



**Request for Proposal**  
**Contract Services to Conduct**  
**Provincial Trails Impact Study - Nova Scotia**

“How can we better understand the impact of trails  
on the well-being of Nova Scotians?”

## Background

The Nova Scotia Trails Federation (NS Trails) mandate is to support the cooperative building, maintaining and enjoyment of trails in Nova Scotia. We aim to ensure that everyone in the trail community has access to guidance, information and best practices so that together we can create safe and enjoyable trail experiences. NS Trails is a lead partner of the provincial Trails Strategy Coordinating Group (TSCG).

The TSCG launched in April 2020 with the primary role to guide the implementation of the *Shared Trails Strategy for Trails in Nova Scotia* ([STS](#)). The vision, goals, and mission are a challenging blend of coordination, collaboration and potential partnering to ensure Nova Scotians have access to and are using a variety of high quality, safe and appealing trail opportunities.

The STS is a significant document with 4 major goals and over 50 action items. Due to its complexity, the TSCG is guiding and prioritizing the STS. It requires a collaborative model that brings together many stakeholders in a coordinated and inspirational fashion.

A key stepping stone to fulfilling the goals of the STS is conducting a Provincial Impact Study so that we have a better understanding of how trails impact the well-being (physical and mental) of Nova Scotians. This would include economic, health, and cultural benefits. By building a baseline of knowledge, the Provincial Impact Study would enable building stronger support for trails and trail groups, ultimately fulfilling the vision of Shared Trails Strategy.

## What We Are Looking For and Considerations

The TSCG is seeking proposals from qualified consultants/contractors to provide the following services:

1. Design the research and work plan methodology for conducting a Provincial Trails Impact Study.
2. Develop a phased work plan to capture the seasonal and diverse nature of trails use.
3. Coordinate the implementation of the work with NS Trails and the TSCG.
4. Conduct the research starting in July 2023 and build in expectations for early results in Fall 2023.
5. Create a reporting framework (printed and online) for which results can be easily shared and disseminated.
6. Provide options for conducting the work to best minimize expense and maximize the usefulness of volunteers and data collection.

When preparing your proposal, the contractor/consultant would need to include information on:

1. Methodology - Defensible methodology and rationale for the assumptions in crafting the work plan. Consider how this work creates a baseline for trails data and how the work can be recreated in the future to see how impacts are changing.
2. Work plan – Coordinated with the client organization(s) to finalize a detailed work plan with target trails, data collection activities, support and training, and timeline for reporting.
3. Trail counts – Support and training for organizations to collect trail count data at target trail locations. Options for where, when, and how to conduct the data collection knowing that trail organizations are led mostly by volunteers. Analysis of trail count data to produce summary results that can be linked to survey data and existing counts.
4. Survey – Design of English/French survey, support and training for delivery of survey by organizations, collect and analyze data.
5. Economic analysis – Conventional economic impact statistics will be produced for direct and spinoff economic impacts related to trails.
6. Other benefits of trails – Analysis and statistics will be produced for the impacts on “well-being” to trails users from trail use/participation.
7. Reporting – Draft and final reports presenting trail user activity statistics, economic impacts, and other benefits of trails related to the well-being of Nova Scotians. Results must be representative of Nova Scotia trails according to scope outlined above, and
8. Presentation – to the client and for one other event/conference (travel costs separate if in-person). All data, reports, and presentation slides will be shared with the client organizations for future use.

It can be expected that when developing the Impact Study, the following would be considered:

- Provincial in geography: To provide results that are representative of all land-based trails in the province (excluding paddling routes). This will require data collection for trails that represent the six (6) regions of Nova Scotia identified by the Nova Scotia Trails Guide (<https://novascotiatrials.cioc.ca/>) including multiple trails within each region selected according to trail characteristics and usage.
- Collaborative Partnerships in Delivery and Results: Conducted with partners/collaborators such as NS Tourism, Inter-Departmental Committee on Trails, NS Trails and Trail Stakeholders.
- Broad in Trail Uses: Will capture all modes of travel including pedestrians, cycling, and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). Winter modes of travel will be captured including pedestrians, skiing, snowshoeing, and snowmobiling.
- 4 Seasons: Representative results by season with greater detail for peak season periods.
- Origin of Users: Surveys will distinguish residents of the province and visitors, with breakdowns of visitors by key origins such as Atlantic Canada provinces, QC, ON, other Canada, U.S., and other international

#### Probable Timeline

- Winter 2023 - Develop and Launch the Request for Proposals.
- Winter/Spring 2023 - Review and Select Preferred Contractor/Consultant.
- Spring/Summer 2023 - Launch and Deliver Impact Study.
- Summer/Fall 2023- Early results and Reporting.
- Winter/Spring 2023/24 - Deliver winter season study with results and reporting.

The contractor/consultant would also benefit from considering that trails contribute to quality of life in a variety of ways. From the Shared Trails Strategy and other reports, we know trails impact/have:

- Individual Wellbeing - Trails support active healthy lifestyles, resulting in a population that is physically, mentally and spiritually healthier. A healthier population will lower our healthcare costs.
- Community Wellbeing - Trails provide opportunities for families, friends and neighbors to be active together and connect with one another. They enrich the vibrancy and attractiveness of communities.
- Connections with Our Natural and Cultural Heritage - Trail experiences foster a stronger understanding of and connection with nature. Trails provide access to special places, cultural landmarks and opportunities for outdoor recreation. Trails help us preserve green spaces, educate, protect and promote wildlife and wilderness areas while providing managed public access.
- Transportation - Trails can provide greener, healthier and more enjoyable transportation alternatives and help connect communities.

- The Economy - Trails attract visitors (tourism) and support a range of economic activities. This could also include investments in trail construction and maintenance.
- Geography - The majority of the 10,000kms of trails in Nova Scotia are rural.

## How Your Proposal Will Be Evaluated

We know proposals take time to prepare and we thank all those who take on this leadership role. To help make efficient use of everyone's time, we plan on evaluating the proposals based on the following criteria:

- Experience of the contractor/consultant team as they relate to delivering trail impact studies.
- Knowledge of the Shared Trails Strategy's goals and the trails systems in Nova Scotia.
- Strength of rationale and methodology in conducting trail impact studies.
- Experience working with collaborative teams composed of government, trail groups and volunteers.
- Detailed budget with possible alternative options.

There isn't compensation to prepare proposals nor will proposals be returned to the contractor/consultant. However, we will follow-up with contractors who submit proposals and share the outcome of their evaluation.

We anticipate the budget for conducting this work in 2023 could range from \$45,000 to \$55,000.

Deadline to submit proposals is Tuesday, Feb 28th, 2023 at 5pm.

Please note, conducting the impact study is predicated on securing funding which may not be known until April/May 2023. Submitting or acceptance of a proposal is in no way a guarantee of work. All physical and intellectual property belongs to NS Trails.

Please submit proposals or questions to Paul Shakotko, Project Manager, Trails Strategy Coordinating Group, [paulshakotko39@gmail.com](mailto:paulshakotko39@gmail.com).

Thank you for your consideration.