

## Request for Proposals

### ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS DIGITIZING STRATEGY CONSULTANCY CONTRACT

#### 1. Purpose of the Request for Proposals

Royal Botanical Gardens is seeking a contractor to write a digitizing strategy suitable for our extensive archival collections. This digitizing strategy will be an important component of an overall planning framework for both analogue and digital assets and collections at RBG.

This request for proposals is to invite prospective suppliers to submit their quotes for the described services. This information is considered confidential, and any information provided to Royal Botanical Gardens will also be considered confidential. The successful contractor will be selected on the basis of the evaluation criteria listed below.

Royal Botanical Gardens is Canada's largest botanical garden on the basis of its land holdings (approximately 1,000 ha). Located in Hamilton and Burlington, Ontario, RBG was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation in 1941 with the objectives of developing and presenting excellence in public horticultural displays, protecting and restoring large, significant natural areas, undertaking research and development of management practices in horticulture and natural areas, and delivering public education on relevant subjects.

#### 2. Project Goals and Results

The required digitizing strategy is a written plan to guide the digitization of Royal Botanical Gardens analogue collections and assets and use and preservation of the digital assets once created. The scope of this strategy is to include RBG's archival assets (its own history and programs as a cultural agency), RBG collections related to the history of horticulture in Canada, and aspects of its Herbarium collection specifically relevant to cultural heritage. The strategy will outline the goals for future digitizing projects and provide direction on what collections and assets should be prioritized for conversion, as well as what digital format(s) they should take.

The primary anticipated outcome of creating and implementing the Digitizing Strategy is a quantitative and qualitative improvement in organizing the digitizing of our archival materials. The qualitative measure is an improvement in decision-making and prioritization of scanning and planning for use of the resulting scans for presentation, access and preservation purposes. This in turn will facilitate planning for all subsequent uses of the digitized materials, including bringing them into the input stream of RBG's planned Digital Asset Management System, as well as their potential use for special exhibits or presentations. The quantitative measure is the number of items in the archives collections that can be realistically scanned under the available resources relating to staffing, volunteer capacity, and physical facilities (scanners).

The technical requirements of the digitizing strategy should include outlining digitizing priorities developed in consultation with staff and will be influenced by potential for public interest, uniqueness/opportunity, object condition, and institutional need, as well as specifications for equipment or services RBG will require in order to achieve the goals of

the strategy. Staff will work extensively with the contractor on the characterization of the collections and to bring together recommendations related to all technical aspects as well as priorities regarding expected uses.

Recommendations should be included regarding potential for presentation of resulting digital assets (e.g., for exhibitions, programs, online content, etc.), and development of new digital content for similar uses. Considerations for rights and permissions, and financial and technical feasibility, should be included in reviews of the analogue assets themselves and their potential for use.

The current metadata schema for digitized archival material, information organization through file and folder structure, and controlled vocabularies will be examined and further developed. This will provide metadata structure for all digital objects that is consistent and robust.

The strategy will also include a detailed action plan for how the organization will execute this work, including needed resources (i.e., people, equipment, budget, timelines, policies, etc.), operational changes, or investments/capacity-building necessary.

### The Digitizing Strategy should address all aspects of Royal Botanical Gardens' Analogue Archival Collections

#### *1. RBG's Corporate Archive*

- Documents on the history of Royal Botanical Gardens itself, its Board of Directors, Predecessor Park Board, program offerings and developments. Approximately 140 meters of holdings
- Collections include photographs, slides, microfiche, some artworks, manuscript and print documents, some artefacts, and some large-scale technical drawings and plans

#### *2. Collections of the Centre for Canadian Historical Horticultural Studies at RBG*

- Collections documenting the history of horticulture in Canada,
- Collections include 30,000 horticulture and nursery trade catalogues, runs of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> C. horticulture publications, some manuscripts, photographs, and other materials associated with prominent horticulturists and landscape designers totally approximately 180 meters of holdings

#### *3. RBG Herbarium*

- Herbarium collection consisting of a total of 62,000 specimens serving both scientific and cultural heritage purposes. The present project is restricted to considerations of records relevant to cultural heritage which number less than 6,000 specimens

### **3. Notes for Proponents**

- Please include details of your approach to this project, the proposed cost of your services (including any details for travel or other expenses), and references in your submission, per the list of documents below.

- This project must be completed on schedule to accommodate the requirements of a grant. It is expected that work on the project will begin in early September 2022. Please let us know if you have any questions about the project timetable.
- In your submission, please include samples of past work and references for completed projects with other institutions that demonstrate success with other similar companies or projects.
- Please be sure to describe the technical skills and qualifications you bring to the project.

#### 4. Evaluation Criteria

- Proposals will be evaluated on the following basis:
  - Approach, details, and feasibility of project plan
  - Cost estimates
  - Meeting of technical requirements
  - Qualifications and history of similar projects

#### 5. Required Documents

- Written description of project and approach you would take
- Budget estimate
- Resume or CV of the company or the principals who will undertake the work
- List of references to completed similar projects with names and addresses of contacts
- Examples of at least two similar plans or strategies that can be shared with us

#### 6. Project Timeline

August 2022	Call for proposals circulated and contractor selected
September 2022	Project initiation - Contractor meets with RBG staff, including on-site, characterizes relevant collections; also meets with ICT staff
October 2022	Formulation of recommendations on equipment, timing, etc. One-day Workshop with users/staff on needs
November 2022	Delivery of preliminary digitizing strategy drafts and revision in consultation with staff
January 2022	Penultimate draft of digitizing strategy delivered to RBG and reviewed by staff for feedback
February 2023	Final delivery of written digitizing strategy
March 2023	Project conclusion (all billing completed, and RBG report sent to granting body, etc.)

- Project expenses and timeline will be reviewed at project initiation and aligned with specifications of funder.

#### 7. Submission Instructions

Please submit all required documentation by 5 PM EST Monday 29 August 2022 to:

Erin Aults  
Librarian and Archives Specialist  
Royal Botanical Gardens  
680 Plains Road West  
Burlington, ON L7T 4H4

Email: [eaaults@rbg.ca](mailto:eaaults@rbg.ca)