

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Ontario Beekeepers' Association

1.0 Description

1.1 The Ontario Beekeepers' Association (OBA) is seeking information on how the OBA can develop, establish, and sustain an innovative new method(s) to market and sell OBA and Technology Transfer Program (TTP) recommended beekeeping tools, equipment, and merchandise.

1.2 ***THIS IS A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) ONLY.*** This announcement constitutes a Request for Information (RFI) to obtain market information and capabilities from vendors and other interested parties. This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes – it does not constitute a Request for Proposal (RFP) or a promise to issue an RFP or a Request for Tender (RFT) in the future. This request for information does not commit the OBA to contract for any supply or service. Further, the OBA at this time is not seeking proposals and will not accept unsolicited proposals. Respondents are advised that the OBA will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response to this RFI; all costs associated with responding to this RFI will be solely at the interested party's expense. Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any future RFP, if any is issued. If a solicitation is released, it will be distributed thru the OBA's website, www.Ontariobee.com and potentially through email distribution to OBA members. It is the responsibility of the potential respondents or offerors to monitor the OBA website and emails for additional information pertaining to this requirement.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Ontario Beekeepers' Association is the voice for Ontario Beekeepers with the provincial government, and through the Canadian Honey Council (CHC) at the federal level, on issues that affect the health of bees, the Operations of Beekeepers or the Business of beekeeping. The OBA advocates for all beekeepers' interests, supports and conducts honey bee health research, and delivers practical education and training through the TTP while representing all Ontario beekeepers to ensure a thriving, viable, local and sustainable industry in Ontario. The OBA's vision is that Ontario leads with well-informed and skilled beekeepers, healthy and plentiful honeybees raised in Ontario, a prosperous beekeeping industry as well as a widespread appreciation for honey and for the critical role that honey bees play in agriculture.

2.2 Although the mandate of the OBA is to ensure a viable, local, and sustainable beekeeping industry, it is a very small Not For Profit Organization. The OBA works with limited resources and a small administration staff who manage the membership enrolment, the

Ontario Bee Journal (OBJ) subscription service, and other items such as the OBA's Insurance Program, the Annual General Meetings, Spring Meetings, and all the benefits of OBA membership. As a result, revenue is routinely balanced by expenses and funding is rarely available to expand OBA membership offerings, improvement OBA of infrastructure such as its website, provide living wages to staffs, etc.

3.0 Purpose

3.1 The OBA is therefore requesting new and innovative ideas to both increase and create sustainable revenue streams with an initial focus on its existing merchandise line. This RFI is intended to solicit from potential respondent's advice on how they may implement a plan(s) to meet the goals and objectives as stated within this RFI. Responses are requested that are complete and focused while providing a level of detail that will assist the OBA in determining if a further RFP or RFT process will be undertaken.

3.2 **Planned Implementation:** Planned implementation that meets the goals and objectives, as stated within this RFI, in addition to any recommended actions by respondents, will be contingent on the OBA Board of Director's approval in a fair and transparent manner, clear of any Conflict of Interest.

3.3 **Implementation Period:** Any potential, suggested advice, recommendations, plan(s), etc., provided by any respondents will be reviewed with the desire to address OBA budgetary constraints in the earliest possible period. Seasonal dependencies will be taken into consideration for any potential implementation plan.

3.4 **Limitations:** As noted, this RFI does not commit the OBA to respond directly to any RFI response, nor commit the OBA to any future RFI, RFP, RFT, or contract or agreement. Neither does this RFI commit the OBA to any period of any possible, future contract or agreement.

4.0 Requested Information

4.1 The OBA is seeking information on how it can develop, establish, and sustain an innovative new method to deliver upon the following OBA Goals and Objectives. All RFI responses will be assessed in the following manner;

4.1.1 Goals will be addressed in accordance with the 2023 OBA Strategic Plan found on the OBA website,

4.1.2 Objectives will be developed and stated with respect to the tenets of Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound (S.M.A.R.T.) principles,

4.2 The RFI response must detail how the following **OBA Goals** can be met;

4.2.1 **Sustain and develop the OBA Brand** as a **reliable source of information and recommendation for** pertinent, Ontario related **beekeeping training, tools, and equipment**,

4.2.2 **Develop sustainable OBA funding** in part from OBA merchandise sales,

4.2.3 **Increase revenue generation for the OBA** from merchandise sales,

4.2.4 **Increase** the number of **locations where OBA merchandise** may be **purchased**,

4.2.5 **Increase the volume of OBA merchandise sold**,

4.2.6 **Increase** the number of pertinent **OBA merchandise offerings**,

4.3 The RFI response must detail how the following OBA Objectives can be met through the application of S.M.A.R.T. principles;

4.3.1 Strategic Objectives;

4.3.1.1 Develop a Marketing and Sales Plan for OBA merchandise within three months,

4.3.1.2 Develop a revenue generation model based on current and projected sales within three months,

4.3.1.3 Review and recommend specific beekeeping supplies, equipment, and tools for Ontario beekeepers within three months,

4.3.2 Tactical Objectives;

4.3.2.1 Identify and develop new marketing opportunities within six months - to expand the reach of OBA merchandise,

4.3.2.2 Develop existing and identify new sales channels within six months - retail outlets, websites, social media, other platforms,

4.3.2.3 Identify and develop new merchandise within six months - To expand the pertinent OBA merchandise offerings,

4.3.2.4 Identify and recommend beekeeping, tools, and products within six months that could become "OBA Recommended Products" – for TTP to conduct utility research,

4.3.2.5 Increase reach of OBA merchandise to retailer outlets by 10% within six months,

4.3.2.6 Increase OBA merchandise revenue by 10% within six months, and by 25% within one year,

4.3.3 Operational Objectives;

4.3.3.1 Implement Marketing Plan(s) using all communication opportunities to reach, beekeepers and informing them of the new OBA sales channels within six months,

4.3.3.2 Develop an OBA merchandising sales platform(s) within six months,

4.3.3.3 Review existing and recommend future OBA branded merchandise within six months, and

4.3.3.4 Develop a Marketing Plan for retailers, who will be attending the fall OBA AGM.

5.0 Response Guidelines

5.1 Interested parties are requested to respond to this RFI with a written response.

5.2 RFI responses shall be submitted in both Portable Document Format (PDF) and Microsoft Word for Office 2000 compatible format and are **due no later than 04 March 2024, 1159pm EST**. Responses submitted after that time will not be considered and will be returned to the respondent. Responses shall be limited to 10 numbered and dated pages, (12 point font Arial, 1 inch margins) inclusive of title page and annexes or appendices, and submitted via e-mail only to the OBA's General Manager's email at info@ontariobee.com.

5.3 If a respondent chooses to submit any business sensitive, proprietary, or otherwise confidential information, it MUST BE CLEARLY MARKED as proprietary or restricted data in the response. To aid the OBA, please segregate proprietary information.

5.4 Information received from respondents will not be shared with any other respondent. Respondents will not be notified of the results of this market research. Response to this RFI is not required in order to respond to any future solicitation that may possibly follow, but information gathered through this RFI may influence future solicitation development.

5.5 Please be advised that all submissions become OBA property and will not be returned.

5.6 The RFI shall at a minimum have the following sections;

5.6.1. Title page;

5.6.1.1 Title page of the RFI response with company name and submission date and time.

5.6.2 Section 1 - Administration;

5.6.2.1 The RFI response shall provide administrative information, and shall include the following as a minimum; Name, mailing address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail of designated point of contact,

5.6.3 Section 2 - Recommendations;

5.6.3.1 Suggested advice, recommendations, plan(s), etc., in sufficient detail to permit a fair and transparent evaluation of the RFI response. Details are to include factual information supported by documentation or other data. Assumptions are to be clearly detailed,

5.6.4 Section 3 - Agreements;

5.6.4.1 Recommended contracting strategy, agreements, or other recommended partnerships if recommended are to be detailed, and

5.6.5 Section 4 – Organisation’s structure;

5.6.5.1 Details of the respondent’s business type to include details such as, large business, small business, small disadvantaged business, woman-owned small business, very small business, veteran-owned small business. Respondents are cautioned, however, that these are general descriptions only and it is incumbent upon to respondents to describe in detail to the OBA the nature of their business to assist in the evaluation of the RFI.

6.0 Considered Contractual or Agreement Clauses

6.1 The OBA in pursuing this RFI and any possible further contract or agreement for the implementation of any advice, recommendation, or plan shall ensure at a minimum that;

6.1.1 All OBA Intellectual Property remains the property of the OBA,

6.1.2 All OBA Intellectual Property associated with OBA branded merchandise remains the property of the OBA,

6.1.3 On completion of any potential contract or agreement, all marketing plans, sales plans, recommendation documents, cost and revenue documentation, forecasts, projections, actuals, etc., and all documentation related to any potential contract or agreement, remains the property of the OBA,

6.1.4 On completion of any potential contract or agreement, all marketing, sales, and service and goods delivery platforms, etc., will be retained by the OBA and Intellectual Property rights will be transferred to the OBA,

6.1.5 Routine status reports meeting the goals and strategic, tactical and operational objectives will be delivered to the OBA within one month of the commencement of the contract. Progress reports will be delivered at the commencement of the following the first day of the following month,

6.1.6 The OBA in any potential contract or agreement, will provide six months advance notice of the termination of any potential contract or agreement,

6.1.7 The OBA in any potential contract or agreement, will to ensure a clear, transparent, and conflict of interest free relationship between any potential contractor or partnership and the OBA, shall immediately be informed of any potential or actual conflict of interest thru the OBA Board of Directors, and shall be posted on the OBA’s website, and

6.1.8 The OBA in any potential contract or agreement, will retain the right to inform its members of the status of this contract, respecting the commercial in confidence nature of the contract.

7.0 Respondent Discussions

7.1 OBA Board members or staff, or any of its volunteer representatives may not to meet, contact, nor discuss with any potential respondent to this RFI or their potential responses. Any such discussions would only be intended to get further clarification of the RFI’s content to meet the RFI’s requirements and will be in accordance with paragraph 8.

8.0 Questions

8.1 Questions regarding this RFI shall only be submitted in writing by e-mail to the OBA General Manager email address. Verbal questions will NOT be accepted. Questions will be answered by posting all questions and answers to the OBA website; accordingly, questions shall NOT contain proprietary information. **The OBA does not guarantee that questions received after 12pm EST, Thursday, 29 February 2024 will be answered.** To access the OBA website, go to www.ontariobee.com Click on www.ontariobee.com/sales-and-services, to view important information related to this RFI. Interested parties are invited to subscribe to the OBA email subscription service to ensure they receive any important information updates connected with this RFI. To subscribe, contact the OBA General Manager.

9.0 Summary

9.1 THIS IS A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) ONLY to identify sources who can provide detail how an interested contractor could develop, establish, and sustain an innovative new method to market and sell Ontario Beekeepers' Association (OBA) and Technology Transfer Program (TTP) recommended beekeeping tools, equipment, and merchandise. The information provided in the RFI is subject to change and is not binding on the OBA. The OBA has not made a commitment to procure any service or product, and release of this RFI should not be construed as such a commitment or as authorization to incur cost for which reimbursement would be required or sought. All submissions become OBA property and will not be returned.