



Request for Proposals

Consultant

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB)

Date of Issue: August 31, 2026

Submission Deadline: September 15, 2026



techNL Ready Tech Talent

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1.0 Background

techNL is a not-for-profit membership association that accelerates the growth of the tech sector in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL). In collaboration with its network of members and partners, techNL provides business growth services, visibility, a collective voice, and a community to tech and tech-enabled companies in NL with a vision to become the most sought-after Canadian tech ecosystem, globally recognized for its collaborative community, diversity, quality of life, and success.

A key focus on business growth includes programs and services to support talent development and retention. More information can be found on the website technl.ca.

techNL's Ready Tech Talent Office, established through a Labour Market Partnership with the provincial department of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development, has become an invaluable part of Newfoundland and Labrador's tech ecosystem by addressing a critical labour market gap. Since its launch in 2021, the team has positioned itself as a trusted, go-to resource for both job seekers and tech employers, strengthening the province's labour market support ecosystem.

2.0 Introduction & Purpose

To better understand the lived experiences of equity-deserving professionals working in Newfoundland and Labrador's tech industry, techNL is seeking to engage a consultant to facilitate a series of focus groups. The findings will help identify barriers to attraction and retention, highlight promising practices, and inform future employer resources and programming.

Since 2021, several quantitative studies have measured DEIB indicators within Newfoundland and Labrador's tech sector from the perspectives of both employers and employees. These include the Equiforce (formerly WRDC)'s *Diversity Tracker* and *WCI Survey Reports* (2022-2023), as well as techNL and The Dais at Toronto Metropolitan University's *The State of Tech in Newfoundland and Labrador Report* (2025). While these reports have provided valuable insights into workforce demographics, representation, and key trends, there remains a gap in qualitative research that explores the lived experiences of individuals from equity-deserving groups working within the province's tech sector.

To help address this gap, techNL is seeking a qualified DEIB consultant to support the planning, facilitation, and reporting for a series of DEIB focus groups. The findings will be used to strengthen employer supports and improve the long-term attraction and retention of diverse talent across Newfoundland and Labrador's tech sector.

The focus groups are intended to:



- Facilitate a safe, inclusive, confidential and voluntary consultation process (focus group) that enables participants to openly share their workplace experiences related to diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and long-term retention within Newfoundland and Labrador's tech sector.
- Gather qualitative insights from individuals from equity-deserving groups who are currently employed in, or have recently (last 2 years) left, Newfoundland and Labrador's tech ecosystem.
- Better understand participants' workplace experiences, including factors that contribute to inclusion, belonging, career growth, and retention, as well as barriers or challenges they may have encountered.
- Identify sector-wide strengths, opportunities, and emerging themes to help inform future action.
- Generate evidence-based recommendations to support techNL in developing employer resources, programming, and advisory services that promote inclusive workplaces and improve the retention of diverse talent.

3.0 Consultant Objectives

The objectives for the consultant are as follows:

1. Support techNL with planning for the DEIB focus group session(s).
 - Create the format, discussion guide and specific questions for focus group session(s).
 - Define anticipated number of focus group sessions required, and any contingencies that would necessitate more than 3 sessions.
 - Support techNL with the participant recruitment methodology for a minimum of 8 participants (one or more participants from each equity-deserving group identified below in section 3.1 Focus Group Participants). Fewer than 8 participants may be considered if there is representation of each group through intersectionality.
 - Provide techNL with participant selection rubric should there be an overrepresentation of applicants from a single equity-deserving group among participant applicants.
 - Support techNL with recruitment efforts based on recommended approach (promoting sign-up link on social media or via email, etc).
2. Co-host 1 – 3 focus group sessions collaboratively with techNL.
3. Deliver comprehensive report including summary of findings/insights and action items.
 - Include 3+ actionable insights from focus group qualitative data.
 - Provide 3+ recommendations from the above insights that techNL can use to improve its employer/member resources, programming, and advisory services to forward the goal of greater retention of diverse talent in the province.
4. Support techNL in the proliferation of project findings and recommendations to select stakeholders.



- If requested, facilitate a (1) workshop or knowledge-sharing session with tech sector employers to discuss findings and practical actions for improving diverse talent retention.

3.1 Focus Group Participants

The focus groups should seek representation from participants who identify with one or more of the following equity-deserving groups:

- 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals
- Women and gender diverse individuals
- Indigenous Peoples
- Racialized persons and People of Colour
- Newcomers to Canada
- Immigrants to Canada
- Persons with disabilities
- Neurodivergent individuals

4.0 Scope of Work and Deliverables

The project is anticipated to take place over approximately 8-10 weeks in Fall 2026 (September - December), with an estimated total level of effort of 48 hours. Proponents may recommend adjustments to the timeline or allocation of hours where justified.

Phase	Deliverables	Estimated Hours
1. Project Initiation & Planning	Kick-off meeting with techNL; review background materials; develop project plan, engagement methodology, focus group format, discussion guide, consent/privacy approach, and participant recruitment recommendations.	8
2. Recruitment Support & Session Preparation	Support techNL in finalizing participant recruitment strategy; refine discussion materials; prepare facilitation tools and session logistics.	8
3. Focus Group Facilitation	Facilitate 1 – 3 confidential focus group sessions with employees from equity-deserving groups within Newfoundland and Labrador's tech sector. Ensure sessions are inclusive, psychologically safe, and encourage meaningful discussion.	12
4. Analysis & Reporting	Review and analyze qualitative findings; identify key themes, strengths, barriers, and opportunities; develop practical recommendations for employers and techNL programming. Prepare a draft report for review and incorporate feedback.	16



5. Knowledge Sharing & Project Close-out	Present findings and recommendations to the Ready Tech Talent team. If requested, facilitate a workshop or knowledge-sharing session with tech sector employers to discuss findings and practical actions for improving diverse talent retention. Submit all final project materials.	4
		Total: 48 Hours

5.0 Proposal Requirements

The contracting organization for this RFP is techNL. A single electronic document is sufficient for submission. Responses should be no more than three (3) pages concisely worded. The proposal must acknowledge and fully accept the terms and conditions as laid out in this RFP. The proposal may feature appendices, including (1) a brief description of the respondent's company and its relevant experience with similar projects (including links to the websites), and (2) a description of any relevant resources that you plan to utilize.

The electronic copy of submissions should be in DOC and/or PDF format and sent via email at talent@technl.ca with subject line: techNL Ready Talent DEIB Consultant RFP no later than September 14 at 4:00 p.m. NST.

Questions from interested applicants can be directed to the same address.

Proposals must include the following:

1. Organizational Overview and Relevant Experience: Highlights of core areas of expertise; summary of experience supporting DEIB initiatives; demonstrable experience working with diverse groups; demonstrable experience leading programs while promoting psychological safety and cultural sensitivity; demonstrable experience translating complex qualitative findings into actionable recommendations; and two or more examples of comparable projects.
2. Organizational Capacity and Continuity: Proposed support structure and commitment to availability for planning, delivery and reporting for the DEIB Focus Group sessions (approximately 10 weeks).
3. Proposed Approach: Methodology for focus group session(s), qualitative data assessment and reporting.
4. Proposed Hours & Hourly Rate: Total costs for project.
5. Understanding of the Project: Demonstration of understanding of RTTO objectives and the multi-level stakeholders and audiences we serve.
6. Project Team: Provide names, roles, and qualifications of Consultant(s) assigned to this project.



6.0 Budget and Schedule

Budget Range Up to \$10,000 CAD

Schedule

RFP Issue Date	August 31, 2026
Vendor Questions Accepted until	September 8, 2026
RFP Closing Date	September 15, 2026
Final vendor selection	September 22, 2026
Work begins	September 28, 2026

7.0 Evaluation Criteria

Submissions will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Demonstrated expertise in preparing, conducting and analyzing data from focus groups or similar style in-person sessions
- Knowledge and experience in relation to the work: demonstrated ability to meet expectations based on completion of similar projects and/or quality of previous works.
- Understanding of the scope and objectives of the project: demonstrated comprehension of/adherence to the RFP.
- Proposed methodology and approach for this project.
- Local knowledge and capacity.
- Value of work proposed versus identified costs (relative to other submissions).

8.0 Terms and Conditions

- All proposals received will be considered strictly confidential.
- The lowest cost, or any proposal, will not necessarily be accepted.
- Proposed costs must be represented in Canadian dollars.
- No payment will be made for the preparation and submission of proposals for this project.
- Standard contract terms of techNL are included with this RFP (See independent contract agreement terms in Appendix A.)



- techNL reserves the right to meet with all, or any, of the applicants during the proposal evaluation stage to clarify information in the submissions and seek additional detail which may be used in the evaluation.



Appendix A

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT (the “Agreement”) is made as of {Contract Start Date}.

BETWEEN:

{CORPORATION NAME}, a body corporate, incorporated and operating under the laws of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada (the “Corporation”)

- and -

{CONTRACTOR NAME} (the “Contractor”)

(each, a “Party” and, together, the “Parties”)

RECITALS:

- A. The Corporation wishes to engage the Contractor for the purpose of providing the services described in the attached [Schedule “A”](#) and such other services that may be reasonably incidental to them or to which the Parties may agree from time to time (collectively, the “Services”).
- B. The Contractor has agreed to provide the Services to the Corporation in accordance with, and subject to, the terms of this Agreement.

THE PARTIES AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

ENGAGEMENT

- 1.32 **Engagement.** The Corporation engages the Contractor to provide the Services and the Contractor agrees to provide the Services on the terms and conditions of this Agreement. The Contractor agrees to complete the Services within the Term.
- 2.32 **Performance of Duties.** The Contractor agrees to provide the Services for and on behalf of the Corporation. The Contractor represents and warrants to the Corporation that the Contractor has the required skills, abilities, qualifications and experience to perform the Services. In performing the Services, the Contractor will:



- (f) act honestly, diligently, in good faith and in the Corporation's best interests;
- (f) exercise the care, diligence and skill of a reasonably prudent person performing similar services in comparable circumstances;
- (f) act in accordance with sound industry standards and practices;
- (f) act in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations and standards;
- (f) devote sufficient time and attention to the Corporation's business and affairs to perform the Services effectively and to the best of his or her ability; and
- (f) comply with the Corporation's policies and procedures in effect from time to time.

3.32 **Personal Nature.** The Contractor's obligations and rights are based on the provision of the Services by the Contractor and his or her singular skills and qualifications. The Contractor will not subcontract any portion of the Services without the Corporation's prior written consent.

4.32 **Other Engagements.** The Corporation acknowledges and agrees that the Contractor may undertake work for other businesses provided that such work does not hinder the proper, timely and efficient performance of the Services or otherwise breach the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

5.32 **Reporting.** Upon the Corporation's request, the Contractor will provide reports regarding the Contractor's progress and performance of the Services.

6.32 **Independent Contractor.** In performing the Services under this Agreement, the Contractor will at all times be an independent contractor of the Corporation and not an employee. Nothing in this Agreement will be construed as, or have the effect of constituting, any other relationship between the Parties, including one of agency, partnership or joint venture, or of creating any employer and employee relationship.

7.32 **Risk and Insurance.** The Contractor will provide the Services under his or her own supervision and risk. The Contractor will provide all work space, equipment, and materials to complete the Services. The Contractor will have the sole responsibility to obtain suitable insurance coverage for the Contractor while performing the Services.



REMUNERATION

8.32 **Compensation.** The Corporation will pay the Contractor the gross amounts of compensation set out in the attached Schedule "A", plus applicable taxes (the "**Contractor Fees**"). To the extent that the Corporation is required by any applicable law or order to withhold any sum from a payment, the Corporation will be entitled to do so.

9.32 **Taxes and Remittances.**

(b) The Corporation shall not, unless duly advised by its legal advisors, withhold any amounts for income taxes or make any deductions in respect of Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance, workers' compensation, health care, professional dues or levies, or other expenses whatsoever from the Contractor Fees payable to the Contractor.

(b) The Contractor will be responsible for remitting all applicable taxes, payments, deductions, remittances, and levies to government authorities and/or regulatory bodies for which the Contractor may be liable at law in respect of any payments to it from the Corporation, including income taxation and social welfare deductions.

10.32 **Expenses.** Subject to the pre-approval of the Corporation, the Corporation will reimburse the Contractor for all reasonable expenses the Contractor incurs in the course of performing his or her duties and responsibilities under this Agreement that are consistent with the Corporation's policies in effect from time to time with respect to travel, entertainment and other business expenses. Reimbursement of expenses are subject to the Corporation's requirements with respect to reporting and documentation of such expenses.

11.32 **Indemnity.** The Contractor agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the Corporation and its directors, officers, and employees, from and against any liabilities, damages, fines, interest, penalties, claims, surcharges, or other costs on account of the Contractor's failure to make any payments, withholdings, deductions or remittances as may be required by law to be made by Contractor, including in respect of any amounts paid to the Contractor under this Agreement.

TERM & TERMINATION

12.32 **Term.** This Agreement will be in effect for a fixed term of **X months** commencing on **DATE** and terminating on **DATE** (the "Term") unless otherwise terminated in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.



13.32 **Early Termination.** Either Party may terminate this Agreement at any time by giving at least **XX days'** advance notice to the non-terminating Party. In the event the Corporation terminates this Agreement pursuant to this section, the Corporation shall only be responsible to pay the Contractor for Services rendered up to the date of termination. The Corporation shall not be responsible for any additional payments contemplated for the remainder of the Term.

14.32 **Breach of Terms by the Contractor.** The Corporation may immediately terminate this Agreement upon giving written notice to the Contractor if the Contractor is in breach of any of the terms or conditions of this Contract without the express written consent of the Corporation or if the Contractor has failed to meet the Contractor's professional obligations.

15.32 **Breach of Terms by the Corporation.** The Contractor may immediately terminate this Agreement upon giving written notice to the Company if the Company is in breach of any of the terms or conditions of this Contract without the express consent of the Contractor.

16.32 **Winding-up, Bankruptcy, or Insolvency of a Party.** This Agreement may be immediately terminated by either Party upon written notice in the event of the winding-up, bankruptcy, or insolvency of a Party.

17.32 **Effect of Termination.** In the event that this Agreement is terminated for any reason, the Contractor shall be entitled to any portion of the Contractor Fees earned but not paid and, subject to Section [1.10](#), any expenses incurred by the Contractor but not reimbursed, in each case up to and including the date of termination.

NOTICES

18.32 **Delivery of Notice.** Any notice relating to, or required or permitted to be given in accordance with, this Agreement will be in writing and will be personally delivered, couriered, emailed or mailed as follows: (a) if to the Corporation, at its head office addressed to the President's attention; and (b) if to the Contractor, at the address set out on the signature page of this Agreement.

19.32 **Time of Delivery.** Any notice will be deemed to have been received: (a) if delivered, couriered, or emailed, on the next business day following when it is delivered; and (b) if mailed, on the fifth (5th) day (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and holidays) after it is mailed.



20.32 **Change of Address.** Each Party may change its address for the purpose of this [0](#) by delivering written notice of such change as set out in Section [1.18](#).

GENERAL

21.32 **Representation.** The Contractor represents and warrants to the Corporation that the Contractor's execution and delivery of, and performance of the obligations under, this Agreement does not and will not conflict with, breach, violate or cause a default under any contract, agreement, instrument, order, judgment or decree to which the Contractor is a party or by which the Contractor is bound.

22.32 **Equipment.** The Contractor agrees that all items the Corporation furnishes or provides to the Contractor and all of the Corporation's material and equipment used by the Contractor while engaged under this Agreement (collectively, the "**Corporation Property**") belong exclusively to the Corporation. The Contractor agrees to turn over to the Corporation all Corporation Property in his or her possession or under his or her control immediately at the Corporation's request or, in the absence of a request, upon the termination of this Agreement.

23.32 **Use of Equipment.** The Contractor shall not use any Corporation Property to access or store illegal material of any kind, including but not limited to material that might be considered pornographic or offensive to others working for the Corporation. All information stored on the Corporation Property is subject to review by any individual the Board designates and, except where such information is unrelated to the Corporation's business, is the Corporation's property. The Corporation is not responsible for the control of any personal information the Contractor places on the Corporation Property.

24.32 **Email.** If the Corporation provides the Contractor with an internet email address then the Contractor expressly acknowledges that such email address is not a personal or confidential address. None of the Contractor's email is confidential to him or her and the Corporation's management or any person the Board designates may review it at any time.

25.32 **Severability.** Each provision of this Agreement shall be legal, valid and enforceable to the fullest extent permitted by law. If a court of competent jurisdiction finds any provision of this Agreement or portion thereof to be void, invalid, illegal or unenforceable, the remainder of this Agreement or the application of such provision or portion thereof shall not be affected thereby.



26.32 **Amendments and Waiver.** This Agreement or any provisions may only be amended with both Parties' written consent. Any waiver must be in writing and any waiver of breach is not a waiver of any subsequent breach.

27.32 **Entire Agreement.** This Agreement supersedes all prior agreements, negotiations and discussions, whether oral, written or otherwise, between the Parties with respect to its subject-matter. This Agreement, together with the PIIA, contains the final and entire understanding and agreement between the Parties with respect to its subject-matter. The Parties will not be bound by any terms

conditions, statements, covenants, representations, or warranties, whether oral, written or otherwise, not contained in this Agreement or the PIIA with respect to its subject-matter.

28.32 **Governing Law.** This Agreement is governed and construed by the laws of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and the applicable federal laws of Canada, and the Parties will submit to the jurisdiction of the courts of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

29.32 **Assignment.** The Contractor may only assign this Agreement with the Corporation's express prior written consent. The Corporation may assign to another person or entity any of its rights under this Agreement, including, without limitation, any successor in interest to the Corporation or its business operations.

30.32 **Independent Legal Advice.** The Contractor acknowledges that the Contractor has obtained competent independent legal advice prior to executing this Agreement, or does not wish to seek or obtain such advice. The Contractor further agrees that the terms of this Agreement are reasonable and that the Contractor is signing this Agreement freely, voluntarily and without duress.

31.32 **Counterparts and Electronic Execution.** The Parties may execute this Agreement in counterparts and may execute and deliver this Agreement in electronic form that can create a printed copy. When signed, each counterpart will be deemed an original and together will constitute the same agreement.

32.32 **Protection of Intellectual Property.** The Corporation shall be the sole owner of all documents, reports, materials and other products and proceeds of the Services, in any material form or support whatsoever, including, but not limited to, all materials, ideas, concepts, formats, suggestions, developments, software, computer programs and other computer software (including, without limitation, all source and object codes, algorithms, architectures, structures, display screens, lay-out and development tools), database, design, plans, drawings, writings, brochures, website content, sales and advertising literature and other marketing materials, copyrightable material and other intellectual



property and any improvements thereon or derivative works or applications thereof and know-how related thereto (collectively, the “Intellectual Property”) that the Contractor may acquire, obtain, develop or create in connection with the services rendered in the performance of the Services, free and clear of any claims by the Contractor (or anyone claiming under or on his behalf) of any kind or character whatsoever. The Contractor agrees to disclose immediately to the Corporation or any person designated for such purpose the acquisition, development or creation of any Intellectual Property. The Contractor hereby assigns and agrees to assign in the future to the Corporation any and all rights, titles and interests in and to any Intellectual Property and all intellectual and industrial rights related thereto. The Contractor hereby irrevocably waives any and all moral rights in and to the Intellectual Property that he may have in each jurisdiction throughout the world.

The Contractor shall, at the request of the Corporation, execute such applications, assignments, certificates or other instruments as the Corporation may, from time to time, deem necessary or desirable to evidence, establish, maintain, perfect, protect, enforce or defend its right or title and interest in or to any Intellectual Property including, without limitation, as may be deemed necessary by the Corporation to apply for and obtain copyrights patents and/or other intellectual property rights in the name of the Corporation. The Contractor agrees to disclose immediately to the Corporation or any person designated for such purpose the acquisition, development or creation of any Intellectual Property.

[SIGNING PAGE FOLLOWS]



SIGNED as of the day and year first above written.

{**CORPORATION NAME**},

Per:

Name:

Title:

{**CONTRACTOR NAME**

CONTRACTOR ADDRESS FOR NOTICES:

{**contractor address**}

E-mail: {**contractor email**}



SCHEDULE "A"

Description of Services and Compensation

Description of Services:

The Services consist of:

{description of services}

Compensation:

The Corporation shall pay the Contractor a total gross sum of \$XXXX for the Services. This sum shall be paid in weekly installments of \$XXX per week. The first weekly installment shall be paid on DATE and every [X]day thereafter.