

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

DETAILS	
<b>Project Reference Number:</b>	IMQT-Strategy-027
<b>Project Name:</b>	Strategic Planning Services
<b>Date of Issue:</b>	06/16/2026
<b>Submit inquiries to:</b>	Paulette Perttunen, COO paulette.perttunen@imqt.org
<b>Deadline for submitting inquiries:</b>	06/30/2026
<b>Deadline for responding to clarifications:</b>	07/02/2026
<b>Deadline for bid submission:</b>	07/23/2026
<b>Submission Method:</b>	Email with subject line: IMQT Strategic Planning Proposal
<b>Submit bid to:</b>	Paulette Perttunen, COO paulette.perttunen@imqt.org
<b>Deadline for selection of winning bid:</b>	07/31/2026
<b>Project timeline (estimated start to delivery):</b>	08/03/2026-11/30/2026

### PROJECT OVERVIEW:

Innovate Marquette is seeking proposals from qualified consultants or consulting teams to facilitate the development of a comprehensive strategic plan.

As Innovate Marquette looks toward the future, leadership and the Board of Directors are seeking an external expert to guide a thoughtful strategic planning process that will define the next phase of the organization’s growth and impact. The goal of this process is to evaluate Innovate Marquette’s current capabilities, examine best practices from leading innovation ecosystems, and develop a forward-looking strategy that positions the organization to significantly increase the creation and growth of high-impact companies in the region.

## ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND:

Innovation Marquette Enterprise Corporation, dba: Innovate Marquette (IMQT) is a private 501(c)3 non-profit in Michigan. IMQT currently operates as the Michigan SmartZone serving Michigan's Central Upper Peninsula. The organization works with entrepreneurs, universities, investors, and regional partners to support the creation and growth of technology-driven companies. IMQT collaborates closely with Northern Michigan University, regional economic development organizations, and statewide innovation programs. As innovation ecosystems continue to evolve nationally and globally, IMQT seeks to identify the most effective operating models, partnerships, and strategies to maximize the region's ability to generate scalable ventures and long-term economic growth.

## PROJECT GOALS:

The objective of this project is to develop a strategic plan that defines how IMQT can significantly expand its impact as a regional innovation catalyst. The strategic planning process should evaluate and recommend the most effective organizational model for:

- supporting high-growth ventures
- strategies for increasing the creation of and scaling of technology companies
- partnership opportunities with universities and industry
- capital formation pathways for early-stage ventures
- regional specialization opportunities
- organizational capabilities and staffing requirements
- performance measurement frameworks
- long-term sustainability strategies for the innovation ecosystem.

The resulting plan should provide a clear roadmap that guides Innovate Marquette's activities and investments going forward.

Innovate Marquette leadership and staff will provide reasonable access to organizational data, participate in planning meetings, and support scheduling of stakeholder interviews and workshops.

## PROPOSAL ELEMENTS (scope of services):

The selected consultant will work closely with Innovate Marquette leadership, board members, staff, and regional stakeholders to foster a sense of shared purpose and engagement throughout the process.

The consultant should propose a process that includes:

- 1. Discovery and Organizational Assessment**
  - Review existing plans, reports, and financial data
  - Conduct leadership interviews
- 2. Stakeholder Engagement**
  - Interviews, surveys, or workshops with key stakeholders
- 3. Environmental Scan**
  - SWOT or comparable analysis
  - Benchmarking of comparable innovation ecosystems
- 4. Strategy Development**
  - Identification of strategic priorities
  - Development of goals and measurable outcomes
- 5. Strategic Alignment**
  - Facilitation of leadership and/or board strategy session
- 6. Drafting and Finalization**
  - Draft plan for review
  - Final plan and implementation roadmap

Proposals should also include an overview of the consultant or firm, a description of relevant experience, the project approach and methodology, the proposed timeline, the project team and roles, examples of comparable engagements, the estimated project budget, and references from previous clients.

## **DELIVERABLES:**

The consultant will provide a summary of stakeholder engagement findings, a benchmarking analysis of comparable ecosystems, a written strategic plan, an implementation roadmap with milestones and timelines, recommended performance measurement metrics, and an executive-level presentation summarizing the strategy for review by the Innovate Marquette Board of Trustees.

The consultant should propose a stakeholder engagement strategy that may include interviews, surveys, or facilitated workshops with board members, staff, regional partners, entrepreneurs, investors, and university stakeholders.

The final strategic plan document should include:

- Mission, vision, and strategic priorities
- strategic goals with measurable outcomes
- Key initiatives aligned with each goal
- Recommended KPIs and performance metrics
- Implementation roadmap
- Organizational implications (staffing, partnerships, capacity needs)

Deliverables should include both written and presentation formats suitable for board adoption and external stakeholder communication.

## **Consultant Qualifications:**

Innovate Marquette seeks consultants with demonstrated expertise in innovation ecosystem development, entrepreneurship support organizations, startup accelerators, technology commercialization, or regional economic development strategy.

## EVALUATION METRICS AND CRITERIA:

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria.

- Relevant Experience and Qualifications (30 points), including experience working with innovation ecosystems, startup accelerators, technology commercialization initiatives, or regional economic development strategies.
- Understanding of Project Objectives (20 points) reflecting the consultant's understanding of the goals and challenges of regional innovation development.
- Proposed Methodology and Work Plan (20 points), evaluating the quality and clarity of the consultant's planning process and engagement strategy.
- Experience with Comparable Projects (15 points), including successful strategic planning engagements for similar organizations.
- Project Team and Capacity (10 points): Evaluating the expertise and availability of the proposed team.
- Cost Effectiveness (5 points), considering overall cost relative to the value of services provided.

The total possible score is 100 points.

Innovate Marquette reserves the right to:

- Request interviews or presentations from selected finalists before making a final selection.
- Reject any or all proposals, waive minor irregularities, and select the proposal that best serves the interests of the organization.

## PROJECT BUDGET:

The total budget for this engagement is not defined.

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND OWNERSHIP OF WORK:

Any information shared by Innovate Marquette (IMQT) during this process must be kept private. All reports, studies, and materials created for this project will belong to IMQT. The selected contractor may not share or reuse the work without IMQT's written permission. IMQT may use the completed work in any way that supports the IMQT project, including planning, fundraising, and communications.