

**Request for Proposals**

**Long-Term Impact Assessment**

**for the project**

**North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action  
(NAPECA)**

**Commission for Environmental Cooperation**

**2022**

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) is requesting proposals from prospective consultants related to the long-term impact assessment of the North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action (NAPECA). More specifically, the consultant would be expected to: 1) evaluate the NAPECA grant program and the impact of projects in cycles 2017–2018 and 2019–2020, all carried out during the Strategic Plan 2015–2020; and 2) assess the application and selection processes carried out for the 2022–2024 grant cycle, with a view to improving the CEC’s grant evaluation process.

In 2010, the CEC Council established the North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action (NAPECA) grant program to encourage innovation and flexibility, and promote model environmental initiatives that would help build long-term partnerships and improve environmental conditions for Indigenous and other communities, at the local and regional levels. A long-term impact assessment (LTIA) of NAPECA was conducted in 2017 which acknowledged the lessons learned from the grant program cycles of 2011, 2013 and 2015, and identified opportunities to strengthen the impacts, performance indicators, replicability, and leverage of funded projects.<sup>1</sup> For a complete description of NAPECA, including tasks and related budget, visit: <http://www.cec.org/about/north-american-partnership-for-environmental-community-action/>

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) was established in 1994 by the governments of Canada, the United Mexican States (Mexico), and the United States of America (United States) through the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation, a side agreement concluded in connection with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). As of 2020, the CEC operates in accordance with the Environmental Cooperation Agreement, which entered into force at the same time as the new trade agreement known as CUSMA, T-MEC and USMCA in each of these three countries, respectively. The CEC brings together a wide range of stakeholders, including the general public, Indigenous people, youth, nongovernmental organizations, academia, and the business sector, to seek solutions to protect North America’s shared environment while supporting sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations. Find out more at: [www.cec.org](http://www.cec.org).

**Terms of Reference**

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Terms of Reference.

The evaluation of the NAPECA cycles of 2017–2018 and 2019–2020, and the assessment of the application and selection processes for the 2022–2024 grant cycle, will include the following objectives:

- Evaluate how the objective of NAPECA (stated above) has been achieved through the implementation of the projects.
- Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the processes.
- Provide recommendations on areas for improvement of the current NAPECA program, including an analysis of the application and selection process for the present cycle (i.e., 2022–2024 grants).

To respond to these objectives, the consultant will perform the following activities:

- In order to analyze the main impacts of the NAPECA grant program, the consultant should develop a procedure for aggregating the impacts of the individual projects that will aid better understanding of the overall impact of this program. Approximately, between 70 to 80% of the consultant’s resources for this project should be assigned to this activity.
- Evaluate whether the structure of the program (in terms of funding, duration of projects, eligibility criteria, Secretariat support, promotion, etc.) is helping it respond to the pressing needs of communities in North America to address environmental issues.
- Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the processes from the preparation of the Call for Proposals to the closing reports at the end of project implementation. The assessment should also include a review of the reporting mechanisms. Approximately, between 20 to 30% of the consultant’s resources for this project should be assigned to this activity.
- Survey both the successful grantees and the applicants whose projects were not selected. This analysis should provide information on how the beneficiaries of the program view its different aspects: its clarity, transparency, simplicity, communication between grantees or applicants and the CEC, etc. The survey should consider a meaningful sample of projects from the cycles developed during the 2015–2020 Strategic Plan, as well as the last grant cycle.
- Provide recommendations on areas for potential improvement in the existing NAPECA program, including the following:
  - Strengthening the impact of projects by building collaboration, seeking community participation and inclusiveness, enhancing the environment, proposing long-term and innovative solutions, supporting vulnerable populations, implementing tangible solutions and strengthening capacities, and ensuring projects are inspiring or replicable to other regions of North America or elsewhere;
  - Improving internal processes; and
  - Developing performance indicators for the grant program as a whole.
- Provide recommendations on how to expand the reach of the program to more communities and ensuring better access and inclusiveness.
- Provide recommendations on how the CEC should define the criteria to select the topics for future Calls of Proposals (this should consider CEC priorities and also the needs of communities in the three countries).

The consultant shall report to and coordinate with the Lead, Planning and Performance to accomplish the following:

- Agree on the work plan and methodology to complete the activities listed above.
- Agree on the specific approach for the assessment.
- Review grant-related documents (with the support of the Grant Programs Coordinator), conduct surveys (or virtual interviews) with selected grantees/stakeholders.
- Review and verify preliminary findings (through consultations with the CEC Secretariat, grantees, government officials and stakeholders, as appropriate), and incorporate revisions into the analysis.
- Complete detailed review and assessment and prepare the final report.
- Develop recommendations as stated in the previous section.

**Deliverables and milestones:**

- Proposed work plan and methodology (27 October 2022).
- First draft report, based on research that assesses the performance of the NAPECA grant program and projects (18 November 2022)
- Annex delivery, including results of NAPECA projects (25 November 2022).
- Final assessment report, integrating comments received from the Secretariat (20 December 2022).

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

**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](#). In addition, for every written deliverable submitted, the Consultant must use iThenticate 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 and evaluation of the proposal

*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 possess competence and experience in:

- Project evaluation (mostly) and process improvements (to a lesser degree).
- Conducting participatory evaluations
- Professional reporting

The consultant must be fluent in both written and spoken English; proficiency in Spanish and French is desirable.

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:

- 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\$25,000 (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 or other approved 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, and according to the exchange rate in force at the submission date.

## 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 6 October 2022**. Proposals submitted after this deadline will not be considered.

**Proposals must be submitted via e-mail to [jacasis@cec.org](mailto:jacasis@cec.org) with a copy to [vpronovost@cec.org](mailto:vpronovost@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:



José Casis  
Planning and Performance, Lead  
Commission for Environmental Cooperation  
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 Environmental Cooperation Agreement (ECA) 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 ECA 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 ECA 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: \_\_\_\_\_