitted become the property of OCI and are to be received and held in confidence.

   o All data collected and all resulting reports and publications prepared by the successful bidder will be the exclusive property of OCI.

   o This RFP does not create an employment relationship. Individuals performing services required by the contract are not employees of OCI.

   o Any changes to scope of services and associated costs following execution of contract must be submitted in writing and are subject to approval by OCI.

   o Travel and travel reimbursement may be authorized for this acquisition and will require written requests, breakdown of costs, and formal approval by OVIN.

   o The successful bidder will be paid at the prices stipulated on the contract upon submission of final invoice to OCI after the successful completion of the project.

   o Invoices will contain the contract number and reference number.

   o OCI follows a standard contract and agreement policy allowing for limited changes to clauses.

f. Conflict of Interest. Arms-Length relationship or disclosure of potential conflict of interest is required.
g. **References.** References with details of work completed are to be provided.

h. **Evaluation Criteria.** Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of:

**Expertise & Qualifications (30%)**

o Those assigned to deliver this project reflect a diverse team of qualified individuals who will each have an active and intentional role in the work. There should be a balance of junior and senior level staff with the appropriate subject matter expertise engaged in this work.

o Demonstrates understanding of the project objectives and context, including clear ability to incorporate EDI considerations in all aspects of work and being able to clearly measure the impact according to the program's guidelines and objectives.

o Relevant experience and references in research, future forecasting, and/or data analysis, preferably have previously worked with diverse projects parallelly, worked with academia and non for profits and have experience communicating with students and diverse underrepresented members.

**Methodology (50%)**

o Proposed approach and methodology of the project is clear, detailed and feasible. Proposed approach includes the types of information and research that will inform the vendor's report(s).

o Proposed approach has a strong stakeholder engagement strategy that demonstrates exceptional understanding for how to engage stakeholders from different sectors (Academia and non for profits), ages, experience, race..etc.

o How well does the proposal address RFP requirements?

o Management and organization of the assignment.

o Commitment to assignment timelines, deadline, and overall terms and conditions.

**Cost (20%)**

o Breakdown of costs by activity

o Justification of the budget line items

j. **Submission Format.** Proposals are to be submitted in free form electronically in Word and PDF format. Please have proposals named as “Company Name Submission OVIN_RFW_Evaluation_ RFP_DD- MM-YYYY”. The receipt will be confirmed via e-mail.

k. **Contact.** Send proposals submissions and any questions and additional information requests to Rodayna Abuelwafa at rabuelwafa@oc-innovation.ca. Please note that any responses may be shared with all potential bidders.

**Bidding Process and Schedule:**

1. The application deadline is **12 July 2023.**
2. Short-listed candidates may be invited for an interview.
3. Final selection is expected to be done by **August 2023**.

We reserve the right not to award the contract to any of those submitting proposals, and we may seek further responses.