

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Cold Storage Business Plan

1. Project Overview

The Uchucklesaht Tribe Government (UTG) and Huu-ay-aht First Nations (HFN) invite all qualified professionals to submit a Proposal to deliver the Project Goal of an investment-ready Business Plan for a new commercial-scale cold storage facility in Port Alberni or the surrounding electoral areas within the Alberni Valley, on Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

Port Alberni, located in Central Vancouver Island at the head of the Alberni Inlet is recognized as one of Canada's major fishing hubs with a long history in both commercial and recreational fisheries. Additionally, the Alberni Valley has a long history in the agricultural sectors of growing high-quality produce as well as raising livestock. Despite this strategic position and rich, fertile agricultural land, the community currently lacks a modern, available commercial-scale cold storage facility to support the growth opportunities in fisheries, aquaculture and agriculture

While there is a cold storage facility within The Dock+ food hub, it has limited capacity and is primarily available only to tenants of that facility. The lack of a broadly available, commercial-scale cold storage infrastructure limits opportunities for local fishers, farmers, processors, and First Nations, who must seek storage options outside the region. With increasing demand for cold storage throughout the region and Port Alberni's advantageous location, a facility would serve not only the city but also surrounding coastal communities such as Bamfield, Tofino, and Ucluelet as well as, potentially, the growing agricultural activities in nearby Whiskey Creek, Coombs and Errington, which are located within only 30 kms to the east of Port Alberni. The establishment of a cold storage facility will not only support growth and strengthen the fishing and agricultural industries' competitiveness but also create direct employment opportunities in Port Alberni and surrounding communities, while providing further positive impact for broader regional economic diversification while also providing much-needed local resiliency for food security and logistics disruptions as recently experienced by the 2023 Cameron Lake wildfire that effectively closed the only food transportation link to Port Alberni and west coast communities for months.

2. Project Goal

To deliver an investment-ready Business Plan that provides clear financial modeling and an implementation roadmap necessary to establish a commercial-scale cold storage facility in Port



**Uchucklesaht Tribe
Government**



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Alberni to support the area's fishing, aquaculture and agriculture sectors and broader regional economic development.

3. Partnership Model

UTG and HFN are members of the Maa-Nulth Treaty and among the shareholders of the Nuuchah-Nulth Seafoods LP, which owns such brands as St. Jean's Cannery and Gratitude Seafoods. UTG and HFN often collaborate on various issues of joint interest, including fisheries and economic development. Given both parties' investments, interests and economic development goals that include growth in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, as well as the potential in community agriculture, UTG and HFN have come together to explore the opportunity that would serve their communities, and the community at large, by investment in a commercial scale cold storage facility. The envisioned Business Plan would include investigation into potential best practices ownership and operational models for consideration by UTG and HFN.

4. Scope of Work

A. Objectives

- Quantify regional demand for cold storage services, particularly for Port Alberni and Alberni Valley.
- Assess infrastructure, site options, and logistical advantages of Port Alberni and surrounding electoral districts within the Alberni Valley.
- Analyze economic, social, and cultural benefits for local communities and First Nations in the region.
- Develop a sustainable business model, governance and ownership options, and financial plan.

B. Key Tasks

1. Market Analysis

- Current and projected demand from fishers, growers, processors, and buyers.
- Benchmarking against other BC coastal cold storage facilities.



2. Stakeholder Engagement

- Consultations with areas First Nations (HFN, UTG, Tseshaht, Hupacasath, Ucluelet, etc.).
- Discussions with local seafood companies, agricultural producers, industry associations, and government agencies including City of Port Alberni and Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District.
- Outreach to local social services organizations such as food banks and seniors' groups

3. Technical & Infrastructure Assessment

- Evaluation of potential sites in Port Alberni and nearby areas within the Alberni Valley.
- Technical requirements: property zoning, capacity, equipment, energy, future expansion options.

4. Economic & Financial Analysis

- Capital and operating cost estimates.
- Revenue projections, utilization scenarios, pricing models.
- Funding and partnership opportunities.
- Labor market analysis to estimate direct jobs (construction, facility operations, management, maintenance) and indirect jobs (fisheries, logistics, value-added seafood processing)

5. Governance & Operating Models

- Explore ownership/management options: private, co-op, First Nation joint venture, etc.

6. Risk & Opportunity Analysis

- **Risks:** market fluctuations, climate change, regulations, financial, etc.
- **Opportunities:** food security, aquaculture, value-added seafood processing, agriculture, food and beverage manufacturing, etc.

7. Business Plan Development

- Financial model, operating structure, phasing, and implementation strategy.
- Clear recommendations as next steps and an implementation strategy.

5. Expected Outcomes of Business Plan

- Clear estimate of capital and operating costs for facility development.
- Financial projections including revenue forecasts, ROI, payback period, and sensitivity analysis.
- Evidence-based market validation of cold storage demand in Port Alberni and surrounding regions.
- Comparative analysis of governance/ownership models (e.g., joint venture, co-op, private operation).
- High-level assessment of regional economic benefits for First Nations, fishers, agricultural producers, food and beverage manufacturers, Port Alberni and surrounding area.
- A business plan that is investment-ready and suitable for funding applications and partnership discussions.
- Job creation estimates with number of short-term jobs during construction and long-term employment opportunities in facility operations, logistics and related industries.

6. Deliverables

- **Business Plan** (market, technical, financial, governance analysis operating model, financial projections, implementation roadmap).
- **Executive Summary** for decision-makers and funders.

7. Project Timeline

The study is anticipated to take approximately 4–6 months from funding approval to completion.

8. Budget

All proposals will be evaluated on a *best value for money* approach.



Therefore, all proposals must include a detailed budget and work plan that clearly demonstrates how their proposal will best achieve the scope and deliverables of the project.

*Note the business plan would not include site engineering, utility assessment, construction pre-design and technical modeling for the refrigeration system. This would come as a next phase of the pre-implementation plan.

9. Contact

All project proposals to be submitted by email to:

Dave McCormick, MBA: Economic Development Manager
Uchucklesaht Tribe Government
David.mccormick@uchucklesaht.ca

10. Deadline

All project proposals must be submitted by email by October 3, 2025 at 4:30pm Pacific

11. Rights and Reservations

This project is dependent on achieving successful funding.

The issuing parties reserve the right to amend, adjust or cancel the project in any part or in whole at any time without notice.

The issuing parties reserve the right to select or reject any proposal for any reason at any time.

