

Request for Proposals (RFP)

External Evaluation of the Future Leaders Education Portfolio

Issued by: Biosphere Institute of the Bow Valley

Proposal Budget: \$7,000–\$9,000 CAD

Relevant Timeline:

- September 1, 2026: Proposal due date
 - September 4, 2026: Successful evaluator notified
 - September 11th, 2026: Contract drafted and signed by both parties
 - September 25th, 2026: Detailed evaluation and interview plan, complete with contact names and deliverables, delivered by the selected evaluator
 - October 2026 - May 2027: Detailed program evaluation conducted
 - June 2027: Contract end, final program evaluation presented and submitted
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About the Biosphere Institute

The Biosphere Institute of the Bow Valley is a registered charity dedicated to empowering environmental stewardship through education and community action. Our Future Leaders programs inspire young people to understand, appreciate, and care for the ecosystems and communities of the Canadian Rockies through meaningful, place-based learning experiences.

The Future Leaders portfolio currently includes:

- **Future Leaders** – curriculum-connected environmental education programming for Kindergarten through Grade 12 students.
- **Future Leaders Youth Council** – an after-school environmental leadership program for youth.
- **Ways of the Bison** – our flagship experiential learning program exploring the ecological, cultural, and historical significance of bison through interdisciplinary learning and

collaboration with Indigenous partners and Knowledge Keepers. The program is concluding its current three-year funding cycle from the National Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), creating an ideal opportunity to evaluate its impacts and inform future growth.

Additional information about these programs can be found at:

- www.biosphereinstitute.org/futureleaders
- www.biosphereinstitute.org/future-leaders-youth-council
- www.biosphereinstitute.org/ways-of-the-bison

Project Overview

The Biosphere Institute invites proposals from experienced evaluators to conduct a comprehensive external evaluation of the Future Leaders education portfolio.

We are seeking an evaluator who can serve as both an objective assessor and a thoughtful strategic partner—someone who can help us understand not only whether our programs are achieving their intended outcomes, but how they can evolve to maximize their long-term impact.

The evaluation should examine the effectiveness of the portfolio as a whole while also providing an assessment of the **Ways of the Bison** program at the conclusion of its three-year funding cycle through NSERC.

This evaluation will inform future program planning, organizational strategy, funding applications, communications, and partnerships.

Beyond measuring outcomes, we hope this evaluation tells the story of how Future Leaders is influencing young people, educators, and communities. We are looking for an evaluator who will help us identify our strengths, challenge our assumptions, and provide thoughtful recommendations that position Future Leaders to thrive for years to come.

Evaluation Objectives

The successful evaluator will help the Biosphere Institute answer the following questions.

1. Program Efficacy

How effective are our programs in achieving their intended educational outcomes?

Areas of interest include:

- What knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours are participants developing?
- How are students applying their learning beyond the program?
- Are intended learning outcomes being achieved?
- Which program components appear to have the greatest impact?
- How does impact differ across age groups and program types?
- What evidence exists for longer-term stewardship or pro-environmental behaviour?

Note: student participant interview requests must first be coordinated with approval from the school's administration and teaching staff. Our staff will facilitate this approval process.

2. Educator and Partner Perspectives

We would like to better understand the experiences of educators and community partners.

Questions may include:

- What aspects of the programs do teachers value most?
- What would teachers like to experience more or less of?
- How well do programs support curriculum outcomes?
- How do Indigenous partners, volunteers, and collaborators view the quality of our work?
- What barriers exist to participation or implementation?

3. Indigenous Education and Ethical Practice

As environmental education increasingly intersects with Indigenous knowledge systems, we wish to ensure our work is respectful, reciprocal, and appropriate.

The evaluation should consider questions such as:

- Are Indigenous perspectives represented accurately and respectfully?
- Are relationships with Indigenous communities and Knowledge Keepers being approached in ethical and reciprocal ways?

- Are we educating *with* Indigenous communities rather than simply *about* them?
- Where are opportunities to strengthen authenticity, relationship-building, and reconciliation within Future Leaders?

Note for applicants: Experience evaluating Indigenous education initiatives or working collaboratively with Indigenous communities is considered an asset.

4. Strategic Assessment

We are seeking an objective assessment of the Future Leaders portfolio through a strategic lens.

This assessment may include:

- A SWOT analysis identifying organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
- How the Future Leaders program connects with and amplifies other dimensions of the Biosphere Institute's programming (WildSmart, ClimateSmart, Community Hub)
- Identification of emerging opportunities in environmental education.
- Program sustainability and long-term resilience.
- Opportunities for innovation and growth.
- Recommendations for strengthening program alignment across the Future Leaders portfolio.
- Recommendations for the future direction of Ways of the Bison following completion of its current funding cycle (ending December 2026).

5. Communications and Digital Engagement

The evaluation should also assess how effectively Future Leaders engages audiences through its communications channels.

This review may include:

- Website effectiveness
- Newsletter performance
- Instagram engagement
- Audience reach and engagement
- User experience

- Content effectiveness
- Calls-to-action and conversion opportunities
- Recommendations for strengthening digital engagement

Where possible, recommendations should be informed by available analytics and comparable best practices.

Scope of Practice

While applicants are encouraged to recommend their preferred methodology, proposals should address how they would undertake activities such as:

- Review of existing program documentation and evaluation materials
- Development of an evaluation framework
- Interviews with staff, teachers, administrators, Indigenous partners, volunteers, funders, and other stakeholders (with sensitivity to their limited time and availability)
- Focus groups with youth participants where appropriate
- Student feedback collection
- Classroom or program observations (optional)
- Review of digital analytics and communications metrics
- Analysis and synthesis of qualitative and quantitative data
- Strategic assessment of the overall Future Leaders portfolio

The successful evaluator is encouraged to recommend additional methods that would strengthen the evaluation.

Deliverables

In order of importance, successful consultant will provide:

- (Most important) Assessment of educational effectiveness and participant outcomes
- Review of Indigenous education practices and recommendations
- A comprehensive final report summarizing findings including recommendations
- Executive summary suitable for Board members and funders
- Presentation of findings to Biosphere Institute staff and Board (virtual or in person)

- (Nice to have, less important) Recommended interview process and methodology (e.g. focus group, online surveys, interviews) including recommended frequency, timing and content to be implemented going forward to further monitor program impact
- (Nice to have, less important) Review of communications and digital engagement

Desired Qualifications

Preference will be given to evaluators with demonstrated experience in one or more of the following:

- Program evaluation
- Environmental education
- Outdoor education
- Place-based learning
- Indigenous education and engagement
- Youth development
- Non-profit organizations
- Strategic planning
- Communications and digital engagement analysis

Experience designing mixed-method evaluations and translating findings into practical recommendations is highly desirable.

Budget

The available budget for this project is **\$7,000–\$9,000 CAD**, inclusive of consultant fees, GST, and expenses.

Proponents are encouraged to describe how they would maximize value within this budget and identify any optional components that could be added should additional funding become available.

Proposal Requirements

Please include:

- Cover letter
- Description of your proposed evaluation approach and methodology
- Relevant experience and qualifications
- Examples of similar evaluation projects
- Proposed timeline
- Budget
- Names and contact information for two references

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Understanding of the project
- Quality and appropriateness of the proposed methodology
- Relevant experience, particularly for working with Indigenous communities
- Understanding of environmental and Indigenous education
- Ability to provide practical, actionable recommendations
- Value for cost