



Request for Proposal (RFP)

Trade & Investment Vancouver Island Website Development

Issued by: [Vancouver Island Economic Alliance \(VIEA\)](#)

Issue Date: August 19th, 2026

Proposal Submission Deadline: September 15th, 2026 at 5:00pm PST

Version 1.0



Project Overview.....	3
Supporting Vancouver Island Businesses.....	3
Project Objectives.....	4
Scope of Services.....	5
Discovery.....	5
Information Architecture.....	6
Website Design.....	7
Website Development.....	8
Home.....	8
Why Vancouver Island.....	8
Priority Sectors.....	8
Communities.....	9
Indigenous Partnerships.....	9
Data & Intelligence.....	9
Trade Resources.....	9
Team Vancouver Island.....	10
News & Insights.....	10
Contact.....	10
SEO & GEO (AI Search) Foundation.....	10
Creative Assets & Marketing Storytelling.....	11
Project Assumptions & VIEA Responsibilities.....	11
Content Migration.....	13
Content Management System.....	14
Future Scalability.....	15
Deliverables.....	16
Warranty & Post-Launch Support.....	18
Ownership & Intellectual Property.....	19
Timeline.....	20
Budget.....	20
Proposal Requirements.....	21
Evaluation Criteria.....	22



Project Overview

The Vancouver Island Economic Alliance (VIEA), acting as the convener of **Trade & Investment Vancouver Island (TIVI)**, is seeking proposals from qualified web development firms to design, develop, and launch a new Trade & Investment Vancouver Island digital platform.

The website will serve as the primary regional gateway for investment, trade, supply chain development, and strategic economic partnerships across Vancouver Island.

The platform is intended to present a coordinated regional investment story while connecting investors, businesses, governments, Indigenous Nations, and strategic partners with the appropriate organizations throughout the region.

The website is not intended to replace existing partner websites. Rather, it will complement them by serving as the regional front door that directs visitors to the appropriate community, organization, or sector partner.

The successful proponent will create a modern, visually compelling, and easy-to-manage website that establishes the foundation for future growth while remaining achievable within the current project budget.

The project will be managed by a designated VIEA project lead who will coordinate stakeholder input and provide consolidated feedback on behalf of the project team. Agencies will not be expected to coordinate approvals across multiple partner organizations.

Supporting Vancouver Island Businesses

As part of its broader economic development mandate, VIEA is committed to supporting Vancouver Island businesses wherever practical. Proponents with an established presence on Vancouver Island, or who demonstrate meaningful collaboration with Vancouver Island-based firms as part of their project team, are encouraged to identify this within their proposal. While this is one factor in the evaluation process, VIEA will also consider overall project quality, experience, value, and the long-term success of the proposed solution.



Project Objectives

The website should:

- Position Vancouver Island as Canada's Pacific Industrial Coast and a globally competitive location for investment, innovation, trade, and business growth
- Communicate a coordinated regional investment narrative while respecting the unique roles of communities, Indigenous Nations, industry organizations, and regional partners
- Showcase Vancouver Island's competitive advantages, strategic sectors, infrastructure, workforce, and economic opportunities
- Support domestic and international investment attraction
- Strengthen visibility of Vancouver Island businesses and supply chain capabilities
- Provide a clear pathway for prospective investors and businesses to connect with the appropriate regional partner
- Serve as the public-facing digital platform for Team Vancouver Island
- Create a scalable digital foundation capable of supporting future enhancements
- Position Vancouver Island as Canada's Pacific Industrial Coast and a globally competitive location for investment, innovation, trade, and business growth
- Communicate a coordinated regional investment narrative while respecting the unique roles of communities, Indigenous Nations, industry organizations, and regional partners
- Function as an active marketing and lead-generation tool for investment attraction - optimized for both traditional search engines (SEO) and AI-driven answer engines (GEO), which investors and site selectors increasingly rely on for research

While this RFP outlines VIEA's current vision and requirements for the platform, proponents are encouraged to recommend alternative approaches where they believe they will improve usability, long-term maintainability, performance, or overall project value. Any recommended alternatives should clearly identify the rationale, benefits, and any associated impacts on scope, budget, or timeline.



Scope of Services

The successful proponent will be responsible for all aspects of website planning, design, development, testing, launch, and training.

The website should be approached as an active marketing and investment-attraction tool (not simply a digital brochure). Search engine optimization (SEO) and Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) for AI-driven search (e.g. ChatGPT, Perplexity, AI Overviews) should be treated as core requirements woven through discovery, information architecture, design, and development, rather than a setup task addressed only at launch.

Services will include, but are not limited to:

Discovery

- Project kickoff
- Review of existing websites
- Review of existing branding and communications materials
- Review of existing technical infrastructure, hosting environment, domain configuration, analytics, and relevant third-party integrations
- Identify project assumptions, dependencies, risks, and constraints to inform project planning and implementation
- Stakeholder consultation with the VIEA project team
- Website architecture recommendations
- Navigation planning
- User journey development



Information Architecture

Develop an intuitive information architecture that reflects the priorities of Trade & Investment Vancouver Island while remaining easy to navigate for multiple audiences.

The successful proponent will develop a proposed sitemap and navigation structure for review and approval prior to design and development. The information architecture should consolidate relevant content from the existing [TIVI](#), [FTZVI](#), and [VIEA](#) websites while identifying opportunities to simplify navigation, reduce duplication, and improve the overall user experience.

Primary audiences include:

- International investors
- Domestic investors
- Businesses
- Industry
- Site selectors
- Government
- Indigenous Nations
- Economic development organizations
- Strategic partners



Website Design

Design a custom website that reflects the Team Vancouver Island brand and conveys a modern, professional investment attraction platform.

The design should:

- Establish a modern, credible visual identity appropriate for investors, industry, government, Indigenous Nations, and strategic partners
- Highlight Vancouver Island's natural, industrial, and economic strengths through high-quality imagery and visual storytelling
- Be responsive across desktop, tablet, and mobile devices
- Meet WCAG 2.2 AA accessibility standards
- Prioritize usability, readability, and clear calls to action
- Include a reusable design system consisting of page templates, typography, colour palette, buttons, cards, icons, and other interface components to support consistent future content creation
- Support the website's role as a marketing and storytelling tool, structuring page content, headings, and imagery in ways that strengthen both search engine (SEO) and AI answer engine (GEO) visibility
- Support future expansion without requiring significant redesign or redevelopment



Website Development

Develop the website using an open-source Content Management System (WordPress preferred unless another platform offers compelling advantages).

WordPress is the preferred Content Management System for this project. Proponents recommending an alternative platform must clearly demonstrate equivalent or greater ease of content management, long-term sustainability, security, accessibility, and portability of the website and its content.

The completed website should follow current industry best practices for performance, security, and search engine optimization, including page speed optimization, image optimization, SSL implementation, XML sitemap generation, metadata management, and appropriate spam protection for public-facing forms.

The website should include:

Home

- Hero banner
- Primary value proposition
- Featured sectors
- Regional statistics
- Calls to action
- Latest news

Why Vancouver Island

- Regional overview
- Competitive advantages
- Infrastructure
- Workforce
- Transportation
- Quality of life



Priority Sectors

Dedicated pages for sectors such as:

- Marine & Ocean Innovation
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Technology & Innovation
- Food Systems
- Clean Energy
- Transportation & Logistics

Defence and aerospace content should be integrated throughout relevant sectors rather than presented as a standalone industry.

Communities

Integration of existing community profiles from VIEA.

Future updates to community profiles are outside the scope of this project.

Indigenous Partnerships

Pages highlighting participating Indigenous Nations and Economic Development Corporations, with links to partner websites and approved content.

Data & Intelligence

Integration of existing content including:

- Economic maps
- Regional statistics
- Economic reports
- Supply Chain Study
- Dashboard launch page
- Additional research publications



Trade Resources

Migration and integration of relevant content from the existing FTZ Vancouver Island website including:

- Trade supports
- Export resources
- Foreign Trade Zone information
- Government programs
- Logistics information

Team Vancouver Island

A dedicated section describing the Team Vancouver Island initiative.

This section should include:

- Overview of the initiative
- VIEA's role as convener
- Team Vancouver Island story
- Partner logo wall (25+ organizations)
- Short descriptions of partner organizations
- Links to partner websites

News & Insights

Simple news management capability for:

- News articles
- Reports
- Announcements
- Events

Contact

Simple inquiry form directing visitors to the appropriate regional contact.



SEO & GEO (AI Search) Foundation

To support the website's role as an investment-attraction and marketing tool, the build should include a technical SEO and GEO (AI-driven search) foundation covering:

- Metadata architecture and schema markup (Organization, sector/service pages) for both traditional search engines and AI answer engines
- Structuring investor and sector content for AI answer engines (ChatGPT, Perplexity, AI Overviews): entity clarity, FAQ schema, an llms.txt file, and citation-friendly page structure
- Regional and local SEO: Google Business Profile optimization for TIVI, geo-targeted landing pages for priority sectors and communities, and local citation cleanup across the VIEA/FTZVI/TIVI consolidation
- Investor and sector keyword strategy: keyword mapping and on-page content guidance for priority sector pages, aligned to how site selectors and investors actually search
- Canonical/redirect QA and Core Web Vitals tuning beyond baseline page-speed setup

Creative Assets & Marketing Storytelling

- Photography direction and optimization: art direction/curation of existing and new regional imagery, web-ready processing, responsive image sets, and alt-text/image schema for SEO
- Videography integration and optimization: hero/sector video embedding strategy, compression and adaptive delivery, hosting/CDN approach, and video schema for search visibility
- A creative asset system: sector iconography/graphics, social and Open Graph share images, and data-visualization templates for regional statistics and reports



Project Assumptions & VIEA Responsibilities

To support the successful delivery of the project, VIEA will:

- Provide existing branding assets, content, imagery, and documentation required for the project
- Identify and prioritize content to be migrated from existing websites
- Consolidate stakeholder feedback and provide a single coordinated response through the designated project lead
- Review and provide feedback on deliverables within agreed project timelines
- Supply new or revised content where identified as outside the agreed migration scope
- Coordinate access to existing hosting, domains, analytics platforms, and other relevant systems where required

Project timelines assume timely review and approval by VIEA. Delays in approvals, content delivery, or access to required systems may require corresponding adjustments to the project schedule.



Content Migration

The successful proponent will migrate content identified by VIEA from the existing [VIEA.ca](#), [FTZVI.ca](#), and [TIVI.ca](#) websites into the new platform.

As part of the migration process, the proponent should recommend opportunities to consolidate duplicate content, simplify navigation, and improve the overall user experience while preserving the intent of approved content.

The project does not include comprehensive copywriting or large-scale content redevelopment. VIEA will provide new or revised content where required.

The proponent should implement an appropriate URL redirect strategy for migrated content to minimize broken links and preserve search engine performance where practical.



Content Management System

The website must allow VIEA staff to easily:

- Add pages
- Edit content
- Upload reports
- Add news
- Manage partner logos
- Update sector information
- Create redirects
- Manage images

The CMS should prioritize the use of native platform functionality and widely supported plugins wherever practical. Custom development should be modular, well documented, and avoid unnecessary dependencies on proprietary tools or code that would make future maintenance or vendor transitions difficult.

The website should support multiple user roles with appropriate permissions, allowing VIEA staff to manage content securely without requiring administrative access for routine updates.

No coding knowledge should be required.



Future Scalability

While the current budget is intended to deliver an information-rich website rather than a complex web application, the platform should be architected to accommodate future enhancements without significant redevelopment.

The proposed solution should emphasize a modular, standards-based architecture that allows future functionality to be added incrementally without requiring significant restructuring of the website or migration to a new platform. Where future integrations are anticipated, proponents should identify any architectural considerations or recommendations that would support long-term scalability.

Future capabilities may include:

- Interactive mapping
- GIS integration
- Community profile database
- Industrial land inventory
- Supplier directories
- CRM integration
- Investment opportunity database
- Procurement portal
- Multilingual content
- Economic Dashboard API integration
- User accounts
- Secure partner portals

These features are **not** part of the current scope but should be considered during the design and architecture of the platform.



Deliverables

The successful proponent will provide:

- Discovery workshop
- Website architecture
- Wireframes
- Final website design
- Fully functioning CMS
- Responsive website
- Development, staging, and production environments, including deployment of the website to the production hosting environment.
- Comprehensive pre-launch testing, including browser compatibility, mobile responsiveness, form functionality, link validation, and quality assurance across all major page templates.
- Content migration
- Testing and quality assurance
- Accessibility review
- Technical SEO foundation (metadata architecture, schema markup, canonical/redirect QA, Core Web Vitals tuning)
- GEO / AI search optimization (entity clarity, FAQ schema, llms.txt, citation-friendly page structure)
- Regional and local SEO, including Google Business Profile optimization and geo-targeted sector/community landing pages
- Investor and sector keyword strategy and on-page content briefs
- Photography direction and optimization, and videography integration and optimization
- A creative asset system (sector iconography, social/Open Graph share images, data-visualization templates)
- Post-launch SEO/GEO monitoring for 90 days following launch, with ranking/visibility reporting and one round of optimization adjustment
- Google Analytics configuration
- Google Search Console configuration and submission of XML sitemaps.
- Verification that all public inquiry forms, email notifications, spam protection measures, and automated workflows are functioning correctly within the production environment at the time of launch.
- Staff training



- Website launch
- Technical documentation



Warranty & Post-Launch Support

Proponents should include a post-launch warranty period during which defects identified after launch will be corrected at no additional cost.

Proposals should clearly identify:

- The length of the warranty period.
- Expected response times for critical issues.
- The process for reporting and resolving defects.
- Any ongoing website maintenance or support services available following the warranty period, including associated costs where applicable.

VIEA anticipates managing routine website updates internally but is interested in understanding the proponent's approach to long-term technical support, security updates, and future enhancements.

Ownership & Intellectual Property

Upon final payment, VIEA will retain ownership of all website designs, source code, content, graphics, documentation, and other project deliverables created specifically for this project.

The successful proponent will provide all necessary administrative access, credentials, and documentation required for VIEA to independently manage the website following launch.

Any third-party themes, plugins, fonts, stock imagery, software licences, or subscription services incorporated into the solution must be clearly identified within the proposal, including any ongoing licensing or renewal costs that will be the responsibility of VIEA.



Timeline

RFP Issued:	August 2026
Proponent Selected:	Late September 2026
Project Kickoff:	Late September 2026
Website Architecture & Design:	September - October 2026
Beta Website Launch:	October 2026 (prior to the VIEA Summit)
<i>The beta launch should include all major navigation, branding, core pages, and essential content, allowing the website to be publicly demonstrated during the Summit while remaining clearly identified as an evolving platform.</i>	
Content Refinement & Final Development:	October–December 2026
Final Website Launch:	January 2027

Budget

The total available budget for this project is **up to \$28,750 CAD**, inclusive of all design, development, content migration, SEO and GEO research and integration,testing, training, and launch activities.

VIEA is seeking a practical, high-value solution that emphasizes excellent user experience, thoughtful information architecture, strong visual design, and ease of long-term maintenance over complex custom functionality.



Proposal Requirements

Proposals should include, at a minimum:

- Agency overview and relevant experience.
- Examples of comparable website projects, particularly those involving economic development, investment attraction, government, nonprofit, or regional partnerships.
- Proposed project approach and methodology.
- Proposed project team and key roles.
- Preliminary project timeline and major milestones.
- Detailed cost breakdown, including any optional services or assumptions.
- Description of the proposed CMS and technical approach.
- Any third-party software, plugins, licences, or ongoing subscription costs required to support the solution.
- Warranty and post-launch support offerings.
- Two or more client references for comparable projects.



Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated using a combination of the following criteria:

Criteria	Approximate Weight
Relevant experience and portfolio	20%
Understanding of the project and proposed approach	20%
Information architecture, design, and user experience	20%
Technical solution and long-term maintainability	20%
Vancouver Island presence and contribution to the regional economy	15%
Project cost and overall value	5%
References and demonstrated ability to deliver comparable projects	5%

VIEA reserves the right to interview shortlisted proponents, request clarifications, negotiate scope where appropriate, and accept or reject any proposal in whole or in part.