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## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

### **Co-development of a Youth Educational Framework to Address Environmental Challenges through Knowledge Dialogue and Community Participation**

for the CEC initiative

*Community-led Environmental Education Initiative for Biocultural Heritage Protection*

**Commission for Environmental Cooperation  
2025**

## I. Overview

In the context of its initiative “*Community-led Environmental Education Initiative for Biocultural Heritage Protection*”, the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) is requesting proposals from prospective consultant organizations to develop and test an Environmental Education Framework that considers diverse types of knowledges and emphasize horizontal approaches to learning. This framework seeks to build on and strengthen the skills and capacities of systemically vulnerable communities in North America<sup>1</sup> to tackle challenges related to ecosystem conservation and climate action through knowledge dialogue<sup>2</sup> and education, following a participatory approach that is intergenerational and intersectional.<sup>3</sup>

In general terms, the consultant organization (hitherto “the consultant”) is expected to:

1. Perform an initial environmental scan of existing educational resources and knowledge dialogue experiences with similar objectives and contexts from the three countries.
2. Design an initial Environmental Education Framework (Version 1.0) that fosters reciprocal exchange between diverse knowledges (including but not limited to Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) / Indigenous Knowledge (IK), local and academic knowledge). This framework aims to share with young leaders (ages 18-30) further tools to lead participatory processes and facilitate the implementation of environmental work in their communities through knowledge dialogue and horizontal education.<sup>4</sup>
3. Identify and engage with experts and actors from Canada, Mexico and the United States that can bring in diverse perspectives (e.g., Indigenous and youth perspectives) at key stages during the development of the framework.
4. Work and/or coordinate work with one community per country to pilot test the framework, collaborating with community representatives and young partners to adapt and use the framework based on their context and needs.

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<sup>1</sup> Here we define systemically vulnerable communities as communities that face historical and contemporary: disenfranchisement, land dispossession, racialization and/or racial marginalization, environmental burdens due to resource extraction and/or other polluting industries, environmental racism, forced relocation, disproportionate impacts of climate change, vulnerability to extreme weather events, economic insecurity, food insecurity, and other chemical or non-chemical exposures that negatively impact health, wellbeing, and/or quality of life.

<sup>2</sup> Knowledge dialogue is a communication process used between diverse groups, integrating research and education, enhancing underrepresented groups’ participation, linking science and everyday knowledge, and particularly regarding environmental inquiry (adapted from [Anderson et al., 2015](#), and [Bastidas et al., 2019](#)).

<sup>3</sup> For the Environmental Education Framework, an intersectional participatory approach means ensuring that the framework considers how multiple forms of discrimination or marginalization interact. This could involve:

- Recognizing how climate change and environmental issues disproportionately impact certain communities, based on race, income, gender, or other factors.
- Ensuring that educational methods and content are inclusive of diverse lived experiences.
- Engaging participants with varying social identities and backgrounds in shaping the framework.

<sup>4</sup> Horizontal education, an approach that emphasizes non-hierarchical, participatory, and co-constructed learning, is deeply rooted in critical pedagogy, sociocultural learning, and experiential education. It underscores the need for dialogue and mutual exchange of knowledge and highlights the social nature of learning through collaboration and shared problem-solving. It also advocates for decentralized learning networks that empower individuals and communities. Practically, horizontal education is applied via cooperative learning models (Johnson & Johnson, 1999), Indigenous knowledge systems that prioritize intergenerational and land-based learning (Battiste, 2002), and open education initiatives that facilitate peer-to-peer knowledge sharing (Wenger, 1998). These approaches foster active engagement and democratized learning spaces, making education more inclusive and contextually relevant.

5. Facilitate an intercommunity knowledge-sharing workshop with community representatives to exchange experiences and lessons learned during the implementation of the pilot projects.
6. Revise the Environmental Education Framework and strengthen a Version 2.0, based on the results of the pilot projects and the intercommunity workshop, that can be used by different communities in North America.

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) was established in 1994 by the governments of Canada, Mexico and the United States through the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation, a parallel environmental agreement to NAFTA. As of 2020, the CEC is recognized and maintained by the Environmental Cooperation Agreement parallel to the new Free Trade Agreement of North America. The CEC brings together a wide range of rights holders, including the general public, Indigenous Peoples, 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).

The CEC is governed and funded equally by the Government of Canada through Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), the Government of the United States of Mexico through the *Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales* (Semarnat), and the Government of the United States of America through the Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA).

The CEC's Council, its governing body, approved the initiative, entitled *Community-led Environmental Education Initiative for Biocultural Heritage Protection* as part of the 2022 CEC Operational Plan. The Initiative aims to build environmental, conservation, and climate action capacities in systemically vulnerable communities, and provide potential community leaders with tools to address these environmental challenges in their communities.

For a complete description of the initiative, including tasks and related budget, please see the approved Project Description in the CEC website at: <<http://www.cec.org/wp-content/uploads/CEC-Environmental-Education-Project-description.pdf>>.

## **II. Terms of Reference**

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

As mentioned, the overarching purpose of this work is to develop an Environmental Education Framework that will strengthen the capacity and knowledge of communities on environmental issues and topics related to ecosystem conservation and climate action work. This work also seeks to prepare young leaders within the communities to contribute towards strengthening their capacities to lead participatory processes and facilitate the implementation of community-led environmental work, using the principles of knowledge dialogue and horizontal education.

The initiative will engage experts and actors, both local and regional ones from the three North American countries, to guide and follow up on the development of the framework, and also make sure that diverse perspectives (e.g., Indigenous and youth perspectives) and knowledge are taken into account. Moreover, to achieve its goals, this work will be done in close and meaningful collaboration with Indigenous and local partners and communities, following an iterative approach. To ensure a long-lasting impact, this framework will be designed such that the final product can be used by diverse communities across North America.

Overall, this initiative will seek to enhance community social resilience in fostering environmental stewardship and network-building within and across communities.

The outputs of this work will include:

#### *Design stage*

1. An initial environmental scan of key existing resources from the three countries. This would include noteworthy and interesting actors, as well as programs and initiatives that have been implemented successfully over the past 5 or 10 years.
2. An open call for communities interested in collaborating in this work and in pilot testing the framework.
  - a. To ensure meaningful youth engagement and mentorship across the three sites, the consultant should work with stakeholders and the Steering Committee early in the design phase to define which pilot sites will be involved.
3. An initial version of an Environmental Education Framework that engages diverse knowledge (including, but not limited to, Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) / Indigenous Knowledge (IK), local and academic knowledge) and perspectives. This first version will work as a baseline that can be tailored and used by different communities to address community ecosystem conservation and climate action. This document is meant to be applied with three pilot communities and to support the training and empowerment of young leaders (ages 18 to 30) within them. It should consider the principles of knowledge dialogue and horizontal education, while following an intergenerational and intersectional participatory approach.
4. A methodology to pilot test the framework
5. A consent form and a clear process to communicate the project's purpose to communities, enabling them to make an informed decision about whether to participate. This approach should align with the principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), and acknowledge that consent is built on relationships, not just legal agreements.

#### *Piloting stage*

6. Undertake piloting of the framework in three selected communities.
7. Activity report(s) that documents by writing the experience and lessons learned from each pilot project.

#### *Wrap-up and conclusions stage*

8. An intercommunity knowledge sharing workshop.
9. A high-level synthesis of the intercommunity knowledge sharing workshop.
10. A version 2.0 of the framework with tools for effective engagement, participatory processes and community-led projects which considers diverse knowledges. This revised version will build from version 1.0 of the framework, integrating the results of the pilot projects and the intercommunity workshop.
11. A final report that includes the final revised framework, the results from the intercommunity workshop and pilot projects, recommendations to ensure the sustainability of the initiative, and its future replicability, as well as a qualitative and critical systematization of the initiative. All outputs are to adhere to Section II.D (Quality of Deliverables).

This work will be supported by CEC Secretariat-designated staff and this initiative's Steering Committee (SC). The SC is composed of representatives from Canada, Mexico, and the United States; as well as members from the CEC's Traditional Ecological Knowledge Expert Group (TEKEG). This work will also receive input from TEK and IK keepers, as well as experts in environmental education and knowledge dialogue processes to provide recommendations for a review of project outcomes.

## **B. Description of Services**

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

### ***Activity 1: Conduct an environmental scan from the three countries of existing educational resources and knowledge dialogue experiences with similar objectives and contexts.***

Subtask 1.1. Conduct a preliminary environmental scan of programs, resources, initiatives and key actors that use environmental education and knowledge dialogue approaches to address climate action, environmental protection, and the protection and restoration of bio-cultural heritage. This inventory should:

- a. **Identify and, where relevant, integrate** existing resources on environmental education, community-led conservation efforts, Indigenous land-based educational frameworks, and tools for youth engagement.
- b. **Serve as a curated selection** rather than an exhaustive list, highlighting best practices and success stories in environmental education and knowledge dialogue. Selection criteria should prioritize quality, impact, and relevance to the specific context or geographic area of the communities involved.

### ***Activity 2: Define the Environmental Education Framework***

Subtask 2.1. Design and conduct an open call for the selection of communities interested in collaborating in this initiative and pilot testing the framework (Activity 3). This subtask should:

- a. Be conducted in parallel with Activity 1.
- b. Perform in coordination with the CEC and the SC to define the criteria for the selection of the communities where the pilots will be implemented. N.B.: Discussion of Activity 1 (Environmental scan) can serve as a primary basis for selecting communities.

To achieve a meaningful and successful collaboration with the selected communities:

- a. The selection of communities and identification of key stakeholders from each community will be conducted in alignment with the Secretariat and the SC, following the strategy and criteria set in Activities 1 and 2 (subtask 2.1, above).
- b. A collaboration agreement with each community will be co-developed, following the community's protocol, if one is available.
  1. The consultant should respect the communities' governance structures, and thus the agreement should be signed with the community's authorities, or by whomever they designate for such a role (e.g., Director of Education, land, or environment).
  2. The consultant should verify whether the communities have their own research protocols to which initiatives like this one must adhere. This is paramount for respecting the communities' self-determination and data sovereignty. If a community lacks protocols for this type of initiative, one should be co-developed.

Subtask 2.2. Define and design an initial version of the Environmental Education Framework (Version 1.0) that serves as reference. This framework should:

- a. Take a horizontal, intercultural educational approach that fosters peer-to-peer knowledge sharing and dialogue, grounded in mutual respect and collaboration for the protection of nature.

- b. Take inspiration from the concept of “Buen Vivir,” or “living well” (e.g., Gudynas, 2011), that prioritizes community solidarity and social and ecological well-being over economic growth and material accumulation.
- c. Foster diverse knowledges and perspectives including but not limited to TEK/IK, local and academic knowledge.
- d. Include tools in effective engagement, participatory processes, and community-led projects (e.g., joint fact-finding, participatory mapping, cultural mediation, community action planning) that can be used by youth (ages 18 to 30) and other community members to lead and facilitate local conservation and climate action work.
- e. Follow an intergenerational and intersectional participatory approach.

To create this initial version of the framework, the consultant is expected to identify and engage a diverse array of experts and actors, including TEK & IK keepers, experts in environmental education and knowledge dialogue processes who can provide recommendations and guidance for the development of the framework. This group should have representation across the three countries (subject to approval by the initiative’s SC), where IK holders and youth should receive an honorarium as per the CEC’s Honoraria Policy.

The framework’s structure could include the following three main components:

- a. **A curriculum** – with the educational content or recommended better practices centered on horizontal education, that will guide and support youth to facilitate and implement conservation and climate work in their communities.
- b. **An implementation plan** (previously referred to as “*Community learning strategy*” on the project description) – to guide how the curriculum will be used, considering the cultural diversities and particularities of each country and community.
- c. **An activity plan** – on how the framework should be implemented. This activity plan would include the criteria for selection, engagement and participation of community leaders, including youth leaders. The creation of this plan will be based, amongst other things, on respectful dialogue and relational accountability. The aim is to honour community perspectives whilst minimizing the imposition of external agendas.

**Additional components**, such as a monitoring and evaluation process, management aspects, and mechanisms for trinational experience sharing, could also be considered.

This document aims to be a baseline and reference with enough flexibility to be tailored with and by communities. Communities should be able to enrich this framework with their own knowledges as well as adapt the framework’s content to their own context, needs and interests to later address their local environmental challenges (Activity 3 of this initiative). The Parties should be able to use this framework to work as peers with communities strengthening their capacity to address local environmental issues: primarily young community leaders who can become catalysts for change, while helping their communities become more resilient to the effects of ecosystem degradation and climate change.

Subtask 2.3. Design a methodology for pilot testing that will be implemented in Activity 3. This methodology should:

- a. Be clear and flexible enough to be used to pilot test the framework in three communities in North America, one per country

- b. Integrate the criteria for the selection of the communities where the pilots will be implemented (subject to be designed with and approved by the initiative's SC).
- c. Include clear language that the project will be co-led with the communities according to their specific contexts and needs
- d. Include a consent form to be shared with the communities.
- e. Consider integrating virtual sessions with community representatives from the three communities during key moments of Activity 3. The design of this methodology should be done in consultation with the SC and the selected communities.

### **Activity 3: *Implement pilot testing – one community per country***

Activity 3 is the phase where the work with local communities takes place. Accordingly, this is the phase that should allocate the most effort, time and resources within the initiative. Furthermore, these resources should be distributed as evenly as possible among the three pilots to ensure a balanced and comparable approach across the three countries.

During Activity 3, three pilot projects will be implemented in one community per country (identified in Activity 2), collaborating closely and meaningfully with the communities that will have accepted to advance and participate in this work.

For the implementation of the pilots, the consultant is encouraged to engage directly and/or subcontract part of the work under this Activity to local organizations. Subcontracting part of the work is not mandatory although highly recommended, since engaging with communities and implementing pilot projects will require close and flexible collaboration that may be more adequately carried out by a local entity. If the consultant wishes to delegate part of the work, the subconsultant will be co-selected with the CEC and the SC. The subconsultant may be tasked with adapting the initial version of the framework and using its content to build capacity among young partners and other community representatives in the selected community. To achieve this, the following subtasks should be undertaken/coordinated by the consultant and the subconsultant, if any, as part of an iterative process and might be adapted by the communities and consultant(s) as they best see fit to achieve the objectives set in the collaboration agreement.

Subtask 3.1. **Co-develop a sharing protocol** with the selected communities, so as to navigate in a good way consultation and collaboration with local and Indigenous communities. This could involve elaborating a data-sharing agreement, following not only [OCAP](#) but also [CARE and FAIR principles](#).

A sharing protocol will encompass how best to protect TEK and IK and data sovereignty. Indigenous knowledges are rooted in community-specific teachings, histories and practices. Knowledge protocols vary by community, and teachings must be shared with permission and proper acknowledgement. Stories, songs and dances also have specific ownership and cultural contexts. Non-Indigenous educators should be particularly mindful of these complexities and avoid appropriating or simplifying traditions.

Subtask 3.3 Create a Community Design Group with key community members to review, design, and adapt the Environmental Education Framework to the specific conditions of their community.

Subtask 3.4 Following the guidance of the community leaders, the Community Design Group will select the youth partners who will participate in the capacity building focused on the framework's curriculum and, upon receiving the agreed-upon training, will work with their communities to define and undertake specific activities to address (or start addressing) a climate action or ecosystem conservation issue selected by the community.

Subtask 3.5 The Community Design Group and the selected youth partners will host a knowledge dialogue with key community stakeholders to identify the climate action or ecosystem conservation issue that needs to be addressed in the community. The Community Design Group adjusts the framework to the specifics of the community and defines the specific curriculum for the training in that community.

Subtask 3.6 Contributing to the formation of the selected youth partners takes place. A community action plan to address the specific issue of the community is developed.

Subtask 3.7 The trained youth partners work with their communities to address (or start addressing) the climate action or ecosystem conservation issue identified for their community by following the action plan. The consultant should earmark not less than C\$30,000 for the implementation of the defined action plan for each pilot (C\$90,000, in total). The allocation of these resources should be balanced among the three countries.

Subtask 3.8 Produce written activity reports to document the experience and lessons learned in each of the pilots, including a qualitative and critical systematization of each experience, highlighting achievements, obstacles and lessons learned.

#### ***Activity 4: Facilitate an intercommunity knowledge sharing workshop and develop a final report/brief***

Subtask 4.1. Design and facilitate an intercommunity knowledge sharing workshop, that:

- a. Includes community representatives from the pilot communities, CEC designated staff and the SC, and if possible, other experts who participated in the design of Version 1.0 of the framework. This workshop will be planned in coordination with the CEC and the initiative's SC.
- b. Focuses on sharing and learning from others' experiences during the implementation of the pilot projects, but also in the identification of ways to spread this work for other communities to use and general recommendations.

The consultant is expected to prepare a high-level synthesis of the workshop, including a list of participants, executive summary, objectives of the workshop, key results and recommendations.

#### **Workshop Arrangements**

The CEC will arrange in-person/hybrid conferencing services for the workshop, including venue, participants' travel arrangements and accommodations, as well as simultaneous interpretation. These costs will be borne by the CEC and should not be included in the budget breakdown submitted by the consultant.



Subtask 4.2. Revise and develop a Version 2.0 of the Environmental Education Framework, that:

- a. Builds from the initial version of the framework and that is strengthened, based on the outcomes of the pilot projects and the intercommunity workshop.
- b. Is sufficiently flexible that it can be adapted to other contexts and used by other communities across North America.
- c. All content of the framework will be designed so that it is easily used by the Parties and community representatives.
- d. All content of the framework will be designed for download, print or electronic use. At the same time, where the framework draws from TEK/IK, ensure there are controls or measures in place to protect the rights of knowledge holders. Refer to the sharing protocol outline in subtask 3.2.
- e. An English version of the framework and all content shall be produced by the consultant and delivered with an accompanying text file in English. Translation will be completed in Spanish and French by the CEC Secretariat, and the consultant will be responsible for production and delivery of the final version of the framework in English, French and Spanish.

Subtask 4.3. Develop a final report that includes the revised Environmental Education Framework (Version 2.0), an adaptive implementation plan, and pilot projects. In addition, this document should:

- a. Offer recommendations to promote the sustainability of the initiative (for example, mechanisms for community planning, and financing or self-financing) and its future replicability.
- b. Include a synthesis of lessons learned and principles for spreading work into other communities in North America, which might include an adaptive implementation plan to facilitate the use of the framework for other communities.

## **Ensure Quality Deliverables**

The consultant shall be responsible for meeting the following criteria:

- Ensure that all deliverables, including the Environmental Education Framework (Version 1.0 & 2.0), are of publishable quality and adhere to section II.D (Quality of Deliverables).
- Ensure that all documents, including the Environmental Education Framework (Version 1.0 & 2.0), have been revised by the identified project manager for quality control prior to submission to the CEC Secretariat and the project's SC, and experts for review and comment. Quality control shall include, but is not limited to, assuring errors related to technical content, grammar, spelling, formatting, pagination, figures and tables are kept to a minimum.
- Ensure that all documents, including the Environmental Education Framework (Version 1.0 & 2.0), are submitted to the CEC Secretariat on time. Any delays, should they occur, will not reduce the allocated time made available for the CEC Secretariat, the project's SC, experts and others to review and comment on the documents.
- Ensure that inputs received from experts, partners involved, and advisors, the CEC Secretariat and the project's SC are considered in conducting the research and preparation of all documents to be used by the communities and later its publication, subject to approval by the CEC Secretariat and the project's SC.

- Ensure that all information provided by TEK/IK keepers and communities is used properly and stored in accordance with agreed-upon protocols.
- For all expert reviews of draft content, prepare an internal working document (not to be published) that consolidates and summarizes input received and rationale for any input that will not be adopted.
- Ensure that final deliverables adhere to best practices and to CEC publication standards for content accessibility, layout, and graphic design—collaborating with the CEC Secretariat, as necessary.
- Ensure clear, concise, and inclusive language.
- Include an attractive graphic design and visual storytelling to ensure that Framework 2.0 and its communications products effectively engage youth audiences through compelling visuals, dynamic layouts, and concise, impactful social media content.
- Include a detailed approach to intellectual property with a preference for free and open access (e.g., public domain, Creative Commons) to support broad uptake and distribution of the framework. At the same time, the approach must respect and balance the needs and expectations of Indigenous partner communities, including adherence to principles such as First Nations OCAP® (Ownership, Control, Access, Possession) or equivalent Métis and Inuit governance frameworks.
- Avoid duplication of efforts with existing work, included but not limited to Canada's National Framework for Environmental Learning, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development toolkit (in prep).

The duration of the contract to deliver the work will be 25 months.

The Contractor will provide all services and related deliverables associated with this work in English.

The timeline presented below is approximate and may change. The CEC invites prospective consultants to modify the schedule suggested based on their evaluation of this proposal, keeping in mind that the work must be completed by the identified end date.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Deliverable(s)</b>	<b>Approximate Dates</b>
<b>Activity 1 – Conduct an environmental scan of relevant projects, resources and key actors</b>		
Initiative kick-off meeting call to the CEC's designated contacts and SC	Review of the proposed workplan to implement Activity 1	Start of contract (June)
Presentation of an updated workplan to the CEC's designated contacts and SC	Updated workplan based on input shared during the kick-off meeting	June 2025
Present an initial screening of existing environmental education resources and actors	Initial screening	July 2025
Share a curated selection of notable best practices and success stories of related environmental education and knowledge dialogues work.	Curated selection of success stories and related work	July 2025
<b>Activity 2. Design an initial Environmental Education Framework</b>		

<b>Task</b>	<b>Deliverable(s)</b>	<b>Approximate Dates</b>
Identification of the communities	NA	July-August 2025
Set a collaboration agreement with the three communities	Collaboration agreement with each partner community	August 2025
Propose a draft outline of the framework to the CEC's designated contacts and SC	First draft of the framework's outline	September 2025
Deliver a first draft of the framework	First draft of the framework (Version 1)	November 2025
Deliver a revised version of the framework addressing initial comments	Revised version of the framework (Version 1)	December 2025
Deliver a final version of the framework	<b>Final Version 1 of the framework</b>	January 2026
Propose a draft outline of the strategy for pilot testing to the CEC's designated contacts and SC	First draft of the strategy's outline	January 2026
Deliver a first draft of the strategy for pilot testing	First draft of the strategy	February 2026
Deliver a revised and final version of the strategy for pilot testing	<b>Revised and final strategy</b>	March 2026
<b>Activity 3. Pilot testing</b>		
Implementation of pilot tests		
Deliver an initial report of activities for the three pilots		
*Note: This and following reports should include updates on the work done by the community, adaptation of the framework, youth trainings, and implementation of the tools acquired after the training to address an environmental issue in the community. These should include documented and visual evidence.	First report of activities with initial progress in each community	March 2026 – February 2027
Deliver a second report of activities of the three pilots	Second report of activities in each community	
Deliver a third report of activities of the three pilots	Third report of activities in each community	
Deliver a fourth and final report of activities of the three pilots including the experience and lessons learned.	Fourth report of activities in each community	March 2027

<b>Task</b>	<b>Deliverable(s)</b>	<b>Approximate Dates</b>
<b>Activity 4. Intercommunity knowledge workshop and Version 2.0 of the framework</b>		
Propose an agenda for the intercommunity knowledge sharing workshop	First draft of a workshop agenda	February 2027
Facilitate an intercommunity knowledge sharing workshop	NA	May 2027
Prepare a high-level synthesis of the workshop	<b>High-level synthesis of the workshop</b>	June 2027
Deliver a first draft of the Version 2.0 of the framework	First draft of the Version 2.0 framework	June 2027
Deliver a revised draft of the Version 2.0 of the framework	Revised draft of the Version 2.0 framework	July 2027
Deliver a revised and final Version 2.0 of the framework	<b>Final Version 2.0 framework</b>	July 2027
Deliver a final report including the summary of the workshop and pilot projects, a systematization of the experience and an adaptive implementation plan for the framework.	<b>Final report</b>	July 2027

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

At the onset of the initiative, the consultant will participate in a kick-off meeting with the CEC Secretariat and government officials from the three countries through remote conferencing. Based on information discussed during the kick-off meeting, the consultant will develop a work plan that provides an updated timeline and that demonstrates the milestones to be followed to fulfill the requirements of the initiative. Throughout the initiative, the consultant will work in close collaboration with the CEC Secretariat, the initiative's SC, and experts to gather information to support delivery of the work. The consultant may consult directly with government officials, other stakeholders and experts, as needed. However, the consultant shall report only to, and receive direction only from, the CEC designated Staff.

The CEC Secretariat will forward draft deliverables to the initiative's SC for their review and comments. The CEC Secretariat will arrange teleconferences with the consultant, the CEC designated staff, and other stakeholders and experts on an as-needed basis. The goal of these meetings will be to present the products, get feedback and input from the initiative's SC, and assess progress on the initiative.

The consultant will present periodic status reports to the CEC designated staff, and to the SC when requested by CEC, that summarize the following:

- progress in the previous month;
- current status of activities;

- 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 initiative.

A copy of these reports is to be sent to the CEC designated staff by e-mail. The consultant will work in their own offices.

#### **D. Quality of Deliverables**

The consultant will be responsible for providing deliverables of **publishable quality** (i.e., copy-edited prior to submission) in English and, when applicable, for the technical review and editing of the materials. Technical review and style correction required to ensure the quality of the materials will be the responsibility of the consultant. 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](#), if applicable, or in another format approved by the CEC, 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., Word, PowerPoint, Photoshop, 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 reports or other materials under the initiative, the CEC will require 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. If 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 pre-agreed rate.

#### **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](#). 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 and comply with sanitary regulations/restrictions within the three 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 group 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 CEC is seeking a consultant organization that is not only experienced in environmental education but also sensitive to the cultural and social contexts of systemically vulnerable communities, and committed to building lasting, sustainable change through a holistic and inclusive approach. Project proposals should clearly demonstrate that the consultant possesses knowledge, skills, and experience in a North American context in as many of the following areas and activities as possible:

1. Ecosystem conservation and climate action.
2. Co-development and implementation of environmental education programs or frameworks and targeted educational materials, particularly those focused on ecosystem conservation, climate action, and community engagement.
3. Youth (particularly youth aged 18-30) and community engagement particularly in Indigenous vulnerable communities.
4. Knowledge of existing environmental education models and ability to critique and enhance these models with a focus on systemically vulnerable communities.
5. Knowledge of youth theories and approaches that support young people development and strengthening of environmental leadership capacities and abilities in becoming environmental leaders. Expertise in integrating diverse knowledge systems, including but not limited to Indigenous knowledge, local ecological knowledge, and scientific knowledge.
6. Co-development of environmental education material focused on effective engagement, participatory processes and/or community-led projects.
7. Work with youth and communities including, urban, local/rural and Indigenous communities along with experience in intercultural and intergenerational approaches, as well as

facilitation of participatory processes, with a particular focus on the empowerment of marginalized or vulnerable communities.

8. Work with experts, actors or organizations with diverse backgrounds and perspectives.
9. Work effectively and with appropriate consideration to social, cultural, historical and political differences across Canada, Mexico and the United States
10. Capacity to work fluently in written and spoken English and Spanish, and capacity within the project team to conduct research in French.

Demonstrable work experience involving the use of English, French and Spanish will be considered an asset.

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

Prospective consultants should refer to the **Terms of Reference (Section II)** of this document for more detailed information on the initiative 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, if applicable.

Proposals must be organized as indicated below and include the following information:

##### **1. Knowledge and Understanding of Work**

- Provide brief background information relevant to this initiative that will 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.

##### **2. Workplan and Methodology**

- Provide a detailed and comprehensive work plan and methodology that clearly demonstrates how key activities under **Section II** of this document will be undertaken, including engagement with experts and rights holders;
- Identify suggested modifications to the Terms of Reference, and rationale for such modifications, if applicable.

##### **3. Organization, Qualifications and Experience of Project Team<sup>5</sup>**

- Identify organization of Project Team, including project manager and country team leads for Canada, Mexico and the United States where relevant;
- Provide a summary of qualifications and experience for each team member (including alternates) and any other relevant information (e.g. language proficiency).

##### **4. Allocation of Time (Hours) and Costs by Task and Team Member**

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<sup>5</sup> At this stage, the consultant is only expected to provide this information with respect to its own team. Information relating to subconsultants, if any, will be requested at a later date and once communities for pilot projects are selected.

- For each member of the project team, provide a detailed breakdown of assigned tasks, hours worked, and labor costs;
- Identify alternates who can fill in for the identified project manager and country team leaders where relevant in the event of unforeseen circumstances;
- Provide a summary of qualifications and experience for each team member (including alternates) and any other relevant information (e.g. language proficiency).

#### **5. Added Value Within Identified Budget**

- Identify any additional tasks or activities not specified within the terms of reference but that will be undertaken by the contractor at no additional cost.

The consultant must provide the following documents:

#### **Annex A: Declaration of Acceptance and Impartiality and Independence for Contract**

- Provide a completed copy of the CEC form identified in the Annex to this Request for Proposals.

#### **Annex B: Letters of Recommendation and References**

- Two letters of recommendation from previous assignments.
- Details and contact information for three or more references.

#### **Annex C: Résumés of Each Team Member**

- Résumés for all project team members;
- Résumés of identified alternates for the project manager and country team leaders where relevant.

#### **Annex D: Examples of Previous Work**

- Provide two samples of previous work.

#### **Annex E: Corporate Information**

- Identify relevant corporate information pertaining to this work.

### **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 applicants' 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.

All work within the contract must be completed within 25 months.

### **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](#). Proposals that the CEC Secretariat determines to be complete will be evaluated by the CEC Secretariat according to the evaluation criteria below. Prospective consultants who submit proposals determined by the CEC Secretariat to be incomplete will be so notified in writing.



<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Maximum Point Rating</b>
Knowledge and understanding of project requirements	25
Suitability of the proposed approach and work plan	25
Organization and qualifications of project team	15
Multi-lateral experience of project team, specifically with indigenous organizations and youth	15
Allocation of resources (time, cost) by task and team members	15
Added value within identified budget	5
<i>Total</i>	100

A minimum score of at least 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 designated staff and technical reviewers, who will form an Evaluation Committee. Each member of the Evaluation Committee will receive copies of the proposals and will be asked to rate each proposal using the evaluation criteria and their maximum point ratings as given above.

The CEC's designated staff 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, as rated according to the evaluation criteria, will be noted and summarized. Once the selection has been made, the prospective consultant(s) 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 maximum budget for this activity is C\$ 700,000 (seven hundred thousand Canadian dollars), including professional fees and expenses. The consultant should earmark no less than C\$30,000 for the implementation of the defined action plan for each pilot (C\$90,000 in total) out of this budget.

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 was 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 in the proposal, the consultant should indicate the total cost in Canadian dollars as well as the currency of choice, for comparison purposes, detailing the exchange rate used.

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

The consultant will be paid according to the table on deliverables and milestones in the “Description of Services” and “Estimated level of resources required” sections above.

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 after 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.

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.

## **G. 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](#).

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

The proposal, including all relevant attachments, must be received by the CEC Secretariat by **17:00 EDT on June 18, 2025**. Proposals submitted after this deadline will not be considered.

Proposal format must be in Adobe PDF format. Once the proposal has been submitted electronically, the CEC will confirm receipt within three business days.

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

## **The contact person to submit the proposals via e-mail is:**

Ilse Esparza Magaña

Project Lead; Commission for Environmental Cooperation

[iesparza@cec.org](mailto:iesparza@cec.org)

**ANNEX A** (this Annex will correspond to Schedule D in the CEC Terms of Reference for the contracting procedure)

**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: \_\_\_\_\_