
**Council of Canadian Academies
and
Government of Canada**

10th Joint Call for Proposals

November 2011

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1 INTRODUCTION

The *Council of Canadian Academies* (the Council) generates in-depth, evidence-based assessments, authored by panels of independent experts. These assessments provide resources to inform the evolution of public policy on matters for which a science perspective is relevant. This document provides guidelines for the submission of proposals by government departments and agencies for these assessments.

1.1 *About the Council of Canadian Academies*

Mandate

The Council is a source of independent, authoritative, expert assessments on the science and evidence underlying matters of significant public interest. In carrying out its work, the Council addresses a broad spectrum of knowledge, encompassing the natural, social and health sciences, engineering and the humanities.

The Council facilitates access to the best available scientific knowledge with the objective of informing debate and decision-making in Canada.

The Council's mission is to provide Canadians with:

- the best available scientific knowledge with the objective of informing debate and decision making;
- independent, authoritative and evidence-based assessment on the science underlying current and future issues of public interest; and
- a science voice nationally and internationally.

Organization

The Council is an independent, not-for-profit corporation. Its Board of Governors includes nominees from the Council's three founding member academies - the Royal Society of Canada; the Canadian Academy of Engineering; and the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences. The Council's Board of Governors and staff are advised by a Scientific Advisory Committee of eminent authorities in key disciplines of knowledge. The Council is independent of government, but benefits from a \$30 million founding grant from the Government of Canada in support of the Council's core operations through 2015. Funding was provided to the Council to provide the Government of Canada with a standing capacity to identify, analyze and assess the science aspects of key public policy issues with the objective of informing public debate and decision-making.



1.2 What is a Council Assessment and what can it do for my department / agency?

What is a Council Assessment?

A Council assessment is a multidisciplinary account of the state of evidence underlying an issue of public policy importance. Evidence-based assessments are typically descriptive and diagnostic, rather than prescriptive, in the presentation of findings, but where possible include expert judgement on matters of science, supported by the appropriate evidence. Council assessments can take many forms, including:

- Assessment of the state of knowledge;
- Identification of knowledge gaps;
- Cost-benefit analysis;
- Risk evaluation;
- International practices and trends
- Expert judgment.

What is the Council's role?

The Council is comprised of a staff, a Board of Governors, and a Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC). The Board of Governors approves assessment topics and final reports. The SAC ensures the integrity of the assessment process. Council staff perform secretariat functions including providing advice on proposals, assisting with the selection of expert panels, supporting expert panels with research and writing, producing, launching and disseminating reports, and supporting the SAC and the Board of Governors. More information on roles and responsibilities is provided in Section 4.

Who undertakes Council Assessments?

Assessment reports are authored by independent expert panels comprised of distinguished individuals from Canada and abroad. Panel members come from academia, industry and other relevant sectors. They are selected for their expertise and are not expected to represent specific community views. All panel members serve on a voluntary basis, without remuneration.

What is my role as sponsor of an assessment?

The sponsor's role is to develop a proposal for an assessment question in accordance with the attached Template for Council Proposals and to modify its proposal based on feedback received during the proposal selection process. As independence and objectivity of an assessment are fundamental to the value of the end product, Council practices ensure that independence of the process is preserved throughout. The



sponsor of an assessment does not participate in the appointment of panellists or in the conduct of an assessment and does not see a report before it is finalized. The lead sponsor does, however, have the opportunity to meet with the expert panel at the beginning of the process to ensure a clear understanding of the assessment question, and the final report of an assessment is presented to the sponsor once the report has gone to print. All Council reports are made public in both English and French to allow both decision-makers and the people of Canada to benefit from this source of expert knowledge.

How are assessment topics selected?

Assessment topics are selected based on a review by an interdepartmental Working Group and by the SAC, as detailed in section 2. Reviews are based on selection criteria, which are provided in Section 3.

How many assessment topics will be selected?

The funding agreement between the Council and the government obliges the Council to make best efforts to undertake up to five assessments per year through fiscal year 2014-15, on subject areas identified by the Government of Canada.

What is the value of a Council Assessment?

To effectively address important issues such as climate change, nanotechnology, innovation, and new infectious diseases, Canadians need access to credible, independent assessments of the underlying science. The Council provides a standing capacity to undertake such assessments and thus helps keep Canada abreast of emerging issues, gaps in knowledge, and the implications of advances in science worldwide. Council assessments are unique in the value they provide in terms of:

- **Independence:** Assessments are authored by a panel of independent experts drawn from the academic, private and public sectors.
- **Credibility and expertise:** The Council is governed by a Board of Governors advised by a Scientific Advisory Committee. Assessments are conducted by panels of recognized experts selected to ensure depth and breadth in response.
- **Depth:** As assessments address issues of interest to public policy on matters of science, sufficient time and scope are provided to allow to the panel to delve deeply into available evidence relevant to the topic and question. A typical assessment will be conducted by a panel of 10 to 15 experts and take roughly 18 to 24 months to complete.



- **Public availability:** Final reports are widely available to the public. Reports completed to date are on the Council website at:
<http://www.scienceadvice.ca/en/assessments/completed.aspx>



2 SELECTION PROCESS AND CONDUCT OF AN ASSESSMENT

2.1 Selection Process for Assessment Topics

The selection process for Council assessment topics starts with a call for proposals issued by the ADM Committee on S&T and ends with approval by the Council's Board of Governors. On the government side, proposals are reviewed and ranked for the ADM Committee on S&T by the Interdepartmental Working Group on Council of Canadian Academies Assessment Topics (Working Group) - a group of Directors General and Directors from various departments and agencies. On the Council side, review is undertaken by the Council's SAC. Assessment topic selection is an iterative process during which sponsors have a chance to revise their proposals based on feedback received from Government and Council reviewers. Steps of the selection process are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Steps and key dates in the selection process

Steps and key dates	Description
Call for Proposals November 8, 2011	A Call for Proposals is typically issued up to twice a year (spring and fall) by the Assistant Deputy Minister Committee on Science and Technology (ADM Committee on S&T).
Proposal Outline Due Friday, December 2, 2011	Departments and agencies are required to submit a brief Proposal Outline in accordance with the attached template. Proposal Outlines will be reviewed by Industry Canada and Council staff, and will serve as the basis for a short initial feedback meeting with Industry Canada and Council staff. Sponsors will have the opportunity to receive feedback on their proposal ideas and seek clarification as to what should be included in their proposals before filling out the full-length template. Proposal Outlines <u>no longer than two pages</u> must be submitted on or before the deadline to CCA_proposals@ic.gc.ca .



<p>Deadline for submitting full-length proposals to Industry Canada</p> <p>January 6, 2012</p>	<p>Sponsors are required to draft proposals in accordance with the attached Template for Council Proposals. Proposals must be submitted on or before the deadline to CCA_proposals@ic.gc.ca.</p> <p>Note: sponsors can expect to receive feedback from Industry Canada, including Council comments, on the content and quality of their proposals during the week of January 16, 2012.</p>
<p>Deadline for submitting updated proposals to Industry Canada</p> <p>February 3, 2012</p>	<p>Sponsors must re-submit finalized proposals incorporating feedback from Industry Canada and Council staff. An indication of preliminary support from other implicated departments is recommended here. Proposals must be submitted on or before the deadline to CCA_proposals@ic.gc.ca.</p>
<p>Working Group Review Meeting</p> <p>Week of February 20, 2012</p>	<p>The first stage of the ADM Committee on S&T's review is undertaken by the Committee's Interdepartmental Working Group on Council of Canadian Academies Assessment Topics (Working Group). The Working Group, comprised of Directors General and Directors, and chaired by the Director General of Program Coordination Branch in the Science and Innovation Sector at Industry Canada, reviews the proposals according to the selection criteria (listed in Figure 1), with particular attention to <i>Government Requirements</i>. Following this review, the Working Group invites proposal sponsors to a review meeting, where feedback is given on how to modify proposals for the next stage of review. A representative of the Council sits on the working group and provides preliminary feedback from the Council's Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC). Sponsors are encouraged to brief their Minister on proposals at this stage.</p>
<p>Deadline for submitting written support to Industry Canada</p> <p>March 9, 2012</p>	<p>ADM-level support is required from departments and agencies that participated in the development of a proposal and that could be affected by the results of an assessment on the proposed topic.</p> <p>Written support, in the form of an email or letter, must be submitted on or before the deadline to CCA_proposals@ic.gc.ca.</p> <p><u>Proposals missing their written support do not advance to</u></p>



	<u>the final Working Group Review meeting and are deferred to the following round.</u>
<p>Deadline for submitting proposals to the Working Group and Council's Scientific Advisory Committee</p> <p>March 9, 2012</p>	<p>Proposal sponsors are required to revise their proposals based on Working Group and Council SAC's feedback on or before the deadline for submission. The Working Group ensures that feedback has been incorporated.</p> <p>The Council's SAC reviews each proposal to determine if it meets the <i>Council Requirements</i> criteria (as listed in Figure 1 and detailed in the attached Template for Council Proposals). The SAC provides a formal response to each proposal, including whether the assessment topic has received <i>approval in principle</i>.</p> <p>The Working Group reviews and ranks proposals and makes a recommendation for approval to the ADM Committee on S&T, which decides which proposals will go forward for Ministerial approval.</p> <p>Proposals must be submitted on or before the deadline to CCA_proposals@ic.gc.ca.</p>
<p>Decision</p> <p>First available ADM Committee on S&T meeting following SAC approval -</p> <p>TBD: Spring 2012</p>	<p>Following approval in principle by the Working Group and SAC, each sponsor is required to submit a final version of the proposal to Industry Canada (CCA_proposals@ic.gc.ca). ADM sponsors or their delegates should be present at this meeting to answer any questions on their proposals.</p>
Ministerial Approval	<p>On the recommendation of the ADM Committee on S&T, the Minister of the sponsoring department or agency for each successful proposal is asked to write to the Minister of Industry to request referral of the assessment topic and proposal to the Council. The Minister of Industry then writes to the Council Board of Governors formally requesting the assessment on behalf of the Government of Canada.</p>
Council of Canadian Academies Approval	<p>The Board of Governors of the Council approves the topic, allowing work on the assessment to begin.</p>



2.2 Conduct of an Assessment

Following approval of an assessment topic by the Council Board, the Scientific Advisory Committee advises the Board on the recruitment of an expert panel to undertake the assessment. Through a combination of independent work, small working groups and full panel meetings, panel members develop an in-depth report responding to the question asked by the sponsor.

The Council facilitates a rigorous, independent peer-review of the report that is overseen by the Council Board.

The final report is published in both English and French. The sponsor will receive a copy of the full report and is invited to attend an assessment briefing session during the two weeks prior to the report's release to the public.

Depending on the nature of the assessment question and the needs of the sponsoring agency, a typical assessment takes from 18 to 24 months.



3 ASSESSMENT TOPIC SELECTION CRITERIA

Figure 1 shows the criteria that the proposal must meet in order to be accepted by the Working Group on behalf of the Government of Canada and by the Council. The Government and Council requirements are complementary and mandatory. The asset criteria are optional and no proposal is expected to fulfill all asset criteria. Providing information related to one or more asset criteria may be used to provide additional justification for selecting a proposal over others that also meet the Government and Council criteria. Further guidance on each criterion is provided in the attached Template for Council Proposals.

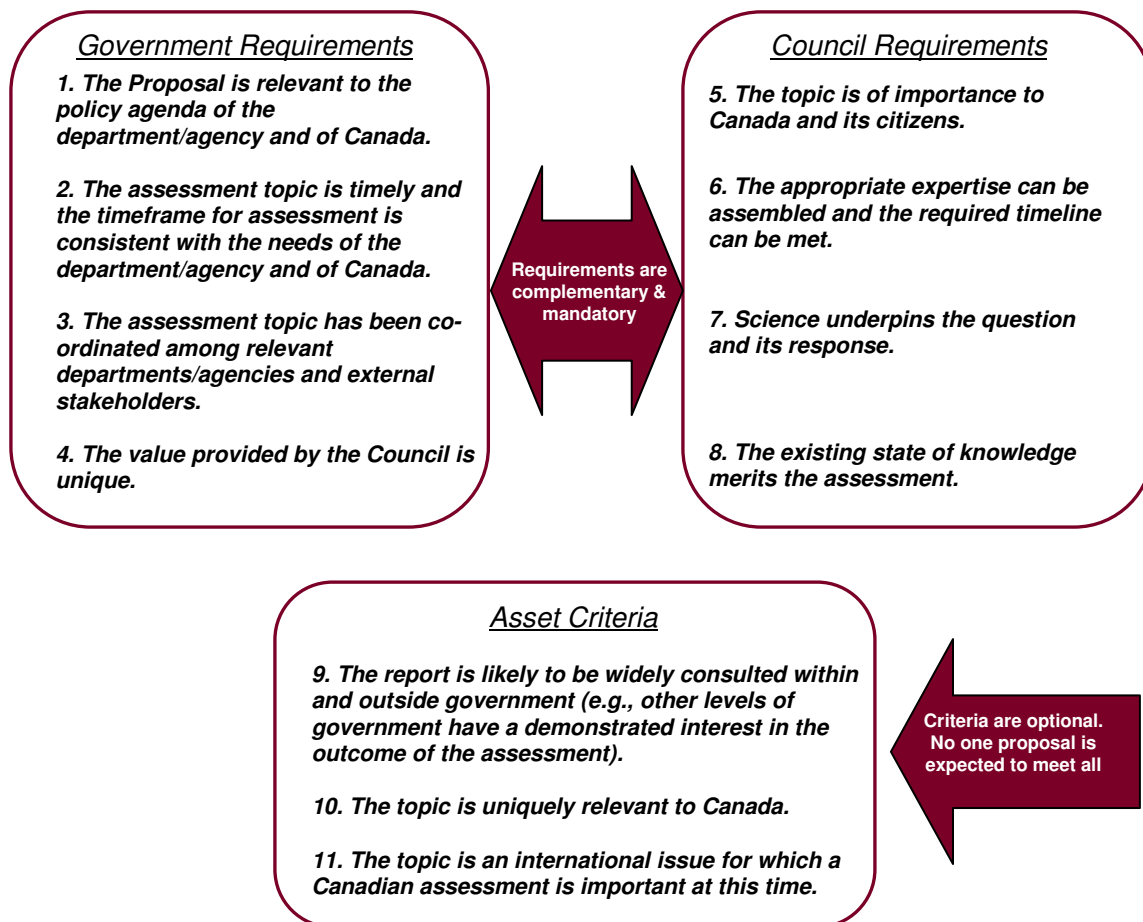


Figure 1: Criteria for selection of assessment topics



4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 *Assessment Sponsor*

The sponsor is the department or agency that takes the lead in developing an evidence-based question that would benefit from a multi-disciplinary assessment by a panel of independent experts. The sponsor is responsible for developing a question that is of national importance, and for submitting that question to the ADM Committee on S&T in accordance with the guidelines for proposals outlined in the attached Template for Council Proposals. The sponsor must ensure that other departments that have an interest in the question are appropriately engaged in the development of the proposal. The sponsoring department may not influence the report's findings, and should therefore consider the risk of possible report findings prior to submission of a proposal.

Once the assessment proposal has been approved, the Council assembles an appropriate panel of experts. The sponsor is invited to attend a portion of the first panel meeting in order to discuss the assessment question with the panel.

Following this meeting, the sponsor, and all other parties interested in the outcome of the assessment, must wait until the report is completed to learn the panel's response to the question. An assessment typically takes 18 to 24 months to complete. Once the assessment report is completed, the Council will arrange an assessment briefing to inform the sponsor of the outcome of the assessment; this briefing typically takes place during the two weeks prior to public release of the report.

4.2 *Assistant Deputy Minister Committee on Science and Technology*

The ADM Committee on S&T is responsible for assisting the Minister of Industry in the prioritization of government requests for Council assessments.

4.3 *Working Group of the Assistant Deputy Minister Committee on Science and Technology*

The Working Group advises the ADM Committee on S&T on the feasibility of specific assessment proposals and on how such proposals should be ranked. Specifically, the Working Group is responsible for advising the ADM Committee on S&T on whether assessment proposals prepared by the sponsor meet the *Government Requirements* and *Asset criteria* for assessment topics. In addition, the Working Group is responsible for working with the sponsor to ensure that proposals are of sufficient quality and



relevance to form the basis of a Council assessment and to ensure that other departments have been sufficiently engaged in the preparation of proposals.

4.4 Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC)

The SAC is a 16-member committee established by the Council's Board of Governors to advise them with respect to assessment topic selection, the selection of expert panellists, terms of reference for assessments and peer-review processes. The members of the SAC are eminent representatives of the broad science community, drawing from the academic, business and non-governmental sectors. With respect to the assessment proposal process, the SAC is responsible for reviewing proposals based on *Council Requirements* and *Asset Criteria* for assessment proposals (see Figure 1).

4.5 Sponsoring Minister

Proposals approved by the ADM Committee on S&T must receive approval from the Minister of the sponsoring department or agency. This approval takes the form of a written request from the sponsoring Minister to the Minister of Industry to ask that the assessment topic be referred to the Council for approval by the Council's Board of Governors.

4.6 Minister of Industry

The Minister of Industry, in line with responsibilities for science policy coordination in the Government of Canada, oversees the process to prioritize government request lists for Council assessments. The Minister is responsible for formally referring assessment questions to the Council.

4.7 Council of Canadian Academies' Board of Governors

The Council's Board of Governors has the final authority to accept or reject assessment proposals referred to the Council. The Board relies on advice provided by the Scientific Advisory Committee to inform its decisions.

4.8 Council of Canadian Academies Staff

Council staff is available to advise sponsors on the feasibility of their proposals prior to, and at the initial Proposal Outline stage. The Council performs a secretariat function for expert panels, the SAC and the Board of Governors.



6 CONTACT INFORMATION

For further information on the selection process, please contact one of the following:

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