



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Researcher – Consultant
Benchmark the Canadian engineering accreditation system

Date Issued: **September 3, 2021**

Interest Disclosure: **September 22, 2021**

Proposal Submission Deadline: **October 6, 2021**

Questions concerning this RFP should be directed to:

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Engineers Canada

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Table of Contents

- 1. Statement of Purpose 3
- 2. General Information 3
 - 2.1 Engineers Canada Background..... 3
 - 2.2 Background on the Project 4
 - 2.3 Definition of Terms 4
- 3. Project Scope 5
 - 3.1 Scope of Work..... 5
 - 3.2 Deliverables..... 6
 - 3.4 Budget..... 6
 - 3.5 Project Timeline 6
- 4. RFP Submission and Evaluation Process 7
 - 4.1 Submission Schedule..... 7
 - 4.2 Interest Disclosure and Bidder Questions 7
 - 4.3 How to Submit a Proposal..... 7
 - 4.4 Proposal Evaluation 7
- 5. RFP Terms and Conditions 10
 - 5.1 Process conditions 10
 - 5.2 Competitive process 11
 - 5.3 Proposal Revisions 11
 - 5.4 Cost of preparing proposals..... 11
 - 5.5 Clarification of proposal..... 11
 - 5.6 Acceptance of RFP conditions..... 12
 - 5.7 Negotiation Delay 12
 - 5.8 Notification of Success..... 12
 - 5.9 Reservation of Rights 12
 - 5.10 Limitation of Damage..... 12
 - 5.11 Proposal Documents 13

1. Statement of Purpose

Engineers Canada is seeking proposals from entities (“**Bidders**”) for the Benchmarking Project (the “**Project**”), a component of our strategic priority to “Investigate and Validate the Purpose and Scope of Accreditation” (the “**Program**”).

Successful completion of this Project will entail several key services and deliverables, including:

- Conducting an environmental scan,
- Producing a benchmark report,
- Presenting the key findings from the benchmarking report, and
- Working with the Benchmarking Task Force.

All work on the Project must be completed by **March 31, 2022**.

2. General Information

2.1 Engineers Canada Background

Engineers Canada upholds the honour, integrity, and interests of the engineering profession by supporting consistent high standards in the regulation of engineering, encouraging the growth of the profession in Canada, and inspiring public confidence. For over 80 years, we have worked on behalf of the provincial and territorial associations that regulate engineering practice and license the country’s 300,000 members of the engineering profession.

Our work is focused on 10 core purposes, as established by Engineers Canada’s members, the 12 provincial and territorial engineering regulators:

1. Accrediting undergraduate engineering programs.
2. Facilitating and fostering working relationships between and among the regulators.
3. Providing services and tools that enable the assessment of engineering qualifications, foster excellence in engineering practice and regulation, and facilitate mobility of practitioners within Canada.
4. Offering national programs.
5. Advocating to the federal government.
6. Actively monitoring, researching, and advising on changes and advances that impact the Canadian regulatory environment and the engineering profession.
7. Managing risks and opportunities associated with mobility of work and practitioners internationally.
8. Fostering recognition of the value and contribution of the profession to society and sparking interest in the next generation of professionals.
9. Promoting diversity and inclusivity in the profession that reflects Canadian society.
10. Protecting any word(s), mark, design, slogan, or logo, or any literary, or other work, as the case may be, pertaining to the engineering profession or to its objects.

More information about Engineers Canada can be found on our website at www.engineerscanada.ca.

2.2 Background on the Project

Accreditation systems exist throughout Canada, where they are often tied to robust systems of professional regulation and in other countries where they may or may not be related to licensure or registration systems. All accreditation systems establish a standard and audit, whether or not programs meet that standard. As such, they are a type of quality management system.

As part of a key strategic priority, Engineers Canada seeks consulting support in the research and writing of a benchmarking report to understand the various types of accreditation systems, and how the Canadian engineering accreditation system compares. Specifically, the purpose of the Program is to discover and understand the foundational elements of accreditation and their relationship to the overall licensure system. The report will serve as one input to the Program's development of a recommended path forward.

Working in collaboration with the Benchmarking Task Force, the selected Bidder will support the Program by completing the Project, which is to **benchmark the Canadian engineering accreditation system to other professional accreditation systems in Canada, and to other engineering accreditation systems worldwide.**

The Benchmarking Task Force is a group of six (6) volunteers with expertise in accreditation, engineering education and engineering education. Their mandate is to oversee the development of the benchmarking report, and to create a paper of key considerations from the benchmarking report for the Program. Meeting monthly for the duration of the project, the Benchmarking Task Force will set the scope for the benchmarking exercise, provide feedback to the draft benchmarking report, and approve the final benchmarking report and presentation.

2.3 Definition of Terms

Accreditation: a process of formal recognition by a professional external body whereby an educational establishment or programme meets certain agreed quality standards.¹

Accreditation may be focused on inputs, process or outputs or any combination of these. Programme accreditation tends to focus on inputs such as staffing, programme resources and curricula design and content. Sometimes it addresses the teaching process and the level of student support. Occasionally programme accreditation explores outcomes such as graduate abilities and employability. In some cases, the medium of delivery might be the key focus, especially when it differs from the norm.²

¹ Oxford Reference. (n.d.). Accreditation. In *OxfordReference.com*. Retrieved August 12, 2021.

from <https://www.oxfordreference.com/search?q=accreditation&searchBtn=Search&isQuickSearch=true>

² Harvey, L. (2004). The power of accreditation: Views of academics. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 26(2), 207–223. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080042000218267>

Benchmarking report: the report that results from benchmarking which is defined as the process of measuring products, services, and processes against those of organizations known to be leaders in one or more aspects of their operations.³

Environmental scan: the document that results from environmental scanning which is the ongoing tracking of trends and occurrences in an organization's internal and external environment that bear on its success, currently and in the future. The results are extremely useful in shaping goals and strategies... Effective environmental scanning examines both quantitative and qualitative changes.⁴

3. Project Scope

3.1 Scope of Work

The selected Bidder shall:

- 1) Scoping Exercise: confirm the scope of the benchmarking report with the Benchmarking Task Force
- 2) Environmental Scan: Conduct an environmental scan of accreditation systems that includes:
 - At least 3 other non-health professions regulated in Canada
 - Engineering in at least 3 other jurisdictions outside of Canada
 - Other professions in jurisdictions outside of Canada
 - Relationships between accreditation and the regulatory environment and any dependencies in these jurisdictions/professions
- 3) Draft Report: Deliver to the Benchmarking Task Force a thorough and detailed draft benchmarking report with key findings
- 4) Final Report: Taking into consideration all feedback received from the Benchmarking Task Force, deliver a final benchmarking report
- 5) Presentation: Make a presentation of the key findings to stakeholders, as defined by the Benchmarking Task Force.
- 6) Additional Support: Provide advice to the Benchmarking Task Force as they prepare a paper highlighting key considerations from this Project for the Program.

Additionally, Bidders will be asked to work with the Benchmarking Task Force to receive advice and feedback on the benchmarking report and presentation and they may wish to include other quality assurance activities (i.e., from governmental and non-governmental environments) in the environmental scan.

Throughout the Project, the selected Bidder will be expected to liaise with the Project Manager to establish and confirm directional plans for completing the work, and to provide regular progress reports using an agreed format and frequency. The selected Bidder will also be required to attend and participate at monthly Benchmarking Task Force meetings.

³ American Society of Quality. (n.d.). Benchmarking. In <https://asq.org/quality-resources/benchmarking>. Retrieved August 17, 2021.

⁴ Fordham University. (2021, August). *Conducting an environmental scan*. Fordham University. https://www.fordham.edu/info/26625/conducting_an_environmental_scan

3.2 Deliverables

The selected Bidder shall competently deliver to Engineers Canada each of the items outlined in section [3.1 \(Scope of Work\)](#), resulting in successful completion of the Project. All deliverables are subject to acceptance and approval by Engineers Canada and the Benchmarking Task Force.

3.4 Budget

Engineers Canada has a budget of up to \$25,000 for this Project. To be considered, proposals should cite a total Project cost within this range.

3.5 Project Timeline

All proposals must include a timeline reflecting how each of the items outlined in [section 3.1 \(Scope of Work\)](#) will be completed by the proposed deadlines noted below, as a minimum. These dates are all latest possible submission.

No.	Scope Item	Deadline*
1	Scoping exercise	January 14, 2022
2	Environmental scan	January 28, 2022
3	Draft report	February 25, 2022
4	Final report	March 11, 2022
5	Presentation of key findings	March 18, 2022
6	Additional support	March 31, 2022

**Work to complete the above scope items may commence immediately upon execution of a Service Agreement between Engineers Canada and the successful Bidder. For clarity, the dates represented in this table set out the latest acceptable completion dates for each item.*

4. RFP Submission and Evaluation Process

4.1 Submission Schedule

The following is a list of key events from RFP issuance to Notice of Award. The dates are subject to change by Engineers Canada, at its sole discretion:

No.	Description	Key Dates
1	Issuance of RFP	September 3, 2021
2	Interest Disclosure	September 22, 2021
2	Proposal Submission Deadline	October 6, 2021
3	Evaluation of proposals – Stage 1 (initial assessment)	October 20, 2021
4	Evaluation of proposals – Stage 2 (interviews and reference checks)	November 3, 2021
5	Notice of Award	November 8, 2021

In responding to this request, Bidders must provide the information requested in [section 4.4 \(Proposal Evaluation\)](#).

4.2 Interest Disclosure and Bidder Questions

To be considered, Bidders must indicate their interest in submitting a proposal, by email, to Jessica Christou (the “RFP Contact Person”) at Jessica.christou@engineerscanada.ca. Interest must be disclosed by **September 22, 2021, at 11:59 EDT** (the “Interest Disclosure Deadline”).

Bidders may submit questions concerning the RFP, the Project, or the Program to the RFP Contact Person at Jessica.christou@engineerscanada.ca. Responses to questions that are relevant to all Bidders will be collated and made available to all Bidders through postings on the Engineers Canada and MERX websites, without attribution.

4.3 How to Submit a Proposal

Proposals must be sent electronically, by email, no later than **October 6, 2021, at 11:59pm EDT** (the “Proposal Submission Deadline”) to Jessica Christou at Jessica.christou@engineerscanada.ca

Confirmation of receipt will be sent to the Bidder by reply email.

4.4 Proposal Evaluation

4.4.1 Evaluation Process

Upon the closing of the Proposal Submission Deadline, Engineers Canada will evaluate proposals in accordance with the following process:

Stage 1: Initial Assessment

All proposals received by Engineers Canada will initially be assessed by the “**Project Team**”, comprising Engineers Canada staff. This may include the Project Manager, Project Sponsor, Project Owner, and any other individual(s) that are deemed necessary, at Engineers Canada’s sole discretion.

The assessment of each proposal will be based on the contents of the Bidders’ written proposal and any statements provided in writing, if needed, in response to requests for clarification made by Engineers Canada. The Project Team will ensure compliance with the stated mandatory requirements and will score each proposal, in accordance with [Section 4.4.4 \(Scoring Legend\)](#).

Stage 2: Interviews and Reference Checks

Following the Project Team’s initial assessment of the proposals, the 1-2 highest scoring Bidders will be contacted to conduct interviews and further confirm their ability and fit to provide the required services and deliverables. The references of the top-scoring Bidders may also be contacted at this stage.

Once this assessment is complete, Engineers Canada will proceed to select and notify the successful Bidder, by issuing a Notice of Award.

4.4.2 Mandatory Requirements

Engineers Canada has several requirements that are deemed mandatory when submitting a response to this RFP. The following criteria have been identified as mandatory:

- Interest disclosure must be received before the Interest Disclosure Deadline.
- Proposals must be received prior to the Proposal Submission Deadline.
- Proposals must indicate that the Bidder is able to deliver the services and deliverables and complete the Project within the stated timelines.
- Proposals must include all of the information requested in [Section 4.4.5 \(Proposal Evaluation\)](#) of this RFP; and
- Proposals must state a total Project cost within the range cited in [Section 3.4 \(Budget\)](#), including all fees and expenses, in Canadian funds.

Proposals which fail, in the sole discretion of Engineers Canada, to meet any mandatory requirement will be eliminated from further consideration in the evaluation process. However, Engineers Canada reserves the right to waive any mandatory requirements if it deems fit and appropriate to meet the interests of and provide best value to Engineers Canada. This clause should be interpreted solely for the benefit of Engineers Canada and not for the benefit of the Bidders.

4.4.3 Scoring

Proposals will be evaluated and scored by Engineers Canada, using predetermined criteria to determine which proposal potentially provides the best value. **Scoring of proposals and evaluation comments are confidential and will not be disclosed.**

In terms of relative importance, each criterion is given a pre-assigned weight, as outlined in [Section 4.4.5 \(Proposal Evaluation\)](#), by which each proposal will be evaluated. Each criterion is rated on a scale of 0 to 10 (see, below). Each criterion's rating is then multiplied by the assigned weight to yield a total for that element. Summation of the individual totals yields a total score, which represents the overall degree of satisfaction for the respective submission.

4.4.4 Scoring Legend

0 Points Deficient	1-3 Points Poor	4-6 Points Fair	7-8 Points Good	9-10 Points Excellent
<p>The proposal fails to meet the requirements of the applicable scoring criteria in a suitable and documented manner.</p> <p>The proposal fails to demonstrate that the Project will be performed in an acceptable manner.</p>	<p>The proposal fails to meet the requirements of the applicable scoring criteria in a suitable and documented manner.</p> <p>The proposal reveals significant weaknesses that could result in unacceptable shortcomings in performance of the Project.</p>	<p>The proposal barely meets the requirements of the applicable scoring criteria in a suitable and documented manner.</p> <p>The proposal reveals weaknesses that could result in tolerable or reasonably correctable shortcomings in performance of the Project.</p>	<p>The proposal reasonably demonstrates that the requirements of the applicable scoring criteria are met in a documented and suitable manner.</p> <p>The proposal reveals minor weaknesses that should not significantly impact performance of the Project.</p>	<p>The proposal fully demonstrates that the requirements of the applicable scoring criteria are met in a documented and suitable manner.</p> <p>There are no apparent weaknesses.</p>

4.4.5 Proposal Evaluation

The proposals will be evaluated as follows:

No.	Scoring Criteria	Weight	Points	Total Points
1	Mandatory requirements		Elimination	
2	Qualifications and Relevant Experience	20		
3	Demonstrated understanding of the issues being addressed by the Project	40		
4	Approach and methodology	20		
5	Project cost	10		
6	Quality of submission	10		
	Total	100		

To confirm the above criteria, Bidders must include with their proposal, at a minimum, the following supporting information:

1. Mandatory requirements
 - See section 4.4.2 (Mandatory Requirements)
2. Qualifications and Relevant Experience:

- Bidders must detail their experience conducting benchmark reporting, research, or similar services to other organizations, particularly to non-profits or associations of comparable size to Engineers Canada.
 - Bidders must provide the names of individual(s) who would be assigned to work on this Project, including their qualifications and experience as they relate to the Project.
3. Understanding of the issues
- The Bidder is asked to supply their understanding and interpretation of the objectives and requirements and deliverables of this Project.
 - The Bidder should demonstrate a working knowledge of the engineering education system, engineering licensure and/or accreditation systems.
4. Approach and Methodology:
- Bidders must describe how they will approach the Project.
 - Bidders are asked to identify the expected challenges for this Project and the proposed mitigation strategies.
 - Bidders shall provide a detailed work plan with timelines.
5. Project cost:
- Bidders shall outline their proposed costs and fees for the Project, including any assumptions in developing the fees.

In addition to the above, Bidders must supply the name, email address and phone number of two (2) recent clients who have received services similar to those requested in this RFP and who may be contacted as references. Include a short description of the work performed, including how it was similar to this Project.

Engineers Canada will communicate with the winning Bidder throughout this Project in English. All proposals must therefore be submitted in English.

4.4.6 Confidentiality

Proposals and information submitted by Bidders will be treated as proprietary, held confidential, and used only for evaluating the ability of the Bidder to handle the Project or, if the Bidder is the selected Bidder, to negotiate a contract for services. The details of any proposals will be shared only with the persons involved in the Project evaluation process and Engineers Canada's legal representatives, if and to the extent necessary.

5. RFP Terms and Conditions

5.1 Process conditions

This RFP is not an offer by Engineers Canada to any person, and no contract of any kind whatsoever (including, without limitation, no "Contract A") is formed between Engineers Canada and any Bidder upon the submission of a proposal in response to it. For greater certainty, nothing in this RFP, including without limitation, the use of mandatory language, language reserving rights to Engineers Canada, or other

language that might, but for this clause, be indicative of contractual intention, is intended by Engineers Canada to indicate an intention to be contractually bound to any Bidder in any manner whatsoever. Engineers Canada retains the right, in its absolute discretion, to consider and analyze the proposals, negotiate with any Bidder at any time, select a preferred Bidder, or enter a service contract with a Bidder. Without limiting the foregoing, since this clause precludes Contract A, none of the usual Contract A terms apply, and Engineers Canada may:

- Reject or accept any proposal, whether or not complete, and whether or not it contains all the required information.
- Require clarification of any proposal.
- Request additional information on any proposal.
- Reject any or all proposals without any obligation, or any compensation or reimbursement to the Bidders.
- Refuse to enter into a service contract with any of the Bidders.
- Re-advertise for new submissions or call for tenders for this work or for work of a similar nature.

Engineers Canada may, in its sole discretion, independently verify any information in any proposal. The proposals submitted by Bidders must be offers made in good faith, and Engineers Canada reserves the right to make a choice from the various proposals, or not choose any. Engineers Canada shall not be obligated in any manner until a written agreement relating to an approved proposal has been duly executed.

5.2 Competitive process

With the issuance of this RFP, Engineers Canada is making a business opportunity available to Bidders having the experience, competence, and managerial sophistication to enter into a service agreement to complete the work.

5.3 Proposal Revisions

All proposal revisions must be received by Engineers Canada prior to the Proposal Submission Deadline stated in Section 4 (RFP Submission & Evaluation Process), above.

5.4 Cost of preparing proposals

Bidders are solely responsible for all costs they incur in preparing and submitting proposals.

5.5 Clarification of proposal

Engineers Canada reserves the right, but does not have an obligation, to request clarification of a proposal or request further information from any or all Bidders. In addition, if, in the opinion of Engineers Canada, any proposal contains a minor defect or irregularity or fails in some way to comply with any requirement of the RFP in a way that, in the opinion of Engineers Canada, can be remedied without providing an unfair advantage to one or more Bidders, the RFP Contact Person (as set out in [section 4.2](#)) may request rectification from the Bidder(s).

Engineers Canada, upon receipt of appropriate clarification and/or rectification, may waive the minor defect or irregularity and accept the proposal. Failure by a Bidder to provide a written response that, in the opinion of Engineers Canada, properly clarifies or rectifies its proposal, within the time specified in the request for clarification or rectification, may result in disqualification of the proposal.

5.6 Acceptance of RFP conditions

Receipt of a proposal by Engineers Canada will be considered acceptance by the Bidder of the RFP terms and conditions and will be incorporated in the Bidder's proposal.

5.7 Negotiation Delay

Engineers Canada will draft and provide the selected Bidder with a written agreement governing the provision of services and deliverables under the Project. If a written agreement cannot be concluded within fifteen (15) business days after receipt of the agreement by the selected Bidder, Engineers Canada may, in its sole discretion, terminate negotiations with that Bidder and either negotiate a service agreement with another Bidder of its choice or choose to terminate the RFP process and not enter into a contract with any of the Bidders.

5.8 Notification of Success

A written Notice of Award shall be the only valid form of notification of success in response to this RFP.

5.9 Reservation of Rights

Engineers Canada reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to:

- modify, cancel, or suspend the selection process, or any or all stages of the selection process, including before or after provision of a Notice of Award, at any time for any reason.
- modify or expand the scope of work, including services or deliverables, at any point from RFP issuance through until contract negotiations have been completed.
- accept or reject any proposal based on the evaluation criteria in [Section 4.4.5](#) above, as determined in the sole discretion of Engineers Canada.
- not accept any proposal; and
- reject or disqualify all or any proposal without any obligation, compensation, or reimbursement to any Bidder.

5.10 Limitation of Damage

Each Bidder, by submitting a proposal, agrees that:

- In the event any or all proposals are rejected or disqualified, or the Project or selection process is modified, suspended or cancelled for any reason, neither Engineers Canada, nor its employees, agents, officers or directors will be liable under any circumstances for any claim, or to reimburse or compensate any person in any manner whatsoever, including but not limited to costs of

preparation of the proposal, loss of anticipated profits, loss of opportunity, or for any other matter; and

- The Bidder waives any claim for loss of profits or loss of opportunity if: (i) the Bidder is rejected or disqualified or is not successful in the selection process; (ii) the selection process for the Project is suspended, cancelled, or modified at any time; or (iii) cancellation occurs per the above.

5.11 Proposal Documents

All documents submitted by Bidders will become the property of Engineers Canada.