



## Request for Proposals

### Retainer for Public Relations Services in the US and Canada

## Commission for Environmental Cooperation

2021

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) is requesting proposals from prospective consultants related to providing public relations services on retainer to promote its activities and initiatives in Canadian and US markets.

The CEC was established by the governments of Canada, Mexico and the United States through the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation, the environmental side 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)>.

### Terms of Reference

The CEC has a broad mandate for public engagement across Canada, Mexico and the United States as well as objectives related to ensuring the visibility of the organization among key target audiences and thought leaders in the three countries. In addition, a key objective for the CEC is to remain a prime information portal for environmental information, data and analyses among expert and specialty audiences.

To support these objectives, the CEC is seeking the support of a consultant on retainer from March 1 to August 30, 2021 (6 months) to support the dissemination of its work across a variety of target audiences in Canada and the United States, particularly via traditional media and influencers.

The consultant retained will be asked to periodically provide strategic communications advice on overall campaign strategies or critical issues of importance to the Communications Head of Unit or Executive Director of the CEC.

Typical monthly tasks may include:

- Drafting press releases & talking points
- Proactive, targeted media relations and coordination of media interview opportunities
- Approaching influencers and, when appropriate, coordinating influencer agreements to support public outreach campaigns
- Participating in brainstorming sessions to provide suggestions and advice on campaign strategies, including digital content and digital paid strategies
- Occasional meetings to provide strategic advice to the Communications Head of Unit and Executive Director

The work carried out will be conducted under a retainer agreement between the consultant and CEC Secretariat, with some months requiring more work than others. The consultant will work closely with the CEC Communications Unit to map out support for approximately four campaigns in 2021, some of which will involve a specialized target audience and niche media outlets. Examples of specialized audiences include private sector actors in the food supply chain, municipalities and NGOs seeking to prevent upstream marine litter, or scientists and conservationists interested in pollinator conservation. The consultant will also be expected to suggest and advise on opportunities throughout the year to obtain mainstream media coverage of the CEC's broad suite of work on North American environmental issues.

### **Quality of Deliverables**

The consultant is responsible for providing deliverables **of publishable quality** (i.e., copy-edited prior to submission) in English and, 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](#). 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, as well as all their personnel and subconsultants, must reside and be authorized to work legally in Canada, Mexico or the United States of America. If travel is required, the consultant must possess valid documentation to travel within these countries.

The consultant must have multidisciplinary public relations and communications expertise, including but not limited to:

- Media relations
- Drafting strategic communications materials
- Digital content strategy
- Influencer relations
- Strong English-language writing and editing skills
- Experience working with clients with science-based outputs an asset
- French-language skills and familiarity with communications campaigns in Quebec, Canada an asset
- Experience working with clients with science-based outputs an asset
- Experience working on communications campaigns in both the Canadian and US market

The proposal should not exceed three (3) 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 three (3) 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: monthly, according to the retainer agreement.

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\$42,000 (Canadian dollars), including professional fees and expenses. Reimbursable expenses are detailed in the CEC standard contract, available upon request.

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 EST on Friday, February 5, 2021**. Proposals submitted after this deadline will not be considered.

**Proposals must be submitted via e-mail to [mainscow@cec.org](mailto:mainscow@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:

Megan Ainscow  
Head of Unit, Communications  
Commission for Environmental Cooperation  
393, rue St-Jacques Ouest, bureau 200  
Montreal, QC, Canada H2Y 1N9  
Tel: 514-350-4300; Fax: 514-350-4314

The CEC Secretariat intends to select the consultant and notify the applicants within a reasonable period of time following the proposal submission deadline.

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: \_\_\_\_\_