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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

CEC's English Style Guide update

Commission for Environmental Cooperation

2025

I. Overview

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) is requesting proposals from prospective consultants related to the review and update the CEC's English Style Guide (Version 4.0, 2016). The selected consultant will analyze the current guide and recommend modifications to ensure alignment with contemporary language practices, including the integration of directives for more inclusive content. Updates should also reflect recent changes in grammar and orthographic rules. Additionally, the consultant will be expected to incorporate insights from the CEC's latest written communication and translation work to enhance consistency and clarity across all communications materials from the organization.

About the CEC

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) focuses on strengthening the protection of the environment and fosters sustainable development across North America—for the benefit of all, today and into the future. The CEC facilitates knowledge exchange, develops resources and tools, and promotes inclusive and diverse public engagement. Since its creation in 1994, the CEC has been a unique example of regional collaboration.

The CEC was established by the governments of Canada, Mexico and the United States through the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation, a parallel environmental agreement to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). As of 2020, the CEC operates in accordance with the Environmental Cooperation Agreement (ECA), which entered into force at the same time as the CUSMA/T-MEC/USMCA trade agreement.

Find out more at: www.cec.org

II. Terms of Reference

1. Overview and Scope

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) operates in three official languages: English, French, and Spanish. To ensure clarity, consistency, and professionalism across all communication materials, the CEC maintains a comprehensive style guide for each language. Documents prepared for public dissemination, internal discussion, and collaboration with partners must adhere to these guides.

Alongside the [Guidelines for CEC Documents and Information Products](#), the English Style Guide serves as the foundational reference for writing, translation, editing and review of all CEC documents in English. The objective of this project is to update the existing style guide (Version 4.0, 2016) to reflect current writing standards, best practices in inclusive language, and recent developments in grammar and orthography (United States). The updated guide will support the CEC's commitment to clear, accessible, and equitable communication.

2. Description of Services

The consultant will work in close coordination with designated CEC contacts to deliver the following services:

Comprehensive Analysis: Review the CEC's 2016 English Style Guide and provide a detailed analysis, noting areas for improvement and recommending changes to produce an updated version of the guide in accordance with contemporary linguistic practices and standards, as well as current guidelines for writing more inclusive texts.

Drafting the Updated Guide: Prepare a draft version of the updated English Style Guide, that—in addition to reflecting recent changes in grammar and spelling rules—incorporates feedback from CEC staff and collaborators and integrates preferred usage based on the CEC's most recent publication and translation work.

Finalization: Produce the final version of the CEC's 2026 English Style Guide, ensuring it is ready for implementation across all CEC communications and document workflows.

The consultant is expected to apply best practices in style guide development, engage with CEC key actors for input, and deliver a resource that contributes to enhancing the quality and consistency of CEC's English-language materials.

Deliverables and expected results; timeline

The consultant will be responsible for the following deliverables, each with associated timelines and milestones to ensure a transparent and efficient process:

Phase 1: Analysis and Recommendations

Deliverable: Comprehensive analysis of the CEC's 2016 English Style Guide, including a written report with recommendations for updates (focusing on enhancement rather than complete re-writing) and any necessary new additions (including inclusivity and current grammar/orthography standards).

Milestones:

- Kickoff Meeting: Within 1 week of contract signing, meet with CEC contacts to confirm project scope and expectations.
- Submission of Analysis Report: Within 3 weeks of project start.

Phase 2: Drafting the Updated Style Guide

Deliverable: Draft version of the updated CEC English Style Guide, incorporating recent changes in grammar and spelling rules, relevant comments received from CEC staff and collaborators and integrate preferred usage based on the CEC's most recent publication and translation work. Once again, far from a complete rewrite, the work requested involves improving the existing guide.

Milestones:

- Draft Submission: Within 6 weeks of project start.
- Review Period: 2 weeks for CEC to provide feedback.
- Feedback Integration: Consultant to revise draft within 1 week after receiving consolidated feedback.

Phase 3: Finalization and Delivery

Deliverable: Final version of the CEC 2026 English Style Guide, ready for implementation and distribution.

Milestones:

- Final Submission: Within 10 weeks of project start.
- Presentation: Consultant to present the final guide and answer questions in a closing meeting.

Summary Timeline Table

Phase	Deliverable	Milestone/Deadline
1. Analysis	Kick-off meeting	Week 1
	Analysis Report	Week 3
2. Drafting	Draft Style Guide	Week 6
	CEC Review	Weeks 7–8
	Feedback Integration	Week 9
3. Finalization	Final Style Guide	Week 10
	Presentation/Walkthrough	Week 10

Note:

- All expected products must be submitted in **electronic format** (Microsoft Word files), fully complying with the [Guidelines for CEC Documents and Information Products](#), and following the format specified in the [official CEC report template](#).
- The consultant is expected to maintain regular communication with CEC contacts and provide progress updates at each milestone.
- Any adjustments to the timeline must be approved in advance by the CEC.

All work is envisioned to be completed by 27 February 2026.

C. Periodic Reporting Requirements

Throughout the project, and in order to facilitate the review process, the consultant will work in close collaboration with the CEC Secretariat and in meetings with staff members, as well as, external editors and translators who normally work on CEC documents. However, the consultant shall report only to, and receive directions only from, the CEC designated Staff.

All work will be conducted from the consultant's own office.

D. Quality of Deliverables

The consultant will be responsible for providing deliverables of **publishable quality** (i.e., copy-edited and reviewed prior to submission) in English (United States).

Upon delivery by the consultant of the elements of this work, 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.

As a supporting document the consultant shall refer to the [Guidelines for CEC Documents and Information Products](#).

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.

Similarly, the consulting entity or individual shall inform the Commission to what extent—if applicable—it has relied on generative artificial intelligence (for example, ChatGPT) to carry out the required work and deliverables under this call for proposals and as stipulated in the corresponding contract, and to what extent such use was decisive in the provision of the services.

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.

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 consultant must demonstrate:

- Extensive experience in editing and translating English-language documents, with a strong understanding of current writing styles and standards.
- Proven expertise in applying inclusive language, ideally within the North American context.
- Native-level proficiency in written and spoken English (United States).
- Familiarity with international communication practices and the ability to update an existing style guide, focusing on enhancement rather than complete re-writing.
- Strong collaboration skills and the ability to work effectively with diverse teams, including editors and translators.

Preference will be given to candidates whose mother tongue is English and who have a track record of successfully updating style guides or similar reference materials for organizations operating in multilingual and multicultural environments.

4. Proposal Submission

Prospective consultants should refer to the **Terms of Reference (Section II)** of this document 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, if applicable.

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

1. Knowledge and Understanding of Work

- Provide a brief statement with relevant background information that demonstrates the consultant's experience and knowledge of the subject. The purpose of this statement is not only to show the consultant's general and specific familiarity with the objectives of the work to be carried out, but also to highlight their writing skills.
- In addition, the statement should address the desired results; the guidelines or parameters within which those results are to be achieved; the resources available (human, financial, technical, and organizational support that will contribute to achieving the results); and any other aspects the individual or team submitting the proposal considers relevant.

2. Organization, Qualifications and Experience of Project Team

- Identify organization of project team, including project manager and team members.
- Provide a summary of qualifications and experience for each team member (including alternates) and any other relevant information (e.g. language proficiencies).

3. Allocation of Time (Hours) and Costs by Task and Team Member

- For each member of the project team, provide a detailed breakdown of assigned tasks, hours worked, and labor costs.
- Identify any other direct and indirect costs, and applicable taxes.
- Clearly identify total hours worked under and the total cost (including taxes) of this project.

Annex A: Letters of Recommendation and References

- Provide two letters of recommendation from previous assignments.

Annex B: Resumes for Each Team Member

- Include resumes for all project team members.

Annex C: Examples of Previous Work

- Provide two samples of previous work, preferably related to guideline development or editorial projects.

Annex D: Declaration of Acceptance and Impartiality and Independence for Contract

- A copy of the completed and signed CEC form must be provided. Annex D.1 is used when the consulting entity is an individual and Annex D.2 is used when the consulting entity is an institution or company.

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.

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 following criteria:

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Point Rating
Understanding of project requirements	10
Suitability of the proposed approach and work plan	10
Consultant's experience and qualifications and competency of key personnel	40
Consultant's ability to show analytical capabilities and effective writing	30
Adequacy of budget	10
<i>Total</i>	100

For a proposal to proceed in the selection process, it must obtain a minimum score of **80 points**. The evaluation will consider the **quality-price ratio**, and the merits and weaknesses of each proposal will be identified and summarized according to the evaluation criteria.

Once the selection has been made, the individual or entity with the highest score will be notified. Each participant will also be informed of the score obtained for their proposal and, upon request, its ranking compared to others. Under no circumstances will access be granted to the evaluations or scores of other participants and their proposals.

E. Estimated level of resources required.

The maximum budget for this activity is C\$10,000.00 (ten thousand Canadian dollars), including professional fees and expenses.

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. Payment Conditions

Payments to the individual or entity responsible for the consultancy will be made upon delivery and acceptance by the Secretariat of the results or deliverables, along with the corresponding invoice.

Payments will cover only consultancy fees and legitimate expenses incurred in accordance with the terms stipulated in the signed professional services contract, and only upon written acceptance by the CEC Secretariat of the agreed deliverables, as well as the corresponding invoice from the contracted party.

Invoices that meet the CEC's payment requirements and are approved for payment are typically settled within 30 days from the date the Commission receives them.

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. Deadlines for Proposal Submission and Decision

The proposal, including all relevant attachments, must be received by the CEC Secretariat by **11 December 2025 (17:00 ET)**. Proposals submitted after this deadline will not be considered.

Proposals — addressed to Yadira Rodríguez Murcia, Assistant, Communications, Outreach and Engagement Unit — must be submitted as Adobe Acrobat PDF files and sent via email to: yrodriguez@cec.org.

The CEC will confirm receipt of electronically submitted proposals within three (3) business days. If the individual or entity submitting the proposal does not receive an email confirmation within this period, they should contact the CEC at: yrodriguez@cec.org

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



Annex D.1 - SCHEDULE D (Individuals)

DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE, IMPARTIALITY AND INDEPENDENCE FOR CONTRACT

I, the undersigned,

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

ACCEPTANCE

☐

hereby declare that I accept to serve as a 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: _____



Annex D.2 - SCHEDULE D (Companies or Institutions)

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

I, the undersigned,

Last Name: _____ **First Name:** _____,

acting as the legal representative of _____

ACCEPTANCE

☐ hereby declare that _____ accepts to serve as a 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.)

☐ _____ **is 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 _____ impartiality or independence, and that may constitute a conflict of interest.

OR

☐ _____ **is 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 intends 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 _____ 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, _____ may set out measures it intends 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: _____