

# **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

## **Development of a Guide for Designing and Implementing Syndromic Surveillance Systems for Extreme Heat in North America**

for the project  
**Helping North American Communities Adapt to Climate Change: A Pilot Syndromic Surveillance System for Extreme Heat**



**Commission for Environmental Cooperation**

**2016**

## **I. Overview**

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) is requesting proposals from prospective consultants related to the establishment and/or enhancement of syndromic surveillance systems for extreme heat in three selected communities in North America. The main tasks relating to this request for proposals involve:

1. A literature review of North American syndromic surveillance systems for climate-related health impacts (including an inventory of these systems);
2. Support of participating communities in the identification and collection of weather and climate, socio-economic and health data relevant to syndromic surveillance systems; and
3. Development of a guide (Guide) with recommendations for designing and implementing syndromic surveillance systems for extreme heat in North America.

The CEC is an intergovernmental organization created by Canada, the United States and Mexico under the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC). The CEC was established to address regional environmental concerns, help prevent potential trade and environmental conflicts, and promote the effective enforcement of environmental law. The Agreement complements the environmental provisions of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

The CEC's Council, its governing body, approved the project entitled Helping North American Communities Adapt to Climate Change: A Pilot Syndromic Surveillance System for Extreme Heat as part of the Operational Plan for 2015–2016, with the purpose of developing pilot syndromic surveillance systems for extreme heat in selected North American communities and a Guide on the use of such systems, with the inclusion of lessons learned and recommendations from the participating communities.

For a complete description of the project, including tasks and related budget, please visit the CEC website at: <[www.cec.org/sites/default/files/documents/activities\\_budget/op15-16-project2.pdf](http://www.cec.org/sites/default/files/documents/activities_budget/op15-16-project2.pdf)>.

## **II. Terms of Reference**

### **A. Overview and Scope**

The main goal of this project is to develop a pilot operational, real-time syndromic surveillance system for extreme heat events (EHEs) in three at-risk communities in Canada, Mexico and the United States, and to highlight in a Guide best practices and lessons learned on developing syndromic surveillance system for EHEs. Throughout this project, a number of activities will be carried-out which will result in important outcomes such as comparable databases of health, climate and population information, GIS maps of populations vulnerable to EHEs and facilitated discussions and knowledge transfer between public health professionals and experts in North America.

The syndromic surveillance system will be used as a tool for situational awareness and will support local public health professionals and emergency management officials in their response during EHEs. The project will be completed in collaboration with selected health authorities that currently have an existing capacity with similar systems to take advantage of their expertise and knowledge.

## B. Description of Services

The consultant shall coordinate with the CEC's designated contacts to accomplish the following:

1. Literature review of North American syndromic surveillance systems for climate-related health impacts:
  - a. A summary on the type and use of syndromic surveillance systems in North America (*several sources of information could be considered in this task, such as peer-reviewed journals, governmental reports, existing working groups on syndromic surveillance systems, and consultation with local and regional health authorities*).
  - b. An inventory of the syndromic surveillance systems in use in North America. The inventory will be by State/Province/Territory and will identify the types of data collected by these systems.
  - c. Summary of methods for designing and implementing real-time health surveillance systems for extreme heat.
2. Support the selected pilot communities in the development of a database of weather and climate, socio-economic, geospatial information and health data relevant to syndromic surveillance systems for extreme heat. This database will be used (by the pilot communities) to understand the health impacts from extreme heat in each of the selected communities.

This activity is to be conducted in consultation with the CEC Secretariat and designated health authorities in the Province of Ontario (Ottawa Public Health), Canada; the State of Sonora, Mexico; and the State of Michigan, United States.

3. The development of a Guide with recommendations for designing and implementing syndromic surveillance systems for extreme heat in North America, including compiled information and lessons learned from the three participating communities.

The intended audiences for the Guide are government decision-makers (local, state, federal levels), academia, researchers and community health care workers.

This task will require participation in two meetings with representatives of the selected communities, experts from government and academia, and other relevant stakeholders, to discuss and collect information pertinent to the development of the Guide and to present the final project deliverables. These meetings will be either in-person or through remote conferencing. In-person meetings will take place within North America, preferably at the CEC Secretariat office in Montreal, Canada.

Project activities will take place according to the timetable presented below (the timetable is approximate, and may change). The CEC invites prospective consultants to modify the schedule suggested, based on their evaluation of this proposal.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Target Date for Deliverables</b>
0	Project kick-off meeting	Meeting summary and development of final project workplan	April 2016
1	Consultations with local and health authorities and identification of sources of information relevant to syndromic surveillance systems	Summary report on consultations and information sources	May 2016
1	Review of the literature and inventory of syndromic surveillance systems	Draft literature review, inventory of the syndromic surveillance systems, and methods for designing and implementing real-time health surveillance systems for extreme heat	July 2016
1	Review of the literature and inventory of syndromic surveillance systems	Final literature review document addressing comments from CEC Secretariat and project Steering Committee	July/August 2016
2	Support pilot communities in the development of a database relevant to the syndromic surveillance systems for extreme heat	Summary report on support activities, and description of identified data sources	August-September 2016
3	Incorporation of findings from consultations with local and health authorities into an initial draft Guide	Initial draft Guide	October 2016
3	Face-to-face meeting with the pilot/participating communities	Attendance and executive summary of the meeting	November 2016
3	Incorporation of findings from meeting with pilot communities; finalize draft Guide	Final draft Guide for review	February 2017
3	Review of final draft Guide and incorporate comments	Final Guide ready for editing, translation and publication	March 2017

<b>Task</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Target Date for Deliverables</b>
3	Presentation of the Guide at a workshop with partners and pilot communities	Presentation, including PowerPoint file and attendance	May 2017

During the course of the project, the consultant(s) will develop the following materials/reports:

1. Summary records of Steering Committee kick-off meeting/teleconferences, consultations with experts, and consultations with the pilot communities.
2. Literature review of existing syndromic surveillance systems in North America.
3. Guide on the use of syndromic surveillance for extreme heat.
4. Presentation documents/files for use at the final meeting with partner and pilot communities.

In collaboration with the CEC Program Manager and the project's Steering Committee, the consultant(s) shall develop a detailed outline for the Guide, including ideas for presentation style, use of graphics, and level of detail, and identify additional sources of information to be used. The content of the report shall address:

1. Statement of purpose
2. Introduction
3. Background of climatic factors affecting human health
4. Background on syndromic surveillance systems
5. Current state of syndromic surveillance for climate-influenced human health impacts (climatic syndromic surveillance)
6. Framework for implementation of environmental syndromic surveillance systems
7. Summary/recommendations
8. References

### **C. Periodic Reporting Requirements**

In order to complete the project, the consultant will deliver the tasks described under the description of services. At the onset of the project, the consultant will participate in a kick-off meeting with the CEC Program Manager, the members of the CEC Steering Committee and other North American government officials, either in person or through remote conferencing.

Throughout the project, the consultant will work in close collaboration with the CEC, the project's Steering Committee, and experts to gather information to support delivery of the work. The consultant may interact directly with government officials and other experts, as needed. However, the consultant shall report only to, and receive direction only from, the CEC Program Manager (or designate).

The CEC Secretariat will forward draft deliverables to the project's Steering Committee and other experts, for their review and comment. The CEC Secretariat will arrange teleconferences with the consultant, the Program Manager, and other experts on an as-needed basis. The goal of these meetings will be to present the products and assess progress on the project.

The consultant will prepare short monthly status reports that summarize the following:

- progress in previous month;
- current status;
- anticipated progress in upcoming month;
- potential problems, with description of and reasons for any delays; and
- actions that should be taken by the CEC Secretariat to facilitate the project.

These reports are to be sent to the CEC Program Manager by the first week of the following month, by e-mail.

The consultant will work in his or her own offices.

#### **D. 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 (available at: [www.cec.org/about-us/opportunities/useful-documents](http://www.cec.org/about-us/opportunities/useful-documents)). 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.

#### **E. 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, <<http://www.cec.org/about-us/opportunities/useful-documents>>. 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 fulfil these requirements.

### **III. Requirements and Proposal Evaluation**

#### **A. Mandatory Requirements**

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

##### **1. In-country Ability**

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.

##### **2. Key Personnel**

For the purposes of this RFP, the term "consultant" may refer to either a group or company or a single individual.

If a proposal is submitted by a consortium of individuals or institutions, a "lead" consultant should be designated to take responsibility for ensuring overall coordination, the coherence of activity outputs, and the integration of information and ideas.

##### **3. Qualifications Required**

The consultant must demonstrate competency and documented experience in the subject area, and in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of environmental health data for use in the implementation of syndromic surveillance systems for heat, or similar initiatives. The consultant must provide evidence of previously completed successful assignments of a similar nature. Good knowledge of and writing skills in English are required. Working knowledge of Spanish is an asset.

The consultant shall demonstrate competency and past work with country governments, health and international institutions, and within one or two of the following countries: Canada, Mexico and the United States.

##### **4. Proposal Submission**

It is the intention of the CEC Secretariat to include the **Terms of Reference (Section II)** of this document) in the contract negotiated with the successful applicant. Therefore, prospective consultants should refer to these for more detailed information on the project and the services to be provided. Prospective consultants are requested not to reiterate the Terms of Reference in their submissions, but are invited to suggest modifications to enhance the proposal.

Proposals must include the following:

- A brief statement of interest and intent. This statement should be based upon and serve to demonstrate the consultant's experience and subject knowledge. The statement should address desired results; guidelines (parameters within which results are to be accomplished); resources (human, financial, technical, or organizational support available to help accomplish the results); and other aspects deemed applicable by the consultant. The purpose of this statement is to demonstrate not only the consultant's general and specific familiarity with the subject area, but also to highlight writing skills;
- A general work plan for carrying out this project;
- Proposed methodology;
- Suggested modifications to the Terms of Reference, and the reasons for such modifications;
- Resumes of the key personnel involved in the project;
- Detailed cost breakdown, including number of person/days of key and other personnel, direct and indirect costs, travel costs and applicable taxes;
- Description of relevant experience and any other relevant information;
- Two samples of previous work;
- Two letters of recommendation from previous assignments; and
- List of no less than three references.

## **B. Other Information to be Provided**

Potential consultants are encouraged to submit any additional information that they believe will assist the CEC Secretariat in the evaluation of their proposal. However, the proposal should not exceed six (6) pages exclusive of applicant resumes, samples of previous work or corporate brochures.

## **C. Type of Contract to be Used for These Services**

The CEC Secretariat intends to use its milestone-based contract for these services. A sample is available upon request. If the contract is negotiated with a consortium, the CEC will offer the consultants the option to have separate contracts between each consultant and the CEC.

All work within the contract must be completed by 30 June 2017.

## **D. Selection Procedure**

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*, available at <<http://www.cec.org/about-us/opportunities/useful-documents>>.

Proposals that the CEC Secretariat determines to be complete will be evaluated according to the procedure described below. Prospective consultants who submit proposals determined by the CEC Secretariat to be incomplete will be so notified in writing.

Each complete proposal that is submitted will be evaluated by the CEC Secretariat according to the following criteria, with a point rating assigned for each:

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Maximum Point Rating</b>
Understanding of project requirements, adequacy of work plan	20
Suitability of the proposed approach	20



Consultant's experience and qualifications and competency of key personnel	40
Consultant's ability to analytically approach the subject, and writing ability	10
Adequacy of budget	10
<i>Total</i>	100

A minimum score of 80 will be required for the prospective consultant's proposal to be eligible for further consideration. Cost efficiency will be taken into account in the evaluation.

Proposals in response to this request will be evaluated by the CEC Program Manager and designated technical reviewers, who will form an Evaluation Committee. Each member of the Evaluation Committee will receive a copy of the proposals and will be asked to rate each proposal using the evaluation criteria and its maximum point ratings given above.

The CEC Program Manager will arrange for a conference call/meeting among the members of the Evaluation Committee to discuss the ratings, arrive at final scores, and, subsequently, a ranking of all proposals. The strengths and weaknesses of each proposal, in terms of the evaluation criteria, will be noted and summarized. Once the selection has been made, each prospective consultant will be provided with their score—if requested—along with their comparative ranking. However, neither the evaluations nor the scores of other bidders will be provided.

#### **E. Estimated Level of Resources Required**

The budget for this activity is expected to range between C\$65,000 and C\$72,000 (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 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.

#### **F. Basis of Payment Required**

The consultant will be paid based on the specific milestones to be detailed in the consultant's contract.

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.

#### **G. Financial and Other Confidential Information**

For this proposal, the CEC Secretariat will not require the submission of any confidential information nor will the CEC Secretariat require information regarding insurance, bonding financial status, or company ownership.

## H. 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*, available at <<http://www.cec.org/about-us/opportunities/useful-documents>>.

## I. 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 11 March 2016**. Proposals submitted after this deadline will not be considered.

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

Orlando Cabrera-Rivera  
Program Manager, Environmental Quality and Climate Change  
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 within five (5) working days following the proposal submission deadline. Notification of selections will be made on or about 21 March 2016.

## ANNEX

### 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: \_\_\_\_\_