

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Developing Conservation Markets for Alberta Landscapes

****Issued by:****

Western Stock Growers' Association
Box 179, #14 – 900 Village Lane

ATTN: Lindsye Murfin, General Manager
office@wsga.ca, 403-250-9121
Date Issued: April 21, 2025

1. Background

As pressures on native grasslands grow from diverse land uses, so too does the urgency to develop innovative approaches for conservation, restoration, and regeneration. Existing incentives to maintain these landscapes often fall short, leaving landowners without effective tools to realize the ecological and economic value of their stewardship.

This project aims to demonstrate a scalable, outcome-based approach to conserving and restoring native grasslands through the development of a collaborative, efficient marketplace for buying and selling grassland ecosystem service (EGS) and biodiversity benefits. At the core of this effort is the enhancement and testing of the Grasslands Capital X (GCX) Index—a protocol designed to measure ecosystem health through indicators of biodiversity, soil, water, and culture. The long-term goal is to enable landowners and ranchers to engage with emerging conservation markets that align with Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) frameworks.

2. Project Objectives

1. Increase understanding of market-based tools used to measure and monitor grassland environmental benefits.
2. Apply this knowledge to refine the GCX Index, ensuring outcome-based, scalable metrics that support a conservation market.
3. Pilot the improved GCX Index as a market-based instrument in collaboration with Alberta ranchers.

3. Scope of Work

The project will be delivered in two key phases:

Phase 1: Conservation Market Analysis & Cross-Jurisdictional Scan

Tasks include

- Conduct a comprehensive review of current environmental credit markets and EGS measurement tools, including:
 - o Market history and trends
 - o Outcome-based metric methodologies
 - o Remote sensing and verification technologies
 - o Grazing pressure definitions and landscape applications
 - o Evaluate how existing tools align with ESG reporting and SDG requirements.
 - o Perform a cross-jurisdictional scan:
 - Comparable jurisdictions: North America, Australia
 - Contrasting jurisdictions: Areas with high land-use pressures and established conservation frameworks
 - o Produce a final report synthesizing findings, identifying gaps, and recommending transferable best practices.

Phase 2: Application to GCX Index and Field Testing

Tasks include:

- Work with the GCX Advisory Panel to assess findings and identify scalable improvements to GCX.
- Recommend and implement high-priority metric and technology upgrades (e.g., remote sensing for biodiversity and habitat monitoring).
- Partner with aligned organizations or consultants to assist with technical refinement.
- Conduct large-scale testing of the updated GCX Index on ~50,000 acres of ranchland across Alberta:
 - o Data collection, management, and analysis
 - o Field visits by agrologists and technologists
 - o Soil and vegetation sampling
 - o Travel and stakeholder engagement

4. Deliverables

- Conservation market review and jurisdictional scan report
- Recommendations for integration into the GCX Index
- Upgraded GCX Index framework and associated protocols
- Final field test report, including data analysis and stakeholder feedback
- Documentation of recommendations for full market integration

Developing Conservation Markets for Alberta Landscapes

5. Proposal Requirements

Interested parties must submit a proposal including the following:

- Executive Summary
- Proposed Methodology and Work Plan
- Relevant Experience and Qualifications
- Project Team and Roles (if applicable)
- Timeline and Milestones
- References (minimum of 2 similar projects)

6. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following:

Criteria	Weight
Understanding of project and approach	30%
Relevant experience	20%
Team qualifications	15%
Innovation and feasibility of methodology	15%
Cost-effectiveness	10%
Timeline and ability to meet deadlines	10%

7. Budget

Budget for Phase I of the project is \$50,000. Budget for Phase 2 of the project is \$175,00 which includes budget line items for field agrologists, data management services, soil sampling and communications.

8. Timeline

Milestone	Date
RFP release	April 21, 2025
Proposal submission deadline	May 15, 2025
Contractor selection	June 1, 2025
Project start	June 15, 2025
Phase 1 completion	December 1, 2025
Phase 2 field testing and reporting	October 15, 2026
Final deliverables due	December 31, 2026

9. Submission Instructions

Proposals must be submitted electronically to:

Lindsye Murfin, General Manager
Western Stock Growers' Association
office@wsga.ca

Subject: Proposal – Developing Conservation Markets for Alberta Landscapes

Deadline for submission: May 15, 2025

10. Contact for Questions

Questions about this RFP should be directed to:

Lindsye Murfin, General Manager
Western Stock Growers' Association
office@wsga.ca
403-250-9121

Developing Conservation Markets for Alberta Landscapes