

## **ADVANCE CONTRACT AWARD NOTICE (ACAN)**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

An ACAN is a public notice indicating to the supplier community that a department or agency intends to award a contract for goods, services or construction to a pre-identified supplier, thereby allowing other suppliers to signal their interest in bidding, by submitting a statement of capabilities. If no supplier submits a statement of capabilities that meets the requirements set out in the ACAN, on or before the closing date stated in the ACAN, the contracting officer may then proceed with the award to the pre-identified supplier.

The **Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC)** has a requirement to conduct an assessment of international practices and emerging trends in the funding of natural sciences and engineering, that impact how NSE research should be funded.

The objective is to look at the role NSERC specifically plays in the Canadian landscape, and to compare this role with comparator organizations internationally.

The purpose of this Advance Contract Award Notice (ACAN) is to signal the government's intention to award a contract for these services to **The Council of Canadian Academies (CCA)**.

Before awarding a contract, however, the government would like to provide other suppliers with the opportunity to demonstrate that they are capable of satisfying the requirements set out in this Notice, by submitting a statement of capabilities during the 15 calendar day posting period.

If other potential suppliers submit a statement of capabilities during the 15 calendar day posting period that meet the requirements set out in the ACAN, the government will proceed to a full tendering process on either the government's electronic tendering service or through traditional means, in order to award the contract. If no other supplier submits, on or before the closing date, a statement of capabilities meeting the requirements set out in the ACAN, a contract will be awarded to the pre-selected supplier.

### **2. DEFINITION OF SERVICE REQUIREMENTS**

This assessment will provide a diagnostic on leading practices for funding NSE research, factoring in relevant trends and challenges. Recognizing differences between natural sciences and engineering (and across disciplines), as well as important factors that influence the relevance of international practices to the Canadian context, this assessment will identify practices that could inform future directions for NSERC research funding. It will also situate NSERC in Canada's NSE funding ecosystem relative to NSE funding agencies in other countries.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

Since the establishment of NSERC 40 years ago, the landscape of science and engineering research has changed dramatically. There has been an emergence of new fields and challenge areas, and a rapid growth in technological advances, interdisciplinary research and international collaboration.

NSERC's current strategic plan, NSERC 2020, is in its final year. This, together with the arrival of NSERC's new President, make this the ideal time to embark on a new strategic plan.

NSERC's mandate covers the broad spectrum of NSE research, including fundamental and applied research, all STEM disciplines, research at a variety of institutions (including colleges) and researchers at

all training and career stages. As such, it is proposed that this assessment encompass the breadth of research under NSERC's purview.

To provide a strong foundation to strategic planning efforts, it would behoove NSERC to assess the type of support, funding, mechanisms used to support NSE research in Canada, what role the organization serves in that rapidly changing ecosystem, and how it compares to international counterparts.

#### 4. CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT OF STATEMENT OF CAPABILITIES

Any interested supplier must demonstrate by way of a statement of capabilities that it meets the following requirements:

- Extensive\*\* experience on evaluating the best available evidence on particularly complex issues where the science may be challenging to understand.
- Vast knowledge\* of current Canadian programs, policies.
- Extensive\*\* experience in outreach activities on public policy issues such as panels or roundtables with key stakeholders in the science community, including postsecondary institutions, researchers.
- Extensive\*\* experience convening experts from across Canada and abroad to evaluate the best available evidence on complex scientific topics of public interest.
- Extensive\*\* experience in developing policy papers pertaining to the following subject matter; natural sciences and engineering; research and innovation.
- Extensive\*\* experience in working with the federal government;
- Extensive\*\* experience in overseeing strategic Canadian policy development and communication processes;
- Ability to engage with multiple stakeholders from diverse fields such as academia, public administration and industry;
- Ability to provide services in both official languages;
- Strong credibility and existing relationships with the post-secondary research community.

\* **Vast knowledge** is defined as thorough understanding of a topic, including the perspectives of different stakeholders and associated political, economic social and technical considerations. This understanding would normally be obtained through substantial research, stakeholder outreach and first-hand experience.

\*\***Extensive experience** is defined as a minimum of 4 years of experience of which one is within the last year.

#### 5. APPLICABILITY OF TRADE AGREEMENTS

This procurement is subject to the following trade agreements:

- Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA)
- World Trade Organization - Agreement on Government Procurement (WTO-AGP)
- North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

## 6. JUSTIFICATION FOR PRE-IDENTIFIED SUPPLIER

Under the section: 10.2.4 Exception (c) of the Government Contracts Regulations:

The nature of this work requires complete objectivity. Informing on Canadian decision making policies without force or coercion is important to public confidence and the integrity of the federal departments involved.

Soliciting bids on the open market invites unreasonable risks in maintaining objectivity within the process and will create security concerns for Canada's ability to preserve a source of supply that may be necessary to ensure that future needs for the assessment of evidence on complex scientific topics of public interest to inform decision-making in Canada can be met.

Since the Council of Canadian Academies (CCA) is a not-for-profit organization, funded and created by the federal government with the sole purpose of convening the best experts in their respective fields to assess the evidence on complex scientific topics of public interest to inform decision-making in Canada.

## 7. GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS REGULATIONS EXCEPTIONS

Section 6 d) of the Government Contracts Regulations and contains four exceptions that permit the contracting authority to set-aside the requirements to solicit bids. The one that applies to this requirement is:

a) only one person or firm is capable of performing the contract.

## 8. PERIOD OF PROPOSED CONTRACT

Proposed period:	One (1) year
Estimated start date:	March, 2020
Estimated end date:	March 31, 2021

## 9. ESTIMATED VALUE OF THE PROPOSED CONTRACT

The estimated value of the contract is \$424,900.00 excluding GST.

## 10. PROPOSED SERVICE PROVIDER

Canadian Council of Academies (CCA)  
180 Elgin St., Suite 1401  
Ottawa, ON K2P 2K3

## 11. SUBMISSION OF STATEMENT OF CAPABILITIES BY SUPPLIERS

Suppliers who consider themselves fully qualified and available to meet the specified requirements may submit a statement of capabilities in writing to the Contracting Authority identified in this Notice on or before the closing date of this Notice. The statement of capabilities must clearly demonstrate how the supplier meets the advertised requirements.

**12. CLOSING DATE OF SUBMISSION OF STATEMENTS OF CAPABILITIES**

Monday March 16, 2020 at 2PM EST

**13. INQUIRIES AND SUBMISSION OF STATEMENTS OF CAPABILITIES**

Inquiries and statements of capabilities are to be directed to:

Theresa McDonald  
Senior Procurement Advisor  
Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council  
Telephone: 613-992-4518  
Email: [Tenders@nserc-crsng.gc.ca](mailto:Tenders@nserc-crsng.gc.ca)