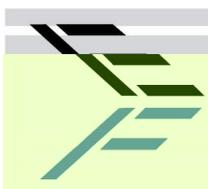# 2016 Evaluation Case Competition

Preliminary Round Case

Imagine Canada – Standards Program

February 6, 2016

The Request for Proposals in this document was developed for the Student Evaluation Case Competition for educational purposes. It does not entail any commitment on the part of the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES), the Canadian Evaluation Society Educational Fund (CESEF) or Imagine Canada, or any related sponsor or service delivery partner.

We thank Imagine Canada for graciously agreeing to let us use the Standards Program for Round 1 of the 2016 competition. We also thank Cathy Barr, Senior Vice-President, Imagine Canada for her input in preparing this case.

Introduction

Welcome to the Preliminary Round of the 2016 CES/CESEF Student Evaluation Case Competition!

Here is the scenario for this round:

> Your consulting firm has been invited to respond to the attached Request for Proposals (RFP) for an evaluation of   which was publicly launched in 2012.
>
> The p   is to help strengthen the charitable and non-profit sector by accrediting organizations that demonstrate compliance with standards in five areas: board governance; financial accountability and transparency; fundraising; staff management; and volunteer involvement.
>
> Imagine Canada is interested in an evaluation of the program to assess outcomes thus far, how the accreditation process could be improved, and how to increase engagement in the accreditation process. Your proposal should demonstrate your understanding of the assignment and include a program logic model, a proposed methodology, an evaluation matrix, a mitigation strategy to address anticipated evaluation challenges, and up to five evaluation competencies you will be drawing upon.[1]
>
> Section 2.2 of the RFP identifies the proposal requirements in more detail. The assessment criteria for the proposals are identified in section 2.3 of the RFP. Three proposals will be short-listed.

We look forward to your submission at the end of the day.

The CES Student Case Competition Working Group and Case Selection Sub-Committee: Bea Courtney, Brian McGowan, Patricia King, Kathryn Radford, Petra Lolić, Marla Steinberg and Sharon Margison.

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[1] A list of evaluation competencies is posted on the CES website under Professional Designations:
  English: http://www.evaluationcanada.ca/site.cgi?s=5&ss=11&_lang=EN;
  en français : http://www.evaluationcanada.ca/site.cgi?s=5&ss=11&_lang=fr.

Rules

1.   n e-mail from Case Competition organizers indicating a website and team identification number for retrieval of the case.

2. Teams can begin work upon receipt of the document from the contact person.

3. Submissions may be in either official language.

4. The submission must be uploaded to the same website **no later than 5 hours and 30 minutes** after initial download.

5. Coaches must not communicate with their teams once the case document has been downloaded and distributed to the team.

6. Submissions must be non-identifiable. Teams should refer to themselves only by an imaginative, non-revealing code name, such as Noble Consultants. Do **not** identify the university, city or province/territory where your team is located. This is a key point to be kept in mind when writing your submission.

7. Do **not**   , as it is confusing for the judges if teams have chosen similar names.

8. Your submission should be saved as **[your team name].pdf**, e.g. Noble Consultants.pdf. The submission must be submitted as one **PDF** file (not a zipped file of multiple documents).

9. Judges may take up to six weeks to select the three best submissions. All teams will receive feedback.

Questions or Problems

To communicate with organizers on the day of the competition, please email casecomp@evaluationcanada.ca, or call one of the following individuals:

Name	Phone Number	Availability (EST)
Patti King (enquiries in English)	709-746-2875	8:00 am to 6:00 pm
Kathryn Radford (demandes de renseignements en français)	613-558-6457	8:00 am to 6:00 pm

Have fun and good luck!

Request for Proposals
Imagine Canada – Standards Program

February 6, 2016

1.0 Program Profile

1.1 About Imagine Canada

Imagine Canada is a registered charitable organization with an interest in strengthening Canadian charities and nonprofit organizations to better serve and engage individuals and communities in Canada and around the world. Launched in January 2005, Imagine Canada is the result of a merger between two charitable organizations, the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy and the Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations. Its three broad goals are as follows:

1. Strengthen the charita   ;

2. Create opportunities to connect and learn from each other; and

3. B   succeed.

Imagine Canada works with other sector organizations, business, governments and individuals to better support the work of charities and nonprofits and to ensure the charitable sector continues to play a pivotal role in building, enriching and defining Canada. Currently, it has a membership of 1,250 charities and nonprofits, and its work is overseen by a 16-member Board of Directors. An Advisory Council provides strategic advice on how to better support the work of charities and nonprofits in Canada.

Imagine Canada aims to help strengthen charities and nonprofits in serving their communities through the following programs:

Membership   Member organizations benefit from:

i)   Opportunities to engage in public policy development and identification of priority issues;

ii) Access to resources and exclusive information; and

iii) Discounts on Grant Connect and other services and products.

National Engagement Strategy   The strategy identifies priorities for action based on discussions with organizations regarding key sectoral issues.

Public Policy   Imagine Canada brings sector organizations together to speak with a united voice and contribute to policy development.

Knowledge Development, which contributes to informing sector organizations and sponsors through research projects.

Caring Company Program   This program recognizes companies that demonstrate leadership in supporting the nonprofit sector, for example, by donating a minimum of 1% of pre-tax profit to community organizations and championing at least one community project.

Standards Program   This is an accreditation program for charities and nonprofits wishing to demonstrate that they meet standards in five areas of operation.

1.2 Imagine Canada's Standards Program

Background

Netherlands. With an estimated 170,000 organizations, the sector represents $106 billion or 8.1% of   GDP, larger than the automotive or manufacturing industries. The sector employs 2 million people, and about 13 million volunteers contribute their time to nonprofit organizations, with over half of them, 54%, run entirely by volunteers.

Imagine Canada believes charities and nonprofits in Canada have a responsibility to be

Innovative
Transparent and accountable
Ethical
Well governed
Inclusive
Collaborative.

The aim of the Standards Program is to strengthen public confidence in the charitable and nonprofit sector by accrediting organizations that demonstrate an ability to fulfill these responsibilities. This program grew out of   Ethical Code Program (still in place but being phased out by the end of 2016) and extensive consultation and collaboration with other organizations from 2008 through 2010. This input contributed to shaping the program.

The Standards Program, piloted in 2011 and publicly launched in 2012, brings together three sets of standards previously developed by other stakeholders. The HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector (2005 to 2013) had created a set of human resources standards for

non-profit organizations, Volunteer Canada had a set of standards for organizations engaging volunteers, and Imagine Canada had its set of standards for ethical fundraising and conduct by nonprofit organizations. In addition to standards of conduct addressed by these codes, governance practices and sound financial management emerged during the consultation process as two other priority areas to be addressed.

Program Goals and Components

The resulting Standards Program has three specific goals:

1. Help Canadian charities and nonprofits improve their practices in five areas:
   a) Board governance
   b) Financial accountability and transparency
   c) Fundraising
   d) Staff management
   e) Volunteer involvement

2.

3. Strengthen public confidence in individual charitable and nonprofit organizations and the sector as a whole.

Currently, there are 73 standards across the five areas. A complete list of the standards and the corresponding indicators for each of the foundational areas are provided in the [Standards Program Handbook](#)   Organizations wishing to demonstrate that they are meeting the standards participate in a voluntary, peer-review-based accreditation process.

Background work on the Standards Program, which began in 2006, involved many consultations and conversations with leaders of Canadian charities and nonprofits. As part of the development work, Imagine Canada hosted a Standards Forum in 2010. During these consultations, it became clear that compliance would need to be evidence-based and validated if the program was going to be seen as credible.

As a result, each standard specifies a requirement that must be met and identifies the evidence or data source that is used to verify compliance. The two standards shown in Figure 1 are examples of requirements that must be met and the evidence required to demonstrate compliance. Other sources of evidence in addition to those shown in Figure 1 may include, for example, documented processes, motions from the board or committees, board reports or minutes, other policies, declarations and narrative descriptions, as identified in the Handbook.

Figure 1: Examples of Standards and Supporting Evidence Required

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Board Governance Standards: A21 Requirements

Proper minutes of board meetings and record of policies are kept.

> *Evidence: One example of board minutes from the last 12 months*
> *Description of how minutes and policies are recorded and retained*

Fundraising Standards: C2 Requirements

The organization does not sell its donor list. If it rents, exchanges or otherwise shares its donor list, it must abide by the *Canadian Marketing Association Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* and honour

> *Evidence: Policy on donor lists*

Source: Standards Program Handbook, Imagine Canada

Often, the standard and the evidence required is the same regardless of the size of the organization. In some cases, they differ in recognition of the fact that small, volunteer-run organizations do not have the same policies and procedures as large, multi-million dollar organizations. The Handbook identifies three levels according to the number of

Table: 1 The Three Levels

Standards Level	Size of Organization
Level 1	Organizations with up to 5 FTE employees *and* up to $2 million in annual expenses.[1]
Level 2	Organizations with up to 50 FTE employees *and* up to $10 million in annual expenses.[2]
Level 3	Organizations with more than 50 FTE employees *or* over $10 million in annual expenses.

[1] *Organizations with no staff are exempt from standards relating to staff management.*
[2] *Excluding organizations that meet the criteria for Level 1.*

Annual Expenses: Use your average expenses, including gifts to qualified donees, over the last 3 years. Charities should use the amount on line 5100 of their Registered Charity Information Return (T3010).

Employee: All paid staff of the organization whether full-time, part-time, fixed-term contract, salaried or hourly.

FTE: Full-time equivalent. Use your average FTE employees over the last 3 years. The definition of full-time employment can vary from one organization to another but is generally defined as between 35 and 40 hours of work per week, 52 weeks per year.

Source: Standards Program Handbook, Imagine Canada

As of mid-2015, of 266 organizations that were in the program, 150 had completed the accreditation process. The breakdown by level is shown in the following figure.

Figure 2: Standards Program Participants by Level
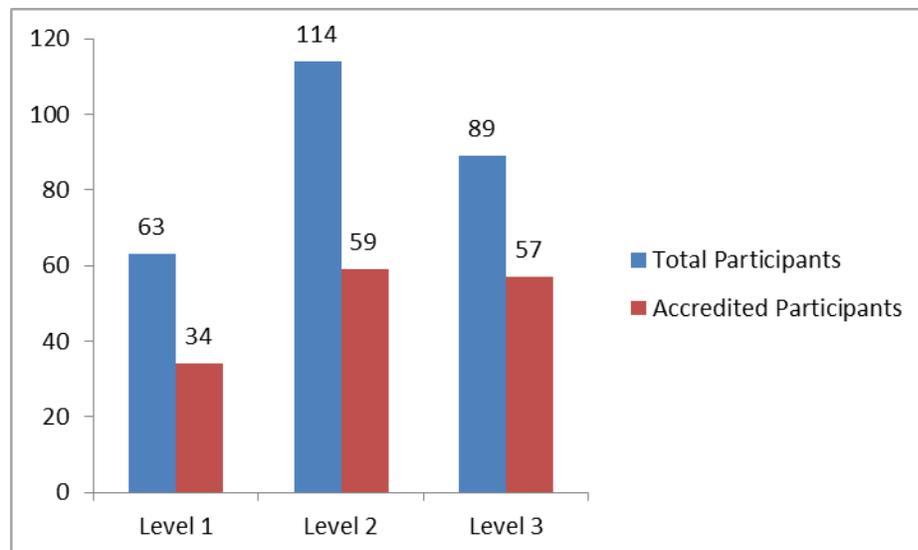
Source: Administrative data 2015, (mid-year), Imagine Canada

Accreditation

Any organization may use the standards to improve and monitor its practices. Organizations wishing to publicly demonstrate that they meet the standards by displaying   Trustmark (shown below) must apply for accreditation and submit an application that includes all of the evidence as set out in the Handbook (Figure 1 provides examples). It takes most organizations 6 to 12 months to complete the accreditation process, starting when they register in the program to gain access to the online application and program support.

The cost of accreditation varies according to the amount of annual revenues an organization receives and the length of time it takes for an organization to become accredited. There are six fee levels ranging from annual revenues of less than $500,000 to over $25 million. Once an organization decides it wants to pursue accreditation, it pays a monthly fee to access program supports (e.g., volunteer coaches from accredited organizations, a gap analysis tool, sample policies and procedures) and the online application form. (For further details, please see the fee schedule on page 2 of the Standards Program Handbook.)

Peer review is an essential element of the Standards Program, contributing to the rigour and credibility of the accreditation process. An application for accreditation is reviewed

by a panel of three volunteer peer reviewers separately, who then meet to discuss and make their decision on the application. Since 2012, there have been 12 peer review panels involving a total of 95 volunteer peer reviewers. They have contributed over 1,700 hours in assessing 178 applications. These volunteers come from across the country, all of whom have expertise in at least one of the areas of the standards.

The symbol shown below is intended to convey that an accredited organization is trustworthy and a leader. It is assumed this is an attractive feature for funders, be they individuals donors, businesses or government. Accredited organizations have told Imagine Canada that they joined the program to improve their overall credibility and trustworthiness and to showcase the Trustmark to their supporters. They found the process helped them identify and reduce organizational risk and improve board governance. Accredited organizations have noted that following accreditation they are perceived by others as being more professional and credible, and they are seen as leading by example. After the first accreditation, organizations are required to repeat the accreditation process every five years in order to continue using the Trustmark.

Imagine Canada's Trustmark

Accredited organizations are permitted to use Imagine Canada's Trustmark (image shown here) for a period of five years, contingent on submitting an annual license fee and an annual compliance report demonstrating continuing compliance.

1.3 Stakeholders, Governance and Resources

The immediate stakeholders for the Standards Program, in addition to Imagine Canada, are the program sponsors (Great West Life, Canada Life, London Life, The Lawson Foundation, EY and KCI Ketchum Canada), the accredited organizations, and those interested in becoming accredited. The program benefits organizations that participate directly as it strengthens their governance, operations, accountability, transparency and credibility, which in turn benefits Imagine Canada and the sector as a whole. The program further benefits funders, volunteers, service users and communities in general, as a result of improving organizational operations and reducing risk.

appoints volunteer members to a Standards Council. The Council is responsible for
                                        ork includes recommending
program policies and procedures to the Imagine Canada Board; approving revisions to the Standards; appointing members to peer review panels; reviewing and rendering decisions on complaints about the program and its participants; and providing guidance

on current and emerging issues related to the program. At the staff level, the program is overseen by the Vice-President, Mission Effectiveness. Currently, there are three full-time program staff.

1.4 Initial Challenges Encountered

When the Standards Program was piloted in 2011, it was expected that there would be 400 accredited organizations by 2015. However, this target has not been achieved as only 266 organizations have joined the program. Of these, 150 have completed the process and been accredited, with the first ones completed in the spring of 2012. Another 51 organizations started the process but withdrew without achieving accreditation. Those that have withdrawn cited the following key barriers and reasons:

Process is too expensive, too time-consuming
Value of being accredited is not seen
Value-added for fundraising purposes and obtaining grants is uncertain
Both the program and the Trustmark are not sufficiently well known to the public
Already performing well in each of the five areas of accreditation
Have other priorities.

With respect to the process, it is challenging at times for the volunteer peer reviewers to find the right balance between seeing the big picture and being appropriately rigorous while not being too demanding in requesting details.

1.5 Program Logic Model

The program does not have a logic model.

2.0 Scope of Work

2.1 Evaluation Services Required

Imagine Canada is seeking a consulting team to undertake an evaluation of the Standards Program to address the following items:

1. The impact of accreditation thus far, how it has made a difference.

2. How the application process is viewed by organizations seeking accreditation and how it might be improved.

3. How to significantly increase participation in the Standards Program.

2.2 Proposal Requirements

The Steering Committee expects proposals to include (but not necessarily be limited to) the following components:

1. An overview of your understanding of the Standards Program and the evaluation requirements.

2. A proposed logic model and identification of 3 to 5 factors (underlying assumptions, external contextual factors or risks) that are likely to have a significant influence on the achievement of the outcomes.

3. A description of how you would undertake the evaluation (approach and data collection methods).

4. An evaluation matrix that includes a list of key evaluation questions along with one to three indicators per evaluation question, clearly indicating which indicator is linked to which question.

5. Anticipated methodological challenges, and proposed solutions.

6. A brief description of how your team has demonstrated up to five Credentialed Evaluator competencies in developing its proposal.

The Steering Committee estimates that it will take 30 to 40 work days of consultant time for this evaluation. The Committee does not require that proposals include a budget.

Proposals **must** meet the following technical specifications:

Maximum of **12** pages, excluding the cover letter, cover page and table of contents. **Text over 12 pages, including any appendices, will not be read or scored.**
Standard paper size (8.5 x 11)
12 point minimum font size for text
Have 1 inch margins (top, bottom, left and right sides
For tables and figures, minimum font size is 10 point and have margins less than 1 inch

2.3 Judging Criteria

The criteria by which submissions will be assessed are as follows:

Criteria	Weight
Understanding of the requirement: Demonstration of an understanding of the Standards Program and evaluation needs (beyond a reiteration of the text provided in the RFP)	10%
Logic model: Clarity, completeness and appropriateness of the proposed logic model, and clarity and appropriateness of the 3 to 5 factors that are likely to have a significant influence on the achievement of the outcomes	15%
Methodology: Appropriateness of the approach and data collection methods for undertaking the evaluation	20%
Evaluation matrix: Appropriateness and clarity of evaluation questions, and appropriateness and feasibility of indicators	25%
Challenges and mitigation strategy: Clarity and appropriateness of the assessment of methodological challenges and the mitigation strategy	10%
Competencies for Canadian evaluation practice: Clarity and appropriateness of the competencies identified	5%
Innovation: Innovative ideas	5%
Proposal: Quality of the proposal (writing and format)	10%
Total	**100%**