



Request for Proposals

Long-term Impact Assessment of the CEC project, “Using Ecosystem Function and Traditional Ecological Knowledge Together to Build Resilience and Adapt to Climate Change”

Commission for Environmental Cooperation

2021

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) is requesting proposals from prospective consultants to assess the long-term impact of the CEC project, “Using Ecosystem Function and Traditional Ecological Knowledge Together to Build Resilience and Adapt to Climate Change,” implemented from 2015 to 2017 as part of its 2015-2016 Operational Plan.

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

Overview and Scope

In 2015-2017, the CEC implemented the project, “Using Ecosystem Function and Traditional Ecological Knowledge Together to Build Resilience and Adapt to Climate Change,” with the objective to share and pilot ecosystem vulnerability assessment and management tools for integrated riparian and/or water catchment management across local and Indigenous communities in Canada, Mexico and the United States. More specifically, the project objectives were to:

- Create awareness about functional ecosystems and their role in building resilience and supporting adaptation in vulnerable communities in Canada, Mexico and the United States.
- Share knowledge among experts and local stakeholders in Mexico, Canada and the United States about integrated ecosystem management tools used at the community level in the three countries.
- Assess risks and opportunities in designated Mexican and Canadian study areas, using traditional and local ecological knowledge and other information to understand functions related to potential ecological condition, and assess vulnerabilities of communities to projected climate change.
- Produce case study reports, assessments, and study-area management plans in close collaboration with local communities.

Through this project, the CEC facilitated the exchange of diverse tools, methodologies and assessments to support the development of ecosystem-based tools to promote local adaptation in communities vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Additionally, the project produced two site-specific assessments, one for each selected site (Georgina Island First Nation, Canada, and Tabasco, Mexico). Each assessment was developed considering local and traditional ecological knowledge and various tools to understand ecosystem function. Subsequently, a plan for each site was produced and made available to the communities for implementation.

Now, four years after the completion of the project, an assessment of the impact of these efforts is feasible and desirable, in order to evaluate critically the project's successes and identify areas it could have been improved.

This assessment will first review the implementation of the project to evaluate if it achieved its objectives, the outcomes (as spelled out in the project description), and its successes and challenges, and then draw some recommendations on what could have been done to make the project more effective.

Secondly, the assessment will examine if the project achieved its longer-term goals to: 1) improve ecosystem-based, local adaptation in the communities engaged in this project; and 2) support other local and Indigenous communities in their efforts to restore local riparian ecosystems to their proper, functioning state.

Supporting documentation and information will be provided by the CEC Secretariat during this assessment work.

Terms of Reference

Description of Services

The Consultant will prepare an assessment report which will consider the objectives of the CEC project, its rationale, its two-year implementation, and all results accomplished. The assessment will give due consideration to the main activities carried out over the period, as well as performance measures and targets, if available. The conclusion should reflect whether the project has yielded the expected environmental outcomes, as per the project description.

The report will draw on the perspectives of, and reflect input from, past and current staff of the CEC Secretariat involved in the project, the beneficiaries of the project (Georgina Island First Nation, Canada, and Tabasco, Mexico), and selected officials from Canada, Mexico and the United States. The interviewees will be selected in collaboration with the contract supervisor.

In preparing the assessment, the Consultant will also take into account all relevant CEC reports, documents and communications associated with the development and implementation of the project.

Deliverables

The calendar of deliverables is as follows:

- Submit to the Secretariat details of the proposed steps to carry out this assessment, based on the information provided in this Request for Proposals and following a kick-off call with the CEC Secretariat, by 18 June 2021.

- Submit to the Secretariat an outline of the report and an interview guide, by 2 July 2021.
- Develop a list of interviewees in collaboration with the Secretariat, by 9 July 2021. Additional interviewees identified as this assessment progresses, will be shared with the Secretariat for approval on a rolling basis.
- Submit to the Secretariat a first draft of the report, by 17 September 2021.
- Based on the Secretariat's feedback (by 4 October 2021), submit the final draft of the report, **by 29 October 2021**.

The report **shall not exceed 15 pages** and be prepared in English.

Reporting Requirements

Throughout this work, the Consultant will collaborate closely with the contract supervisor, and will receive direction only from the CEC Secretariat.

Quality of Deliverables

The consultant is responsible for providing deliverables **of publishable quality** (i.e., copy-edited prior to submission) in English, when applicable, for the technical editing of the materials. The consultant will submit to the CEC Secretariat all written material (including complete drafts and final reports) in Microsoft Word, following the format of the CEC's [Report Template](#) and adhering to the precepts of the [Guidelines for CEC Documents and Information Products](#), as supplemented by the CEC's English [Style Guide](#). Supporting documents for tables, figures and maps will be submitted with the report in their original file format (e.g., Excel or ArcGIS). Note that all amounts shall be presented in metric units. The CEC Secretariat will be responsible, when applicable, for translation, printing, publication and distribution of products from this activity.

Upon delivery by the consultant of a final version of the report or other written materials under the project, the CEC reserves the right to a 15-business day period to review the document(s), notify the consultant of any potential issues or errors, and return the document(s) to the consultant for appropriate corrections, at no extra cost. In all cases, contract payments will be withheld if products submitted to the CEC fail to fulfill the quality and formatting requirements specified above. In the event that the consultant neglects to make the required corrections or if, following corrections, a deliverable remains unsatisfactory, the document shall be edited or revised by a third party designated by the Secretariat, the cost of which shall be deducted from the consultant's fees at a rate of C\$60 per hour.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of conveying someone else's original expression or creative ideas as one's own and can be a violation of copyright law. Neither intentional nor unintentional plagiarism is acceptable to the CEC. The consultant must follow good scholarly methodology in preparing reports and deliverables under the contract, including systematic referencing in footnotes or in-sentence references, for any secondary sources, quotations, data, etc., that do not originate with the author. Sources for tables and figures reproduced from other literature must be given in a "Source" attribution immediately below the table or figure. Failure to properly reference the source of such borrowed material constitutes plagiarism and will be considered a breach of contract. For further information, see [Guidelines for CEC Documents and Information Products](#).

In addition, for every written deliverable submitted, the Consultant must use iThenticate 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 fulfill these requirements.

Requirements

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

The consultant, as well as all their personnel and subconsultants, must reside and be authorized to work legally in Canada, Mexico or the United States of America. If travel is required, the consultant must possess valid documentation to travel within these countries.

The consultant must be fluent in both written and spoken English and Spanish

The proposal should not exceed five (5) pages, exclusive of applicant resume or corporate brochures. It should include a detailed cost breakdown, including number of person/days of key and other personnel, direct and indirect costs, and applicable taxes.

Potential consultants must also submit any additional information that will assist the CEC Secretariat in the evaluation of their proposal, such as samples of previous work and letters of recommendation from previous assignments. This information is not subject to the five (5) page limit.

The consultant deemed best qualified will be selected on the basis of a competitive process, in accordance with sections 2.5-2.7 of the [CEC Consultant Services Procurement Manual](#).

The CEC Secretariat intends to use its standard milestone-based contract for these services. A sample is available upon request.

The consultant will be paid in the following manner:

- Upon signature of the contract and invoice
- Upon receipt and approval of deliverables and invoices

Payment shall be made upon receipt and documented acceptance by the Secretariat of statement(s) of account/invoice(s) from the consultant. Settlement of invoices that are acceptable for payment will normally be made 30 days from the date of receipt by the Commission.

The budget for this activity will not exceed C\$16,000 (Canadian dollars), including professional fees and expenses. Reimbursable expenses are detailed in the CEC standard contract, available upon request.

For universities and nongovernmental organizations, note that the CEC accepts that overhead be charged for administration and other indirect costs up to 15% of the total value of the contract.

If the proposal were presented by a consultant established in Mexico, the applicable value-added tax will be 0%, in accordance with Article 29, section IV, paragraph a) of Mexico's VAT Act, as these are technical services that were engaged from abroad.

If a currency other than Canadian dollars is used, the consultant should indicate the total cost of the professional services in Canadian dollars as well as the currency of choice, for comparison purposes.

Conflict of Interest

“Conflict of interest” means, but is not limited to, a situation where a consultant’s personal interest is sufficiently connected with professional duties under the contract, such that it results in a reasonable apprehension that said personal interest may influence the exercise of professional responsibilities under the contract. For example, a direct conflict of interest exists when the consultant is also a government official involved in CEC work, or is related to or closely affiliated with such a person, CEC staff member or third party involved with the performance of services for the CEC.

The consultant will inform the CEC Secretariat of any circumstance that existed prior to the execution of this contract or that could manifest during the performance of this contract, which could constitute a conflict of interest. The consultant will complete and sign, on behalf of all his or her personnel, the attached *Declaration of Acceptance and Impartiality and Independence* (see Annex). The Consultant will also take note of the [CEC Consultant Services Procurement Manual](#).

Deadlines for Proposal Submission and Decision

The proposal, including all relevant attachments, must be received by the CEC Secretariat offices by **17:00 EDT on 28 May 2021**. Proposals submitted after this deadline will not be considered.

Proposals must be submitted via e-mail to challmich@cec.org with a copy to <rinfiesta@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:

Catherine Hallmich
Lead, Planning and Performance
Commission for Environmental Cooperation
Tel: 514-350-4376

The CEC Secretariat intends to select the consultant and notify the applicants by 17:00 EDT on 4 June 2021.

ANNEX (see also Schedule D in CEC standard contract)

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

I, the undersigned,

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

ACCEPTANCE

☐

hereby declare that I accept to serve as consultant in the subject contract.

IMPARTIALITY AND INDEPENDENCE

(If you accept to serve as a consultant, please check one of the two following boxes. The choice of which box to check will be determined after you have taken into account, inter alia, whether there exists any past or present relationship, direct or indirect, with any of the Parties to the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation ("NAAEC") or their Commission for Environmental Cooperation ("CEC") representatives, Secretariat staff, and/or third parties involved in the performance of this contract, whether financial, professional, familial, or of another kind and whether the nature of any such relationship is such that disclosure is called for pursuant to the criteria set out below. Any doubt should be resolved in favor of disclosure.)

☐

I am impartial and independent with respect to the NAAEC Parties and their CEC representatives, CEC Secretariat staff, and third parties involved in the performance of this contract, and intend to remain so; to the best of my knowledge, there are no facts or circumstances, past or present that need be disclosed because they are likely to give rise to justifiable doubts as to my impartiality or independence, and that may constitute a conflict of interest.

OR

☐

I am impartial and independent with respect to the NAAEC Parties and their CEC representatives, Secretariat staff, and/or third parties involved in the performance of this contract, and intend to remain so; **however**, I wish to call your attention to the following facts or circumstances which I hereafter disclose because they might be of such a nature as to give rise to justifiable doubts as to my impartiality or independence, and that may constitute a conflict of interest. Where facts or circumstances exist that might give rise to the latter such doubts, I may set out measures I intend to take to mitigate or eliminate any doubts regarding my impartiality and independence, and/or a possible conflict of interest. (Use separate sheet and attach.)

Date: _____

Signature: _____