

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Development of Canadian Water Quality Guidelines for Nickel

Water Guidelines Working Group Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) is the primary minister-led intergovernmental forum for collective action on environmental issues of national and international concern. The 14 member governments work as partners in developing consistent environmental standards and practices.

CCME established the Water Guidelines Working Group (WGWG) to develop Canadian Environmental Quality Guidelines (CEQGs) for water. This includes relevant guidelines for protection of aquatic life (including water, tissue residue, and sediment). CEQGs for the Protection of Aquatic Life (PAL) are critical tools for environmental management, providing credible scientific guidance on long-term no-effect concentrations as well as guidance on impacts from short-term events, such as spills.

WGWG's Nickel Project Team (hereafter 'the Project Team') is developing short-term and long-term freshwater and marine guidelines for the protection of aquatic life for nickel (Ni) using CCME 2007 PAL protocol (referred to as "the CCME Protocol"). An assessment of developing freshwater aquatic life guidelines for Ni based on the biotic ligand model (BLM) was completed in a previous contract through comparing its validity for a wide range of Canadian conditions, comparing results with a traditional multiple linear regression (MLR) approach, and examining alignment with the CCME Protocol.

The existing Ni guideline is over thirty years old (CCREM 1987, based on US EPA 1980) and is superseded by new science. It is based solely on acute data and does not consider marine waters. It accounts for the effect of hardness and pH on Ni toxicity to aquatic life; however, it does not take into account other factors such as dissolved organic carbon.

2.0 STATEMENT OF WORK

The Contractor will develop:

- user-friendly bilingual BLM software that can derive short-term and long-term Ni freshwater guidelines based on user inputs of water chemistry data for Canadian waters
- PAL CEQGs for (1) long-term Ni freshwater guidelines, and (2) short-term Ni benchmark in freshwater, using the BLM approach referenced in the CCME Protocol
- PAL CEQGs for (3) long-term Ni guidelines for marine water, and (4) short-term Ni benchmark for marine water, using other approaches in the CCME Protocol.

3.0 SCOPE OF WORK

The project will commence by September 7, 2021 and will be completed by March 31, 2022.

Deliverables will include bilingual (English and French) Ni BLM software and (English) user manual, a Microsoft Excel calculator and two training workshops. The findings and background information will be described (in English) in a final report.

3.1 Tasks

Without limiting the scope of work, the Contractor shall carry out the main items of work as described herein.

Task 1: Project Initiation Meeting

The Contractor, Project Authority and Contract Authority will meet via teleconference within a week of the signing of the contract to discuss and agree upon the scope of the project, expectations for deliverables and periodic reports, format of deliverables, and expected timelines.

In advance of the project initiation meeting, the Contract Authority will provide to the Contractor:

- information on toxicity modifying factors and recommendations on those that should be incorporated into the Ni long-term guideline for PAL
- short-term and long-term toxicity data for freshwater and marine environments that were assembled in a previous phase of this project.

Task 2: Update Summary of Toxicological Data

The Contractor will update the existing review (from 2017 to 2021) of collated toxicity data from peer reviewed scientific literature, scientific reports, and other credible, relevant grey or peer-reviewed literature and databases, summarize all Ni toxicity data (short-term, long-term, marine and freshwater) and classify it as to its suitability according to the CCME Protocol for developing Ni guidelines. The review will include a summary spreadsheet of the toxicological data using Microsoft Excel, and evaluation of the findings (i.e., comparison of toxicity data to the CCME Protocol to determine use acceptability). From these findings, the contractor will recommend a proposed approach for developing marine guidelines (i.e., CCME Type A, Type B1 or Type B2).

The Contractor will provide to the Project Authority and Contract Authority the summary of toxicological data and recommendations for marine guidelines by October 1, 2021. The Project Authority will provide Project Team comments to the Contractor by October 8, 2021. The Contractor will finalize the toxicological data review by October 15, 2021.

Task 3: Draft PAL CEQGs for Nickel

The Contractor will develop draft PAL CEQGs for (1) long-term freshwater species sensitivity distributions (SSDs) to be used in the BLM; (2) short-term freshwater SSDs to be used in the BLM; (3) long-term guidelines for marine water; and (4) short-term benchmark for marine water.

Guidelines must be developed in accordance with the CCME Protocol and account for all relevant toxicity-modifying factors.

The Contractor will provide to the Project Authority and Contract Authority a draft PAL CEQGs for Ni that include the list of species and endpoints used in derivation of the guideline values, relevant toxicity modifying factors and relevant information on the statistical model used to develop the guidelines by December 17, 2021. The Project Authority will provide Project Team comments to the Contractor by January 14, 2022. The Contractor will revise the draft CEQGs for Ni based on the comments provided and submit it to the Project Authority and Contract Authority by January 26, 2022.

Task 4: Customize BLM Software and User Manual

The Contractor will adapt existing BLM software into a user-friendly bilingual format that can predict short-term and long-term freshwater guidelines based on user inputs of water chemistry data for Canadian waters. Species sensitivity distributions (SSDs) developed in Task 3 will be used in the BLM software. Software should allow for input of all relevant parameters as well as a simpler form with fewer inputs that uses predictive relationships from existing data.

The Contractor will develop (in English) a user manual for the BLM software that includes the following:

- instructions for installation of the software by users, including system requirements
- an explanation of the user interface and menu bars
- description of the input files and formats
- explanation of the model outputs
- how CCME can access and update the toxicological database
- any relevant instructions for use of the software
- guidance on what to do should parameters be unavailable or outside the BLM boundaries.

Based on the finalized guidelines, the Contractor will provide the software as a zip file, the user manual, and the Excel-based calculator to the Project Authority and Contract Authority by January 14, 2022. The Project Authority will provide Project Team comments to the Contractor by January 26, 2022. The Contractor will incorporate the comments into the final deliverables as identified in Task 6.

Task 5: Workshop and Summary Report

The Contractor will conduct a maximum of two half-day webinar-based training workshops for the Project Team prior to March 31, 2022 in order to ensure broad understanding of the developed benchmarks and guidelines for Ni. The webinars will include, but are not limited to, information on the features, scientific underpinnings, data inputs, advantages and limitations and implementation requirements of CEQGs. In addition, the webinars will provide an overview of how individual jurisdictions compute provincial/territorial-specific or site-specific benchmarks and guidelines for nickel.

The Contractor will provide to the Project Authority and Contract Authority presentation materials one week prior to each webinar. The Contractor will take an accurate real-time record of the discussions and will prepare a workshop summary report. The Contractor will co-facilitate the workshop with the Project Authority to ensure that the workshop objectives are met. The Contractor will not be responsible for logistics of the webinar such as web hosting, scheduling, creating invite list, and providing a teleconference line. The Contract Authority will record the webinars for future use.

Task 6: Final Report

The Contractor will develop a final report (in English) that is suitable for a scientific audience and written in a style consistent with existing CEQG SCD documents, and that adheres to the CCME style guide. The final report will carefully document all decisions made in the development of the CEQGs, including toxicity data, model boundaries, toxicity modifying factors and implementation considerations.

The contractor will submit the final report to the Project Authority and Contract Authority for review by the Project Team by February 28, 2022. The Project Team will provide comments on the draft report by March 11, 2022.

The Contractor will incorporate Project Team comments on the draft report into all final deliverables (report, BLM software, manual, and Microsoft Excel-based calculator) and provide all final deliverables to the Project Authority and Contract Authority by March 25, 2022.

Task 7: Project Close Meeting

The Contractor, Project Authority and Contract Authority will meet by March 31, 2022 to identify successes, challenges, and opportunities for improvement.

3.2 Payment and Deliverables

Payments will be based upon the Contractor's completion of tasks and as evidenced by the production of the specified deliverables listed below. Payments will be made only after receipt of such deliverables and acceptance thereof by the Project Authority and the Contract Authority. Except as otherwise specifically provided for herein or in the professional services contract entered into with CCME, CCME will not be required to pay for partially completed tasks or for any additional work that may be required that the Contractor may not have budgeted for in its proposal. CCME shall not be committed to any other basis of payment by virtue of CCME having requested or received information regarding the Contractor's method of determining its bid for the completion of the Project, including, without limitation, any information regarding estimates of time spent and hourly rates of the Contractor's employees, contractors and agents involved in the Project.

Payment will be made by CCME via electronic funds transfer (TelPay is CCME's current provider) to the Contractor according to the following schedule, subject to the deliverables listed below having been received and accepted by the Project Authority and the Contract Authority, and

invoices having been submitted by the Contractor, and approved by the Project Authority and the Contract Authority and received by CCME. The Contractor will provide all necessary information to enable electronic funds transfers before initiating work on the project. If the electronic payment information provided by the contractor is incorrect and results in a returned payment, the Contractor will be responsible for reimbursing CCME for the service fees charged by CCME's electronic funds transfer provider.

Deliverables	Payment Amount (% of contract value, inclusive of all applicable taxes)	Target Date
Tasks 1-2: Project initiation meeting, final toxicological data review	15%	October 15, 2021
Task 3-4: Draft nickel PAL CEQGs (short-term, long-term, freshwater and marine), BLM software, user manual, Microsoft Excel calculator	40%	January 26, 2022
Task 5-7: Final report, final BLM software and manual, Microsoft Excel calculator, two training workshops, project close meeting	45%	March 31, 2022

The Contractor agrees to initiate work on the project by September 7, 2021.

The Contractor must provide all deliverables in electronic format to the Project Authority and Contract Authority no later than the dates specified above. All records, including but not limited to documents, reports, briefing notes and correspondence, generated by the contractor during the course of this project must be prepared in English using *Microsoft Word* for word processing, *Microsoft Excel* for data management, and *Microsoft PowerPoint* for presentations and other graphics.

All deliverables are the property of CCME and CCME reserves the right to publish them. The copyright in all materials produced as a product of the services shall belong exclusively to CCME. The Contractor shall waive all moral rights to all materials produced as a product of the services. The Contractor must advise the Project Authority of any information provided by a third party on a confidential basis for the purpose of the study and is to transmit the original documents containing any such information to the Project Authority under separate cover.

All discussion papers, reports and correspondence produced by the Contractor are subject to review by people designated by the Project Authority. The Contractor must perform all work to the satisfaction of the Project Authority and the Project Team.

Sufficient flexibility is required of the Contractor to respond to changing schedules and developments.

3.3 Budget

The maximum budget for this project is \$35,000.00 Canadian, inclusive of all applicable taxes. Proposed fees must be inclusive of all office and administrative costs. Other project-specific expenses such as travel costs, where required, must be estimated and included in the total estimated cost of the Project. These project-specific expenses may be billed on an “as incurred” (or monthly) basis and payment will be made after written confirmation from the Project Authority that the expenses were authorized and approved. The Contractor must supply reasonable and adequate documentation to support the expense claims. Travel-related expenses must follow *CCME Guidelines for Reimbursement of Expenses*.

Bidders from HST jurisdictions are advised that CCME’s office is located in Winnipeg, Manitoba and accordingly only GST should be applied.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 The proposal shall not exceed a maximum of 10 pages in length, excluding appendices.

The proposal must:

- Provide an outline of the intended approach including basic tasks, schedule of activities, and budget.
- Describe the personnel of the project team, areas of responsibility, time allotted and charge out rates.
- Document contingent procedures and personnel to be used if key team members become unavailable.
- Provide a brief description of any similar projects undertaken. Include the timeframe that the work was undertaken and key individuals involved in its completion.
- Include the names and contact information of three references.
- Include as an appendix *curricula vitae* and contact information of key team members.
- Include as an appendix:
 - the bidder’s legal name and mailing address
 - the name and contact information of the bidder’s authorized signing officer
 - the name and contact information for the bidder’s administrator of the contract if different from the signing officer
 - the bidder’s GST registration number or if exempt, proof of exempt status.

4.2 Personal information requested above is required to enable CCME to evaluate the proposal. All individuals noted in the proposal should be advised of and approve the release of personal information for the purpose of the proposal and the bidder is responsible for obtaining such approval.

4.3 The Contractor shall not, without written consent of CCME, subcontract any obligation of the Contractor.

5.0 CONDITIONS

5.1 CCME reserves the right in its sole discretion to consider or reject any and all proposals. CCME reserves the further right to extend the deadline for proposals and to add, delete and/or change the terms of this Request for Proposals (RFP) and issue corrections and amendments to it. CCME has made every effort to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the information contained in this RFP. CCME shall not be liable for any errors or omissions or responsible for any bidder interpretations or conclusions regarding the information contained in this RFP. Contractors who submit proposals will not acquire any legal or equitable rights or privileges whatsoever until a contract is signed with CCME. CCME will not pay any compensation for the preparation of the proposal and all proposals become the property of CCME.

5.2 The successful bidder is required to agree to a professional services contract with CCME. A sample CCME professional services contract is posted with this RFP. Bidders must identify in their proposals any changes requested to CCME's sample professional services contract and CCME reserves the right in its sole discretion to consider, accept, reject or amend such requested changes. CCME further reserves the right to revoke any offer to enter into a professional services contract. As part of a commitment to environmentally-sound business practice, it is CCME's practice to prepare, sign and transmit contracts electronically.

5.3 Proposal Deadline

The Contract Authority must receive proposals no later than 12:00 noon Central Daylight Time, August 25, 2021. The time stamp on CCME's email server shall be deemed to be conclusive evidence of time of receipt.

5.4 Method of Submission

Bidders must submit proposals by email to the Contract Authority in an unsecured electronic format, file size to be no larger than 5.0 MB, compatible with MS Word or Adobe Acrobat.

5.5 Ineligible Bidders

The following organizations and individuals, and organizations proposing such individuals as part of a project team, are ineligible to bid on this project:

- 5.5.1 Federal, provincial and territorial governments and all their departments and ministries and Crown corporations, boards, commissions and agencies and any officials and employees of them.
- 5.5.2 Members of the House of Commons and provincial and territorial legislative assemblies.
- 5.5.3 Persons providing administrative and related services to the CCME group responsible for the project.
- 5.5.4 Members and participants of CCME committees and groups, and for a period of six months after such membership ends.

5.5.5 Any company that is ineligible to bid on federal, provincial or territorial government contracts.

Prospective bidders should direct questions about eligibility to the Contract Authority.

6.0 CONTACTS

6.1 Contract Authority

Olivier Berreville
Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment
123 Main Street, Suite 360
Winnipeg, MB R3C 1A3
Tel: (204) 451-6571
Email: Oberreville@ccme.ca

6.2 Project Authority

Andrew Burton
Manitoba Agriculture & Resource Development
Box 14, 200 Saulteaux Crescent
Winnipeg, MB R3J 3W3
Tel: (204) 232-7851
Email: Andrew.Burton@gov.mb.ca

7.0 PROPOSAL EVALUATION

All assessments and weighting of criteria is at the sole discretion of CCME. The Project Team will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:

Technical and Management Proposal Evaluation Criteria

TECHNICAL PROPOSAL	Score
Demonstrated understanding of the project scope and objectives	10
Technical approach and methodology to meet project objectives, including:	30
a) knowledge and understanding of BLM	
b) knowledge and understanding of CWQG approach	
c) owns or has rights to existing BLM	
d) ability to modify BLM	
e) experience in application of customized BLM in Canada	

f) experience developing water quality guidelines or criteria, including experience providing recommendations for dealing with implementation issues	
g) experience developing freshwater and marine guidelines for the protection of aquatic life	
Work plan feasibility and organization	10
User-friendly and scientifically sound software	10
Recognition of possible problems, proposed solutions and additional innovative suggestions	10
MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL	
Experience and qualification of Program/Project Manager	10
Experience and qualifications of project team members, and alternate team members in case of unforeseen availability:	20
(a) qualifications of team members	
(b) depth and breadth of the team's experience	
(c) depth and breadth of individual team members experience in similar assignments	
(d) number of publications	
(e) roles and responsibilities of team members	
(f) inclusion of professional technical writer as part of project team	
Experience of organization in similar assignments	10
Experience working with a range of stakeholders	10
Ability to communicate effectively and to provide leadership/ coordination/ management under multi-partnership team setting	10
Value for money	10

8.0 AWARD OF CONTRACT

The Project Team will determine award of the contract by September 1, 2021. The lowest or any bid will not necessarily be accepted.

Upon award, the work must proceed on a timely basis as outlined in the table of deliverables. The successful proponent must not commence work until a contract is in place.