

Estelle Benoit  
Contracting Officer  
Privy Council Office  
Email: [estelle.benoit@pco-bcp.gc.ca](mailto:estelle.benoit@pco-bcp.gc.ca)  
Phone: (613) 408-0142

## **1.0 ADVANCE CONTRACT AWARD NOTICE (ACAN) # 20210620**

An ACAN is a public notice indicating to the supplier community that a department or agency intends to award a contract for goods, services or construction to a pre-identified supplier, thereby allowing other suppliers to signal their interest in bidding, by submitting a statement of capabilities.

If no supplier submits a statement of capabilities that meets the requirements set out in the ACAN, on or before the closing date stated in the ACAN, the contracting officer may then proceed with the award to the pre-identified supplier.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

The Commission, established by Order in Council (OIC) 2018-1322 P.C., has been mandated to organize two leaders' debates for the 44th General Election – one in each official language. The Commission is guided by the pursuit of public interest and by the principles of independence, impartiality, credibility, democratic citizenship, civic education, inclusion and cost effectiveness.

The Commission will work to make debates a more predictable, reliable and stable element of federal election campaigns. The Commission will ensure debates are accessible and will engage in public outreach with Canadians about why debates matter, and to inform them on where, when and how they can watch/listen to the debates.

As part of its mandate, the Commission will undertake to evaluate the debates that it organizes and will present an evidence-based assessment of the debates as one component of a final Report o Parliament due no later than five months after election day for the 44th General Election. In particular, the Commission is mandated to:

- “conduct any necessary research or rely on any applicable research to ensure that the leaders’ debates are of high quality”; and
- “conduct an evidence-based assessment of the leaders’ debates that it has organized, including with respect to the number of persons to whom debates were accessible, the number of persons who actually accessed them and the knowledge of Canadians of political parties, their leaders and their positions.”

### *Lines of Inquiry*

The Commission recognizes that it must undertake rigorous analysis and collect sufficient evidence to provide Canadians and future policymakers with the information needed to inform future decision-making. To these ends, the Commission intends to pursue the following lines of inquiry:

### Review existing academic and public knowledge:

- What international experience, Canadian history and best practice informs an assessment of the debates?

### Evaluating the debates:

- What were both the viewership and the potential reach of the debates?
- Did the debates reach target groups from the Commission's mandate?
- Did the debates optimize the use of both traditional and new media?
- Are debates associated with increases in information and factual knowledge, such as increases in Canadians' knowledge of parties, their leaders and their positions?
- Are debates associated with increased engagement in politics?
- Are debates associated with increases in positive democratic attitudes?
- Are debates associated with contributing to Canadians' perceptions of feeling more confident/secure in their voting decisions?
- To what extent was information distributed about the debates accurate?

### Evaluating the Commission:

- Did the Commission deliver "value add" to debate organization?
- Did the Commission ensure the delivery of two informative debates of high journalistic quality?
- Did the Commission ensure debates were organized in the public interest and in a cost-effective manner?
- How effective were Commission initiatives?
- Was the Commission provided with an appropriate mandate?

## **3.0 PURPOSE**

As and when requested by the Project Authority and in adherence to the [Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Qualitative Public Opinion Research](#), the Contractor shall provide the following services:

### **3.1 Conduct a survey study**

In consultation with the Commission, design and implement a standalone study of Canadians through the use of an online panel study. Subject to finalization with the Commission, this study would evaluate questions such as the following questions, although additional framing questions may be developed:

- Are leaders' debates organized by the Commission ("the debates") associated with increases in information and factual knowledge, such as increased understanding of the parties' positions;
- Are the debates associated with increases in participation, conversation, engagement, and interest in politics, as a result of watching the debates and/or discussing the debates with others;
- Are the debates associated with an increase in positive democratic attitudes, such as a belief that democracy is the best system for choosing leaders, satisfaction with democracy, and higher levels of internal and external democratic efficacy;
- Are the debates associated with knowledge of and changes in views of the parties, leaders, and their policies;
- How important were the debates to the electoral process;
- What was the level of awareness about the Commission's awareness-raising campaign;

- Did the debates help Canadians make informed voting decisions and/or contribute in a meaningful way to Canadians' knowledge;
- Did the debates contribute to Canadians' perceptions of feeling more confidence or secure in their voting decisions;
- What are the perceptions of Canadians with regards to leader participation in leaders' debates; and
- What are the views of Canadians with regards to whether broadcasters should be compelled to carry leaders' debates.

This study would interview 2000 individuals prior to the leaders' debates around the time of the start of the election campaign (as set by the drop of the writ), of whom 1000 are re-interviewed around the post-debates.

In consultation with the Commission, the Contractor would be responsible for designing, programming, implementing, evaluating and writing up the survey results for this online panel study.

Additionally, the Contractor would be responsible for leveraging data from the broader Canadian Election Study, including a large phone survey using a mix of landlines and cell phones, to ensure representative interferences about the entire Canadian population.

This study shall also include a series of conjoint survey experiments to elicit preferences about how election debates are conducted.

### **3.2 Conduct a social media study**

In consultation with the Commission, design and implement a social media analysis of the debates. The study will analyze how debates are covered and discussed via social media, in both Official Languages, as a complement to the online panel study. This study shall also provide insights into the specific segments of the debate that were viewed favorably and unfavorably by Canadian Twitter users. This will further serve the goal of understanding with greater precision what elements of the debate mattered and why.

Subject to finalization with the Commission, this study would evaluate the following questions, although additional framing questions may be developed:

- Are leaders' debates organized by the Commission ("the debates") associated with increases in information and factual knowledge, such as increased understanding of the parties' positions;
- Are the debates associated with increases in participation, conversation, engagement, and interest in politics, as a result of watching the debates and/or discussing the debates with others;
- Are the debates associated with an increase in positive democratic attitudes, such as a belief that democracy is the best system for choosing leaders, satisfaction with democracy, and higher levels of internal and external democratic efficacy;
- Are the debates associated with knowledge of and changes in views of the parties, leaders, and their policies;
- How important were the debates to the electoral process;
- What was the level of awareness about the Commission's awareness-raising campaign;
- Did the debates help Canadians make informed voting decisions and/or contribute in a meaningful way to Canadians' knowledge;

- Did the debates contribute to Canadians' perceptions of feeling more confidence or secure in their voting decisions;
- What are the perceptions of Canadians with regards to leader participation in leaders' debates; and
- What are the views of Canadians with regards to whether broadcasters should be compelled to carry leaders' debates.

### **3.3 Conduct focus groups**

In consultation with the Commission, conduct focus groups with 100 participants. These focus groups would be complementary to the survey-based study outlined in Section 4.1. These focus groups are to be held during and after the election debates. This task shall seek to inquire about participants liked and did not like about the debates. The Contractor shall present video clips and lead semi-structured discussions of focus group participants' attitudes toward a variety of hypothetical debate formats and packages of debates. This work shall complement and deepen the findings from the surveys.

### **3.4 Reporting on studies**

In consultation with the Commission, prepare written material for the Commission – such as a 30-50 page report and a deck – that analyzes the collected data and the results of the surveys outlined in Sections 4.1 to 4.3.

## **4.0 CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT**

1. Extensive and proven track record of providing a thorough account of Canadian elections that underlines the main reasons why people vote the way they do, indicates what does and does not change during the campaign and from one election to another, and highlights similarities and differences between voting and elections in Canada and in other democratic countries.
  - a. Across multiple federal elections
2. Extensive and proven track record of contributing to the development of scientific knowledge regarding the motivations of voters and the meanings of elections and election campaigns in democratic societies.
  - a. Across multiple federal elections
3. Team is composed of personnel from across multiple academic institutions Personnel from across multiple academic institutions
4. Ability to assess the impact of the debates and evaluate their coverage in both official languages

## **5.0 TRADE AGREEMENTS**

This procurement is not subject to any trade agreements.

## **6.0 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

There is not Intellectual Property for the service in question.

## **7.0 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PRE-IDENTIFIED SUPPLIER**

The research and analysis being sought to support the Leaders' Debates Commission's report to Parliament requires expert knowledge and experience related to the study of citizen behaviour in a Canadian context.

The Canadian Election Study (CES) as contracted through the University of Toronto, is a university research project initiated in 1965 to examine various aspects of federal elections, such as Canadians' attitudes to elections, the issues and dynamics of election campaigns, political parties and party leaders.

Through this fifty year legacy, the CES is uniquely capable of offering the Commission access to an unparalleled snapshot and record of Canadian society and political life. The research team that is leading the CES is composed of four academics with significant experience operating in the area of Canadian political behaviour.

Additionally, stakeholder consultation revealed a broad consensus that working with the CES provides access to the best source of data on the upcoming election and the ability to assess the role that leaders' debates play, in keeping with the Commission's mandate to undertake an evidence-based assessment of its debates on Canadians knowledge of political parties and their leaders.

The Commission will also realize the unique opportunity to harmonize its debate evaluation across multiple streams of evaluation by working with the CES team for both survey-based assessment as well as social media assessment. Commission initiatives to seek feedback from stakeholder groups will also be measurable within this framework because of the CES' ability to provide a questionnaire aligned with its broader evaluation objectives.

The Commission's consultations with a range of stakeholders revealed a broad consensus that the CES was the best partner for the Commission as it seeks to fulfil its mandate to provide an evidence-based assessment to Parliament.

The CES team has proven capacity to deliver on this requirements of this contract, as demonstrated in its legacy of undertaking this same activity in multiple previous federal elections.

## **8.0 GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS REGULATIONS EXCEPTION:**

The following exception to the Government Contracts Regulations is invoked for the procurement under subsection Section 6, (d) only one firm is capable of performing the work, of the Government Contracts Regulations set aside the requirement to solicit bids.

## **9.0 PERIOD OF THE PROPOSED CONTRACT**

The contract period shall be from date of award of Contract to March 31, 2022.

## **10.0 COST ESTIMATE OF THE PROPOSED CONTRACT**

The estimated maximum value of the contract is \$99,412.00 including all applicable taxes.

**11.0 NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE PRE-IDENTIFIED SUPPLIER**

**Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy**  
**University of Toronto**  
1 Devonshire Place  
Toronto, Ontario, M5S 3K7 Canada

**12.0 SUPPLIERS RIGHT TO SUBMIT A STATEMENT OF CAPABILITIES**

Suppliers who consider themselves fully qualified and available to provide the services/goods described herein, may submit a Statement of Capabilities in writing, preferably by e-mail, to the contact person identified in this Notice on or before the closing date and time of this Notice. The Statement of Capabilities must clearly demonstrate how the supplier meets the advertised requirements.

**13.0 CLOSING DATE AND TIME**

The closing date for a submission of a Statement of Capabilities is August 20 2021 at 14:00 Eastern Standard Time.

**14.0 INQUIRIES AND STATEMENT OF CAPABILITIES ARE TO BE DIRECTED TO:**

Estelle Benoit  
Contracting Officer  
Privy Council Office  
Email: [estelle.benoit@pco-bcp.gc.ca](mailto:estelle.benoit@pco-bcp.gc.ca)  
Phone: (613) 408-0142