

Tahatikohsontóntie' QC NEIHR

Request for proposals

I. Background of the QcNEIHR

The Tahatikohsontóntie' Network Environment for Indigenous Health Research (QcNEIHR) is a network for enhancing the health research capacity for Indigenous Peoples in Quebec region.

The NEIHR purpose is to enhance capacity for multiple groups of stakeholders to support the self-determination of Indigenous people in health research. The three major objectives of the QcNEIHR are thus to promote community mobilization, enhancement of research capacity and institutional transformation. The QcNEIHR aims to promote intercultural knowledge sharing and the sharing of wise practices that bridge and enhance capacity for Indigenous health research. The QcNEIHR supports the creation of new ideas and practices to generate transformations in academic institutions (ethics review guidelines, administration processes), and funding systems.

The network structure and research practices are rooted in Indigenous values and participatory forms of research and collaborations that aim to redistribute power to communities who risk marginalization and subjugation in research.

The host of the network is the Kahnawake Schools Diabetes Prevention Program (KSDPP) within the community of Kahnawake. This community-base of the network supports the self-determination of Indigenous people.

II. General Information

- a. **Purpose.** This request for proposal (RFP) is to enter into a contractual agreement with a successful bidder and select a suitable contractor to carry out an evaluation of the Tahatikohsontóntie' Quebec Network Environment for Indigenous Health Research (QcNEIHR)
- b. **Who May Respond.** Sole proprietor professionals or firms who are legally entitled to work in Canada may respond to this RFP. The individual or team must have bilingual capacity and experience working in Indigenous, community-based settings with participatory methods.
- c. **Instructions on Proposal Submission.**
 - i. **Closing Submission Date.** Proposals must be submitted no later than December 6th, 2021.
 - ii. **Inquiries.** Inquiries concerning this RFP should be directed to: Pierre Haddad, QcNEIHR Executive Director or Leila Qashu QcNEIHR Research Coordinator. Questions will be received up until November 24th at 17h. A document

containing all questions received, with responses, will be circulated to all bidders having submitted queries. This document will be circulated before November 26th.

iii. **Instructions to Prospective Contractors.**

Please submit your proposal via email as an electronic file, using the adobe acrobat format (.pdf) to this address: info@errsaqc-qcneihhr.ca.

With the following Subject Header: NEIHR EVALUATION BID

It is the responsibility of the Bidder to ensure that the proposal is received by date and time specified above. Late proposals will not be considered.

- iv. **Right to Reject.** KSDPP reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received in response to this RFP. A contract for the accepted proposal will be drafted based upon the factors described in this RFP.
- v. **Notification of Awards.** It is expected that a decision selecting the successful contractors will be made within two (2) weeks of the closing date for the receipt of proposals. Upon conclusion of final negotiations with the successful contractors, all Bidders submitting proposals in response to this Request for Proposal will be informed, via email of their status.

III. Description of Entity

The evaluation will be completed in partnership with the NEIHR Research Circle that is responsible for the implementation of the QcNEIHR and the NEIHR National Coordinating Centre (NCC). The contractor selected through this RFP process will enter a contractual relationship with the Kahnawake Schools Diabetes Prevention Project (KSDPP), host of the QcNEIHR network.

IV. Overview of the QcNEIHR's work

The network aims to bring about transformations to complex systems and in health research contexts in Quebec, with Indigenous people and communities.

Our work so far:

- We are well advanced in setting up the network (operations team, governance structure and working groups) and designing ways (methods) to consult with Indigenous communities on regional priorities to inform our priorities and actions from now until 2024. In 2023, the fourth year of the QcNEIHR, we will be preparing the renewal proposal for the next 5 years of the QcNEIHR.

- We expect that our 2019 - 2021 work reflects a transparent process of setting up a network that meets and responds to the diverse health research needs of the 11 Indigenous nations in Quebec.
- We are in the process of undertaking an environmental scan of Academic Institutions Reconciliation plans.
- We have consulted with our partners on direction on setting priorities, on the research program and on identifying opportunities to link this network with other networks and endeavors that are active in the Quebec Indigenous Health Research space.
- We recognize the dynamic context in which the NEIHR is developing: academic institutions are responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions' calls to action by articulating reconciliation plans; Quebec is renewing relations with Indigenous people as a result of the Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous peoples and certain public services; and Indigenous communities, organization and all sectors are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic with measures to reduce transmission, hospitalizations and deaths.

V. Goals of the QcNEIHR Evaluation Strategy

- We require an evaluation framework that articulates the NEIHR's values, approach and 'program theory'. This program (QcNEIHR) is a social innovation/ experiment, happening in a distinct and dynamic context, with a decolonizing mission.
- The evaluation framework will be an essential tool as we determine which indicators we will measure, and the methods we will use to gather the pertinent information, data, events.
- The evaluation plan will be developed and integrated with the annual work plan of activities.
- The evaluation should be designed to answer, 'what works, how, in which conditions and for whom,' rather than to answer the question 'does it work'.
- The evaluation approach should recognize the complexity inherent in the NEIHR. It should consider the underlying mechanisms of change, and the influence of context on the relationship between the intervention (network activities) and its outcomes.
- The evaluation will describe the process of setting up the NEIHR as reflecting our values and collaborative way of working, and in relation to our governance structure to ensure equitable and inclusive Indigenous decision-making.
- The NEIHR National Coordinating Center is the secretariat for the nine regional NEIHRs across Canada. The NCC is coordinating the national NEIHR evaluation strategy in which the QcNEIHR is participating and contributing.

VI. Requirements

The QcNEIHR requires the successful bidder, the Contractor, to carry out an independent evaluation of the implementation of the networking activities, outputs, and outcomes. The evaluator will advise the research team on an evaluation approach, framework and methodology. The evaluator will work collaboratively with the QcNEIHR Research Circle team, and the NEIHR National Coordinating Centre's evaluation process. However, the evaluation will be implemented independently, and the quality of the results will be the responsibility of the consultant.

The provider shall be a for profit or not-for-profit institution or consultancy, operating in the field of evaluation with proven expertise in conducting mixed-method evaluations of a comparable size and complexity and will ideally have first-hand experience of leading evaluations of partnership and capacity building networks with long term durations (i.e., evaluations that last years as opposed to months).

VII. Work to be performed

The evaluation will begin with the development of an evaluation plan that provides a specific roadmap and action plan for the evaluation. The evaluation plan will be developed in collaboration with the research and operations team. The plan will describe an evaluation which spans from October 2021 through to September 2024 – the end of the grant. The plan will provide an overview of the evaluation team’s understanding of the subject matter at hand and the key technical and strategic issues it entails. It will provide a description of the specific potential uses of the evaluation findings, to the extent possible. The evaluation plan will also identify the evaluation approach, evaluation questions and an evaluation framework that aligns with both the specificity of the QcNEIHR as well as the evaluation needs of the National Coordinating Center (NCC) for the NEIHRs. This framework will be accompanied with a set of indicators that will be measured over the time frame of the consultancy. The consultant will propose the timeline and data sources for this data collection, including measurement tools. The evaluator will work with the NCC to learn about evaluation approaches and results across the Canadian NEIHRs. The evaluator will lead the implementation of the evaluation plan in collaboration with the research team, and assure the collection and analysis of the data, the quality of data and validity of findings, and reporting of the results (yearly reports to CIHR) with integration into the renewal proposal.

VIII. Proposal Structure (contents to include)

The proposal is composed of three parts: 1) An expression of interest describing the consultant’s profile and qualifications 2) Curriculum Vitae including references; 3); Technical and financial proposal.

1) Expression of Interest.

The Bidder should describe their qualifications and experience in a written letter with a maximum length of 2 pages (1000 words). The letter should expand upon the information provided in the CV highlighting key experiences along with the knowledge and competencies garnered as a result.

The following knowledge and competencies are considered assets:

- i Knowledge of ethical guidelines and demonstrated sensitivity to their role in professional practice.
- ii Familiarity with QcNEIHR vision, mission, structure and priorities.
- iii Knowledge of the current political context in Indigenous health research, the network of Indigenous actors and key strategies (plans, public inquires, organizational and institutional policies, commissions, etc.) currently operating in Quebec and Canada.
- iv Experience with evaluations that are developmental and that consider the ongoing interaction between the evaluand and the implementation context.

- v Sensitivity to cultural perspectives, including adapting evaluation terms and models to be culturally relevant to community participants and evaluation co-creators.
- vi Knowledge of both traditional and innovative evaluation approaches & expertise in qualitative and mixed methods designs for example: group brainstorming, video, storytelling.

The following qualities, and aptitudes are considered assets:

- a. Openness to learn and implement reflexive practices.
- b. Interest to enhance knowledge of the QcNEIHR and NEIHR aims and activities.
- c. Willingness and experience collaborating and co-creating during the evaluation process.
- d. Sensitivity to social power differentials across cultural and political boundaries and their impact on collective and individual opportunities.
- e. Capacity to think creatively and broadly about analytic frameworks for evaluation needs and understanding the meanings of various concepts such as complexity, systems, networks.
- f. Excellent communication skills and a talented writer.
- g. Interpersonal skills that maintain an enjoyable and a learning work environment.

2) Curriculum Vitae and References

The Bidder should describe areas of evaluation practice, including capacities and experiences to respond to the requirements of this evaluation.

The following qualifications and experiences are considered requirements:

- Minimum 5 years working as an evaluation consultant in both official languages (French and English)
- Credentialed evaluator (CE) with the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES)
- Relevant training and experience in community health and Indigenous health research
- Background in research with a publication record (ideally as first author)
- Experience leading developmental and participatory evaluation or research
- Experience with mixed methods designs including the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data
- Experience in report/research writing and presenting study results
- Experience working on evaluation projects with long term durations (i.e., 2 years and more)

References. The Bidder should include two references, including the names, addresses, contact persons, and telephone numbers, preferably including clients similar to community-based Indigenous health promotion or scopes of work similar to those in this RFP. Ideally, only references for the bidders scoring within the upper 85th percentile will be contacted.

3) Technical and Financial proposal

The technical proposal should describe how the bidder will complete the evaluation plan and a draft proposal of this plan. This includes an understanding of the mandate, evaluation questions, methodology and reporting plans. It also includes phases, timeline and deliverables) (maximum 2000 words).

The financial proposal will include estimated level of effort across the evaluation phases and the daily rate. The consultant should describe the approach to be taken in addressing the scope of work, including the role and estimated number of hours of each team member. The Bidder should also describe its organization, size, structure and office location(s) to demonstrate their capacity to undertake this work.

- This will be a fixed price of 200K over the term of the project. However, based upon past experience, the consultant should provide a per diem rate and anticipated level of effort.

IX. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

A. **Evaluation Procedure and Criteria.** The NEIHR operations circle will review proposals and make recommendations to the Research Circle for final approval. The proposal reviewers may request a telephone meeting with some qualified Bidders prior to final selection. Proposals will be reviewed in accordance with the following criteria:

1. Letter of qualifications: Level of experience and demonstrated competencies (40 points total; 20 points for items i. to vi. and 20 points for items a. to g.).
2. Curriculum vitae: Required experience and qualifications and strength of recommendation from referee (30 points)
3. Quality of technical proposal and rationality for financial proposal (30 points)