



## Request for Proposals

### Long-term Impact Assessment of the CEC activities to support AirNow International System (2010-2015)

### Commission for Environmental Cooperation

2020

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) is requesting proposals from prospective consultants to assess the long-term impact of the CEC activities to support the AirNow-International System in North America, implemented from 2010 to 2015.

The CEC was established by the governments of Canada, Mexico and the United States through the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation, the parallel agreement to NAFTA. An intergovernmental organization, the CEC brings together citizens and experts from governments, nongovernmental organizations, academia and the business sector to seek solutions to protect North America's shared environment while supporting sustainable economic development. Find out more at: <[www.cec.org](http://www.cec.org)>.

#### Overview and Scope

As part of the trilateral effort to promote healthy communities in North America, the objective of the CEC's AirNow-International work was to support and improve the management and sharing of ambient air quality data, and public access to it, through the AirNow-International system. To this end, the CEC endeavored to develop a consistent set of tools to process, share and publicly disseminate information on air quality within and among the three countries.

Over the five years activities were carried out, one project, North American AirNow-International, focused specifically on supporting Mexico's efforts to connect its diverse air quality monitoring systems with the AirNow system used by Canada and the United States to ensure that data can be accessed on air quality conditions for locations across the three countries.

The expected long-term outcomes of the work were:

- The improvement of air quality data and processing time in Mexico;
- An increased sharing of data within Mexico, and between Mexico and the US / Canada;
- An increased dissemination of reliable current and forecasted air quality information to the public;
- An increased ability to respond quickly to air quality-related events;
- Comparable formats and data validation procedures for ambient air quality information for use in national and regional North American air quality initiatives.

Activities relative to AirNow-International were carried out through a multi-stakeholder approach, involving environmental quality and health management agencies from the three countries at the local, state/provincial and national levels, with an interest in improving the quality, access and dissemination of real-time information on ambient air quality conditions.

Some of the outputs include the integration and information sharing of air quality monitoring networks of five major Mexican metropolitan areas into the AirNow-International (AirNow-I) system, and expert input into the development of a proposal for a national air quality index for Mexico, which would inform the public about air quality conditions .

Now five years after the completion of the activities, a broader assessment of the impact of the AirNow-International activities is feasible, and desirable, in order to critically assess programmatic successes, and identify areas for improvement. Moreover, reliable metrics are also available from the implementation of the AirNow system in Mexico (e.g. in the cities of Monterrey, Toluca, Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Guanajuato).

The descriptions of the AirNow-I activities are available at: [http://www.cec.org/sites/default/files/documents/operational\\_plans/8126\\_operational\\_plan\\_2010\\_en.pdf](http://www.cec.org/sites/default/files/documents/operational_plans/8126_operational_plan_2010_en.pdf), [http://www.cec.org/sites/default/files/documents/operational\\_plans/16099\\_operational\\_plan\\_2011-2012-web-en.pdf](http://www.cec.org/sites/default/files/documents/operational_plans/16099_operational_plan_2011-2012-web-en.pdf) and <http://www.cec.org/our-work/projectsN/north-american-airnow-international-project>. Additional information will be provided by the CEC Secretariat during this assessment work.

## **Terms of Reference**

### **Description of Services**

The Consultant will prepare an assessment report which will consider the objectives of the CEC projects involving AirNow-International, their rationale, their implementation over the five years, and results accomplished. The assessment will give due consideration to the main activities carried out over the period, as well as performance measures and targets, if available. The conclusion should reflect whether these projects have yielded the expected environmental outcomes (see list above).

Overarching questions to be answered could also include:

- To what extent did the work support and improve the management and sharing of ambient air quality data for Canada, Mexico and the United States?
- How did the CEC projects support public access to air quality data conditions for locations across the three countries, through AirNow? How is this information used by the public today?
- How were the projects successful in supporting Mexico's efforts to connect its diverse air quality monitoring systems with the AirNow system? And how is it used by the air monitoring agencies in Mexico?
- What changes did the data sharing between the countries yield for border states/provinces?
- What was the impact the CEC's work on the development of a National Air Quality index for Mexico?
- To what extent did the work impacted national and regional North American air quality initiatives?

More specifically, the assessment should also consider the following:

- What have been the successes and challenges during the implementation of the projects?
- What could have been done to make the projects more effective? (possible better approaches, lessons learned)
- Did the initiative leverage other resources, and how? (i.e., did it establish partnerships and successfully work with partners?)
- Is there evidence of this initiative serving as a model for other similar efforts in other regions?

The report will draw on the perspectives of, and reflect input from current staff of the CEC Secretariat involved in the initiative, selected officials from Canada, Mexico and the United States, and other project partners and stakeholders. These contacts and interviewees will be selected in collaboration with the CEC Secretariat.

In preparing the assessment, the Consultant will also take into account all relevant CEC reports, documents and communications associated with the development and implementation of the projects.

### **Deliverables**

The calendar of deliverables is as follows:

- Submit to the Secretariat details of the proposed steps to carry out this assessment, based on the information provided in this Request for Proposals and following a kick-off call with the CEC Secretariat, by 29 June 2020.
- Submit to the Secretariat an outline of the report and an interview guide, by 13 July 2020.
- Develop a list of interviewees in collaboration with the Secretariat, by 20 July 2020.
- Submit to the Secretariat a first draft of the report, by 14 September 2020.
- Based on the Secretariat's feedback (by 21 September 2020), submit the final draft of the report, **by 9 October 2020**.

The report **shall not exceed 30 pages** and be prepared in English.

### **Reporting Requirements**

Throughout this work, the Consultant will collaborate closely with the contract supervisor, and will receive direction only from the CEC Secretariat.

### **Quality of Deliverables**

The consultant is responsible for providing deliverables **of publishable quality** (i.e., copy-edited prior to submission) in English, when applicable, for the technical editing of the materials. The consultant will submit to the CEC Secretariat all written material (including complete drafts and final reports) in Microsoft Word, following the format of the CEC's [Report Template](#) and adhering to the precepts of the [Guidelines for CEC Documents and Information Products](#), as supplemented by the CEC's English [Style Guide](#). Supporting documents for tables, figures and maps will be submitted with the report in their original file format (e.g., Excel or ArcGIS). Note

that all amounts shall be presented in metric units. The CEC Secretariat will be responsible, when applicable, for translation, printing, publication and distribution of products from this activity.

Upon delivery by the consultant of a final version of the report or other written materials under the project, the CEC reserves the right to a 15-business day period to review the document(s), notify the consultant of any potential issues or errors, and return the document(s) to the consultant for appropriate corrections, at no extra cost. In all cases, contract payments will be withheld if products submitted to the CEC fail to fulfill the quality and formatting requirements specified above. In the event that the consultant neglects to make the required corrections or if, following corrections, a deliverable remains unsatisfactory, the document shall be edited or revised by a third party designated by the Secretariat, the cost of which shall be deducted from the consultant's fees at a rate of C\$60 per hour.

## **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the act of conveying someone else's original expression or creative ideas as one's own and can be a violation of copyright law. Neither intentional nor unintentional plagiarism is acceptable to the CEC. The consultant must follow good scholarly methodology in preparing reports and deliverables under the contract, including systematic referencing in footnotes or in-sentence references, for any secondary sources, quotations, data, etc., that do not originate with the author. Sources for tables and figures reproduced from other literature must be given in a "Source" attribution immediately below the table or figure. Failure to properly reference the source of such borrowed material constitutes plagiarism and will be considered a breach of contract. For further information, see [Guidelines for CEC Documents and Information Products](#). In addition, for every written deliverable submitted, the Consultant must use iThenticate software, or an equivalent software approved by the Commission, to validate the written product in question and must forward the plagiarism review results to the CEC at the time of document submission. Contract payments will be retained if products do not fulfill these requirements.

## **Requirements**

*To be eligible for further consideration, all consultants must fulfill the following basic requirements.*

- The Consultant must be domiciled and able to legally work in at least one of the three North American countries. If travel is required, the Consultant must possess valid documentation to travel within these countries.
- Prospective consultants must demonstrate knowledge of information collection and consultation methods, as well as evidence of previously completed successful assignments of a similar nature. Potential consultants must be able to compare and contrast materials generated in multiple countries, as appropriate. In addition, prospective consultants must have excellent report writing skills and be fluent in written and spoken English and Spanish.
- Knowledge of the subject matter is desirable, but not necessary.

The proposal should not exceed five (5) pages, exclusive of applicant resume or corporate brochures. It should include a detailed cost breakdown, including number of person/days of key and other personnel, direct and indirect costs, travel costs and applicable taxes.

Potential consultants must also submit any additional information that will assist the CEC Secretariat in the evaluation of their proposal, such as samples of previous work and letters of

recommendation from previous assignments. This information is not subject to the five (5) page limit.

The consultant deemed best qualified will be selected on the basis of a competitive process, in accordance with sections 2.5-2.7 of the [CEC Consultant Services Procurement Manual](#).

The CEC Secretariat intends to use its standard milestone-based contract for these services. A sample is available upon request.

The consultant will be paid in the following manner:

- Upon signature of the contract and invoice
- Upon receipt and approval of deliverables and invoices

Payment shall be made only for *bona fide* consultant fees and legitimate expenses incurred in accordance with the contract for professional services, and only upon receipt and documented acceptance by the Secretariat of statement(s) of account/invoice(s) from the consultant. Settlement of invoices that are acceptable for payment will normally be made 30 days from the date of receipt by the Commission.

The budget for this activity will not exceed C\$15,000 (Canadian dollars), including professional fees and expenses. Reimbursable expenses are detailed in the CEC standard contract, available upon request; in addition, the cost of using iThenticate software to detect plagiarism (US\$50) should also be considered.

For universities and nongovernmental organizations, note that the CEC accepts that overhead be charged for administration and other indirect costs up to 15% of the total value of the contract.

If the proposal were presented by a consultant established in Mexico, the applicable value-added tax will be 0%, in accordance with Article 29, section IV, paragraph a) of Mexico's VAT Act, as these are technical services that were engaged from abroad.

If a currency other than Canadian dollars is used, the consultant should indicate the total cost of the professional services in Canadian dollars as well as the currency of choice, for comparison purposes.

## **Conflict of Interest**

"Conflict of interest" means, but is not limited to, a situation where a consultant's personal interest is sufficiently connected with professional duties under the contract, such that it results in a reasonable apprehension that said personal interest may influence the exercise of professional responsibilities under the contract. For example, a direct conflict of interest exists when the consultant is also a CEC government official, or is related to or closely affiliated with a CEC government official, CEC staff member or third party involved with the performance of the services.

The consultant will inform the CEC Secretariat of any circumstance that existed prior to the execution of this contract or that could manifest during the performance of this contract, which could constitute a conflict of interest. The consultant will complete and sign, on behalf of all his or her personnel, the attached *Declaration of Acceptance and Impartiality and Independence* (see

Annex). The Consultant will also take note of the [CEC Consultant Services Procurement Manual](#).

### **Deadlines for Proposal Submission and Decision**

The proposal, including all relevant attachments, must be received by the CEC Secretariat offices by **17:00 EDT on 10 June 2020**. Proposals submitted after this deadline will not be considered.

**Proposals must be submitted via e-mail to [ndaoust@cec.org](mailto:ndaoust@cec.org) with a copy to [dmillan@cec.org](mailto:dmillan@cec.org).** Proposal format may be in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF format. Once the proposal has been submitted electronically, the CEC will confirm receipt within three business days. If receipt is not confirmed by e-mail within this time, **applicants must contact the CEC**. The contact person is:

Nathalie Daoust  
Senior Council Liaison and Organizational Performance Officer  
Commission for Environmental Cooperation  
Tel: 514-350-4310

The CEC Secretariat intends to select the consultant and notify the applicants by 17:00 EDT on 17 June 2020.

ANNEX (see also Schedule D in CEC standard contract)

## CONSULTANT'S DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE AND IMPARTIALITY AND INDEPENDENCE FOR CONTRACT

I, the undersigned,

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### ACCEPTANCE

hereby declare that I accept to serve as consultant in the subject contract.

### IMPARTIALITY AND INDEPENDENCE

*(If you accept to serve as a consultant, please check one of the two following boxes. The choice of which box to check will be determined after you have taken into account, inter alia, whether there exists any past or present relationship, direct or indirect, with any of the Parties to the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation ("NAAEC") or their Commission for Environmental Cooperation ("CEC") representatives, Secretariat staff, and/or third parties involved in the performance of this contract, whether financial, professional, familial, or of another kind and whether the nature of any such relationship is such that disclosure is called for pursuant to the criteria set out below. Any doubt should be resolved in favor of disclosure.)*

**I am impartial and independent** with respect to the NAAEC Parties and their CEC representatives, CEC Secretariat staff, and third parties involved in the performance of this contract, and intend to remain so; to the best of my knowledge, there are no facts or circumstances, past or present that need be disclosed because they are likely to give rise to justifiable doubts as to my impartiality or independence, and that may constitute a conflict of interest.

**OR**

**I am impartial and independent** with respect to the NAAEC Parties and their CEC representatives, Secretariat staff, and/or third parties involved in the performance of this contract, and intend to remain so; **however**, I wish to call your attention to the following facts or circumstances which I hereafter disclose because they might be of such a nature as to give rise to justifiable doubts as to my impartiality or independence, and that may constitute a conflict of interest. Where facts or circumstances exist that might give rise to the latter such doubts, I may set out measures I intend to take to mitigate or eliminate any doubts regarding my impartiality and independence, and/or a possible conflict of interest. (Use separate sheet and attach.)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_