

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Destination Branding
CNSTDS-2026-02

Issued By: Central Nova Scotia Tourism Development Society

Issue Date: August 14, 2026

Submission Deadline: September 4, 2026

Anticipated Project Start: September 25, 2026

Introduction

The Central Nova Scotia Tourism Development Society (CNSTDS) is seeking proposals from qualified agencies with demonstrated expertise in developing and delivering authentic, compelling destination brands. As a newly established non-profit tourism destination marketing organization (DMO), CNSTDS requires a brand reflecting our region's story, history, assets, and strategy.

The CNSTDS is governed in part by an established Strategic Tourism Expansion Program (STEP), which was developed to enhance the visitor economy throughout Colchester County and assist the region in reaching its full potential as a thriving tourism destination through positive partnerships and actions. Learn more about the CNSTDS and the STEP [here](#).

CNSTDS assumed stewardship of the Explore Central NS brand and website earlier this year and is seeking to evolve Explore Central NS into a cohesive, research-informed, and regionally aligned consumer-facing destination brand. This exercise is intended to establish the identity used to market Central Nova Scotia to visitors and does not necessarily contemplate a change to the corporate identity or name of CNSTDS. The exercise should consider and recommend the appropriate relationship between CNSTDS, as the region's DMO, and the consumer-facing destination brand, including how the CNSTDS identity should be represented within public-facing tourism marketing. The resulting destination brand will provide a unified foundation for future marketing and promotion and inform a future website redevelopment initiative.

The selected proponent will work closely with CNSTDS' Executive Director and a small Brand Development Working Group established by the CNSTDS Board to provide input and guidance at key stages of the project. The full Board will retain responsibility for approval at key project milestones.

Organizational Context

The CNSTDS is the official destination marketing organization (DMO) for Central Nova Scotia, serving Colchester County, the Town of Truro, the Town of Stewiacke, and Millbrook First Nation.

CNSTDS is responsible for:

- promoting Central Nova Scotia as a competitive, year-round tourism destination
- supporting the growth and sustainability of the regional tourism sector
- investing strategically in events, experiences, and destination development
- aligning regional tourism priorities with provincial strategies

CNSTDS currently operates under the Explore Central NS brand, which will be assessed, refined, evolved, or potentially replaced through this RFP process.

Objectives

To establish a strong, authentic consumer-facing destination brand that reflects Central Nova Scotia's identity, values, and experiences. The resulting brand should demonstrate alignment with STEP findings and identified themes, stakeholder relevance and adoption potential, and usability across digital and marketing applications.

Scope of Work

The proponent will lead a destination branding exercise that includes:

- brand discovery and stakeholder engagement. CNSTDS will facilitate access to key stakeholders. Proponents should outline their recommended approach (e.g., interviews, workshops, surveys) and assumed level of engagement.
- destination brand positioning and value proposition
- brand narrative, tone, and messaging framework
- destination brand values and personality
- evaluation of brand architecture, including the current Explore Central NS brand and the relationship between the consumer-facing destination brand and CNSTDS as the destination marketing organization, with recommendations for how the CNSTDS identity should be represented within public-facing tourism marketing
- digital footprint assessment, including review of existing destination web presence, third-party listings, and discoverability opportunities, with recommendations to improve alignment, visibility, and consistency across platforms.

- experience-based storytelling framework aligned with STEP destination themes and visitor narratives
- guidance on how destination themes should be translated into digital content structure, navigation, and campaign storytelling
- visual identity development, including: logo and supporting marks, colour palette, typography, graphic elements and visual system
- comprehensive brand guidelines
- core marketing and digital brand assets, with proponents asked to identify the specific assets and templates included within their proposed scope
- review, organization, and development of a centralized digital asset library incorporating our region's existing photography, video, graphics from tourism operators and partners, and other marketing assets, as well as new brand assets developed through this project. The library should include a practical folder structure, file-naming conventions, and categorization/tagging approach to support efficient ongoing use by CNSTDS.
- digital brand mapping and implementation considerations

This RFP does not include website design or development. Digital recommendations are intended to inform a future website RFP and should remain strategic in nature.

Deliverables

At a minimum, the expected project deliverables are as follows:

- Destination Brand Strategy, including positioning, value proposition, brand narrative, brand values/personality, messaging framework, brand architecture recommendations including the recommended relationship between CNSTDS and the consumer-facing destination brand, and alignment with STEP destination themes
- Complete Visual Identity System, including primary and secondary logo/marks, colour palette, typography, graphic elements, and supporting visual system
- Comprehensive Brand Guidelines
- Final Brand and Digital Asset Library, incorporating existing and newly developed photography, video, graphics, brand assets, and other marketing materials, organized using an agreed-upon folder structure, naming convention, and categorization system
- Digital Brand and Content Recommendations to inform CNSTDS' future website redevelopment, including recommendations related to destination themes, content structure, storytelling, discoverability, and brand consistency across digital platforms
- presentations to the Brand Development Working Group and/or CNSTDS Board at key project milestones

- Clear identification of key decision points, approval stages, and anticipated revision cycles
- Transfer of all final digital assets and working/source files to CNSTDS

Ownership of Deliverables and Other Materials

All reports, creative assets, data, designs, and digital materials produced through this project shall become the property of the Central Nova Scotia Tourism Development Society upon final payment. The selected proponent shall provide CNSTDS with all final production-ready and editable/source files necessary for unrestricted future use of the brand. Any third-party licensed assets, fonts, photography, software, or other materials that cannot be transferred to CNSTDS must be clearly identified in the proposal.

Budget and Phasing

Proponents must provide:

- project budget; total project cost
- clear cost breakdown by project and phase
- identification of any optional or modular elements

The anticipated budget range for this project is \$35,000–\$50,000, inclusive of professional fees, travel and other disbursements, and excluding applicable taxes. Proponents are encouraged to distinguish between core (required) and optional or modular components to provide CNSTDS flexibility in final scope and project phasing. CNSTDS reserves the right to negotiate the final scope and corresponding fee with the selected proponent.

Proposal Submission Requirements

All proposals must include the following:

- proponent overview and relevant experience
- proposed methodology and work plan
- project team and roles
- development and implementation timelines and key milestones
- relevant case studies
- examples of proponent's past work
- detailed budget and fee structure including itemization and explanation of all costs
- references

Evaluation Criteria – Proposal Assessment

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

Criterion	Weight
Methodology, understanding and approach	25%
Destination branding experience & relevant past work	20%
Proposed team	10%
Digital/content capability & proposed assets	20%
Work plan, timeline & feasibility	10%
Value for proposed fee	10%
References	5%
Total	100%

CNSTDS may invite one or more proponents to participate in a follow-up discussion or interview prior to final selection.

Anticipated Timeline

CNSTDS anticipates the full scope of work may be completed over a period of three (3) to four (4) months, subject to Board approvals at key milestones. Proponents are encouraged to recommend timelines aligned with their methodology, including phased or staged delivery where appropriate.

RFP Rights

CNSTDS reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, to negotiate with the successful proponent, and to cancel or modify this RFP at any time without obligation.

Proposal Deadline, Evaluation and Selection Dates

Briefing Discussion and Other Inquiries	By email to CNSTDS' Executive Director, Nick Sharpe executivedirector@cnstds.ca
Proposal Deadline	No later than 4 p.m. ADT on September 4, 2026 Any proposal received after this date and time will be returned to the sender. All proposals must be signed by an official agent or representative of the organization submitting the proposal.
Presentation Format	PDF formatted document
Delivery	By email to CNSTDS' Executive Director, Nick Sharpe executivedirector@cnstds.ca
Evaluation Period	From September 4 to September 11, 2026.
Selection	By September 18, 2026. Selected proponent will be advised by email. All other proponents will be advised thereafter by email.