

Request for Proposal: International Environmental Scan and Grey Literature Review of Indigenous-Led Artificial Intelligence, Language Technologies, Language Data Assets and Emerging Technology Initiatives

Background

The Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages (the Commission) was established under the *Indigenous Languages Act* to support and promote the reclamation, revitalization, maintenance, and strengthening of Indigenous languages in Canada. As part of its mandate, the Commission is also responsible for raising awareness about Indigenous language rights and supporting broader public understanding.

As artificial intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies continue to evolve, Indigenous communities are increasingly exploring opportunities to leverage these tools to support language revitalization, preservation, documentation, education, and intergenerational knowledge transmission. At the same time, significant considerations exist regarding Indigenous data sovereignty, cultural protocols, governance, infrastructure, digital capacity, and ethical use of language data.

To better understand this rapidly evolving landscape and inform future initiatives, the Commission seeks a qualified proponent to conduct an international environmental scan and grey literature review on Indigenous-led AI, language technologies, language data assets, and emerging technologies. The purpose of this project is to understand how Indigenous Peoples are exercising self-determination in the development, governance, and use of AI and emerging technologies to support language reclamation, revitalization, maintenance, strengthening, and intergenerational knowledge transmission. The project will identify current activities, evaluate factors that influence AI readiness, governance approaches, document promising practices, lessons learned, and emerging trends from Indigenous initiatives in Canada and internationally. The project will also provide strategic recommendations to guide future partnerships, capacity-building efforts and Indigenous language technology that support Indigenous language revitalization.

Objective

The successful proponent will:

- Conduct an international environmental scan of Indigenous led AI, language technology and emerging technology initiatives.
- Conduct a grey literature review of Indigenous AI, digital language, data governance, and emerging technology initiatives.
- Assess the current state of digital and language data assets within Indigenous communities.
- Identify barriers, gaps, risks, and capacity-building needs affecting Indigenous participation in AI-enabled language initiatives.
- Document promising practices, lessons learned, and emerging trends from Indigenous initiatives in Canada and internationally.
- Provide strategic recommendations to inform the Commission's future work on AI and emerging technologies may play in supporting Indigenous language revitalization, maintenance, preservation, and strengthening.

Scope of Work

The successful proponent will be expected to deliver the work through three phases.

Phase 1: Project Initiation and Research Design

The successful proponent will:

- Confirm project objectives, deliverables, timelines, and reporting requirements.
- Develop a detailed project work plan and methodology.
- Design a research methodology, develop research questions, and establish a data collection framework to guide the environmental scan and literature review.
- Establish the analytical framework for the environmental scan and grey literature review
- Establish ethical engagement protocols and obtain research ethics approval where required.

Deliverables

- Project Work Plan
- Research Methodology (including research design, data collection framework, analytical framework, and research questions)
- Ethical Engagement and Research Ethics Protocols
- Ethics Documentation (if required)

Phase 2: International Environmental Scan and Grey Literature Review

The successful proponent will conduct an international environmental scan and grey literature review focused on Indigenous led initiatives. Priority should be given to Indigenous-developed, Indigenous-governed, and community-led initiatives, with external collaborations examined only where Indigenous governance and decision-making authority are evident, in the following areas:

- Artificial intelligence
- Language technologies
- Language documentation and preservation
- Digital language assets
- Data governance and Indigenous data sovereignty
- Digital infrastructure and capacity development
- Emerging technologies supporting language and cultural revitalization
- Examine how AI and emerging technologies can support the documentation, transmission, and preservation of knowledge held by fluent speakers while respecting cultural protocols and Indigenous ownership of language resources.

The review should identify:

- Existing initiatives, projects, and programs.
- Promising and leading practices.
- Governance and stewardship approaches.
- AI readiness indicators and enabling conditions.
- Barriers, risks, and lessons learned.
- Capacity-building opportunities.
- Relevant trends and opportunities applicable to Indigenous language revitalization in Canada.

Deliverables

- International Environmental Scan and Grey Literature Review Report (English and French)
- Inventory of Indigenous-led AI and Emerging Technology Initiatives
- Interim Findings Report (English and French)

Phase 3: Analysis, AI Readiness Assessment and Strategic Recommendations

Using findings from the environmental scan and grey literature review, the successful proponent will:

- Analyze readiness factors, trends, and gaps.

- Identify opportunities for future investments, partnerships, pilots, and capacity-building activities.
- Develop strategic recommendations for the Commission.

Deliverables

- Promising Practices, Lessons Learned, and Emerging Trends Report for Community distribution (English and French)
- Strategic Recommendations Report (English and French)
- Executive Summary (English and French)
- Presentation Deck

Key Deliverables

The successful proponent will provide:

1. Project Work Plan
2. Research Methodology (including research design, data collection framework, analytical framework, and research questions)
3. Ethical Engagement and Research Ethics Protocols
4. Ethics Documentation (if required)
5. International Environmental Scan and Grey Literature Review Report (English and French)
6. Inventory of Indigenous Led AI and Emerging Technology Initiatives
7. Interim Findings Report (English and French)
8. Promising Practices, Lessons Learned, and Emerging Trends Report for Community distribution (English and French)
9. Strategic Recommendation Report (English and French)
10. Executive Summary (English and French)
11. Final Combined Report (English and French)
12. Presentation Deck

Project Expectations

The successful proponent should:

1. Demonstrate a strong understanding of Indigenous language revitalization and Indigenous language rights in Canada.
2. Possess expertise in AI, emerging technologies, data governance, and innovation ecosystems.
3. Demonstrate experience conducting environmental scans, readiness assessments, and community-based research.

4. Apply principles of Indigenous data sovereignty, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Indigenous Languages Act, OCAP® principles, CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance, Community-specific protocols and governance models, and ethical research practices.
5. Engage Indigenous communities, organizations, and partners respectfully and meaningfully.
6. Conduct all work in a manner consistent with trust, reciprocity, relationship-building, and cultural humility.
7. Produce practical and actionable recommendations.

Proponent Requirements

The bidder must possess:

- Demonstrated experience conducting national research projects and environmental scans.
- Experience assessing technology adoption, innovation readiness, or digital capacity.
- Expertise in artificial intelligence, emerging technologies, or digital transformation.
- Experience working in complex, diverse, or sensitive environments.
- Ability to translate complex issues into accessible and compelling narratives, including reporting.
- Strong understanding of Indigenous data sovereignty and ethical engagement practices.
- Demonstrated experience working with Indigenous communities, organizations, and partners across Canada.
- Experience obtaining and managing research ethics approvals.
- Strong analytical, facilitation, and reporting capabilities.
- Capacity to deliver high-quality work within established timelines and budget.
- Cultural competency and experience working with Indigenous Peoples and communities, in respectful, relational, and inclusive ways.
- Minimum three references from comparable projects.

Budget Specifications

A maximum budget of \$100,000 has been allocated for the successful completion of the scope of work outlined in the RFP.

Proposal Submission Instructions

All proposals shall be received by the Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages no later than **November 13, 2026, at 5:00 PM ET.**

All proposals must clearly identify the name of the proponent and will be accepted electronically in PDF format. The subject line must read:

“RFP - International Environmental Scan and Grey Literature Review of Indigenous-Led Artificial Intelligence, Language Technologies, Language Data Assets and Emerging Technology Initiatives”.

Proposal submissions shall be sent by email to:

rfp@ocil-ila.ca

Proposal Submission Requirements

All proposals must include the following information:

1. Executive summary outlining the proponent’s understanding of the project and approach.
2. Relevant experience in community engagement, national research projects, and environmental scans (with samples).
3. Qualifications and capabilities relevant to this RFP.
4. Project organization, including team members and roles.
5. Proposed approach and methodology.
6. Project timeline and key milestones.
7. Client references (minimum of three), including contact information.
8. Cost Breakdown (in CAD, inclusive of HST) aligning with the specified budget.

Evaluation Criteria

The Commission will select the Proponent(s) which, in the Commission’s sole discretion, best serves the overall needs of the Commission. The following is a summary of the general considerations that will be used to determine the Proponent(s) that will be selected:

Criteria	Weight
Indigenous Experience, Expertise and Ethical Research Approach	30%
Understanding of context and objectives	25%
Proposed Work Plan and Methodology	20%
Technical Expertise (AI/Emerging Technology)	10%



Total price aligning with the specified budget	15%
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Timeline

The following dates are set forth for informational and planning purposes and may be changed at the Commission's sole discretion.

Description of Deliverables	Due Date
RFP Released/Advertised/Posted	October 14, 2026
Deadline for submission of proposals	November 13, 2026
Completion of proposal evaluations	November 30, 2026
Final Selection	December 4, 2026
Estimated Contract Start Date: Subject to final internal approvals.	December 14, 2026
Deliverables Submission: Subject to final internal approvals.	June 30, 2027

The timetable is tentative only and may be changed by the Commission, in its sole discretion, at any time prior to the Proposal Submission Deadline.

Rights of the Commission

The Commission reserves the right to:

1. Reject any or all proposals received in response to this Request for proposals;
2. Enter into negotiations with one or more proponents;
3. Accept any proposal in whole or in part;
4. Cancel or re-issue the RFP at any time;
5. Verify information provided in proposals; and
6. Award follow-up work without further competition.

This RFP is issued solely for the purpose of soliciting proposals and does not constitute a call of tenders, except where expressly indicated. The Commission is not liable for any costs, expenses, or claims incurred by proponents in connection with preparation or submission of a proposal. Submission of a proposal bid signifies the proponent's understanding of these conditions.

Additional Provisions

Price: Contractors must provide a firm fixed price, including administrative fees, travel, material costs, translation, printing of draft concepts and HST.

Confidentiality: Responses to this RFP will be considered as confidential information by the Commission and will be used solely for the purposes of selecting the successful bidder.

Clarification/Questions: All proposals will be acknowledged. Requests for clarification and/or questions regarding this RFP should be directed in writing to: rfp@ocil-ila.ca

Responses/Submission: Only those submissions that meet the deadline will be considered. Responses to this RFP must be received by the close of business 5:00 PM EST on November 13.

Submissions shall be sent by email to: rfp@ocil-ila.ca