

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Grand Challenges Canada / Grands Défis Canada

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Grand Challenges Canada®
Grands Défis Canada

BOLD IDEAS WITH BIG IMPACT®

Request for Proposals

Venture Advisory Support Provider(s)

Submission Deadline:

First Phase: September 18, 2026 – 11:59 pm EST

RFP Reference Number: RFP-VA-2026-09-18

Introduction

GRAND CHALLENGES CANADA'S OBJECTIVE

GRAND CHALLENGES CANADA/ GRANDS DÉFIS CANADA ("**Grand Challenges Canada**" or "**GCC**") is seeking contractor(s) to support innovators supported by GCC's Portfolio Management team throughout the 2027 calendar year.

The contractor(s) will be responsible for delivering venture advisory (non-financial) support for Grand Challenges Canada's portfolio of innovations in the role of Venture Advisory Support Provider(s). The selected contractor(s) will focus on strengthening innovators' ability to test, scale and sustain their innovations over the long term. The selected contractor(s) will provide a mix of light-touch, cohort-based support and tailored advisory services, depending on an innovator's stage and needs. Support may be provided through one-on-one engagements, group learning, virtual delivery, or development of resources.

Support areas for innovators that the contractor(s) will provide include, but are not limited to: financial strategies, operating models, leadership and governance, navigating markets and government systems, monitoring and evaluation, and more. Grand Challenges Canada welcomes applications from individuals, organizations and consortiums¹, and does not expect any one applicant to address all areas of expertise outlined. Applicants should identify their strongest areas of support.

This Request for Proposals (or "**RFP**") invites proposals (each, a "**Proposal**") from qualified applicants (each, a "**Applicant**") for the services further described in Section 1.4. The selected Applicant(s) will enter into a contract with Grand Challenges Canada.

¹ For consortiums, one organization is expected to enter into an agreement with GCC on behalf of the consortium.

Part 1: About this Opportunity

1.1 About Grand Challenges Canada

Grand Challenges Canada is dedicated to supporting Bold Ideas with Big Impact® in global health. Funded by the Government of Canada and other partners, Grand Challenges Canada catalyzes innovation that saves and improves lives in Canada and low- and middle-income countries. Since its creation, Grand Challenges Canada has supported over 1,600 innovations in 100+ countries.

Grand Challenges Canada invests along proof of concept and transition-to-scale stages, with innovators on different points of this pathway – those that are still proving their innovations and generating evidence; those who are identifying and testing their innovations with key scaling partners and markets; and those who are actively scaling their innovation with these partners.

For more information, please see: www.grandchallenges.ca, including our latest Annual Report under “Who We Are”.

1.2 About this Opportunity

Grand Challenges Canada funds lifesaving and life-improving innovations addressing intractable health and development challenges in low- and middle-income countries. GCC recognizes that scaling and durability of evidence-based interventions are critical, to ensure that communities and populations who are most underserved are reached and supported in navigating these challenges. We also recognize that organizational and operational challenges often emerge as barriers to scale. To address this, GCC provides advisory services to help innovators work through the practical decisions that shape how they scale, whether it is through public sector, private sector or hybrid pathways ([Our Investment Approach](#)). Specifically, GCC offers support for financing choices, operating model design, leadership and governance mechanisms, and market or regulatory navigation, as key drivers of scale and durability of impact.

GCC is inviting proposals from experienced service providers and specialist practitioners to support GCC in delivering this support. We are looking for genuine, demonstrated expertise in specific areas rather than broad generalist coverage — see Section 1.4 for a breakdown of services.

GCC anticipates committing approximately 1,300,000 CAD in total, across all providers selected through this process, for engagements covering 12 months, with the potential for continued or expanded engagement based on results. This is a combined figure across all categories and providers, not a guarantee to any individual applicant.

1.3 Period of Contract

The awarded contract(s) will be in effect for a duration of one year; from approximately January 1st, 2027 to December 31st, 2027 for “first phase Applicants” who submit their application by September 18, 2026. There will be the possibility of renewal(s) of awarded contract(s) for successive terms of up to two (2)-years, up to a maximum of six (6) years in renewal time for each contracted entity (in addition to the initial contract duration of one year).

1.4 Statement of Work

A. Role

This Request for Proposals welcomes applications from individuals, organizations, and consortiums² for hire in the role(s) of Venture Advisory Support Provider(s). GCC does not expect any applicant to address all areas of expertise outlined in section B. Scope of Work. Applicants should identify their strongest area(s) of support and apply accordingly.

B. Scope of Work

We are looking for services that are right-sized for the stage of innovation and organization, utilizing a blend of high-and-low touch modalities, drawing on in-country and global expertise as appropriate.

You may apply to one or more categories below. If you apply to more than one, please submit a separate outline and fee proposal for each category (see Part 3). We evaluate each category on its own merits, so a strong application in one area is not affected by a weaker fit in another.

1. Capital and Financial Strategy

Helping innovators plan their financing pathway: forecasting, scenario planning, capital structuring, valuation framing, cap table design, and preparing for investor or funder due diligence.

2. Business Models and Operations for Growth

Helping innovators refine their business model and/or operational plan, map scale barriers, refine unit economics, cost structure, and delivery systems so they hold up at greater scale, including responsible use of digital and AI tools to improve efficiency.

3. Leadership and Organizational Strengthening

Helping innovators build the leadership, governance, and organizational capacity to manage growth responsibly including board development, executive role evolution, talent strategy, gender and safeguarding practice.

4. Market and Policy Navigation

Helping innovators navigate regulatory, licensing, procurement, or government engagement pathways relevant to adoption and scale in their specific market(s). Local expertise, especially for applications under this category, is an asset.

5. Group-based Learning and Facilitation

Focused on foundational concepts from categories 1-4 such as business models, operational plans, scaling pathways, designing and facilitating group-based virtual learning sessions, convening peer knowledge exchanges (in-person and/or virtual) and development of resources for earlier-stage innovators.

6. Specialist Advisory: Evidence, Gender & Environment

² For consortiums, one organization is expected to enter into an agreement with GCC on behalf of the consortium.

Support innovators with developing robust monitoring, evaluation and learning plans to evaluate whether proof of concept was achieved, measure the effectiveness of innovations, and demonstrate evidence of improved health, well-being, and survival amongst underserved and unserved populations. Help innovators make meaningful advances in gender equity along GCC's frameworks, including refining innovator plans to advance gender equality. Support innovators to reduce environmental impacts in the context of their innovations. *For this category 6, please tag which of the three areas above (Evidence, Gender & Environment) your proposal covers. You may apply to more than one, but submit a single outline and identify clearly which parts address each tagged area.*

C. Overview of Support

The selected contractor(s) will report to GCC and will define and implement the process and infrastructure needed to provide the contracted services.

GCC can forecast, with reasonable confidence, the number of innovators who will need support and the stage they will be at. The category of support each innovator will need will be determined case by case, based on the specific barrier each innovator is facing at the time. This means that:

- We can expect to work with more than one provider across these categories, matched to the specific need, geography, and context of each engagement as it arises. We encourage applications from organizations and consortiums to individual consultants focused on one area.
- Engagements are commissioned individually against a specific innovator and a specific need, deciding a reasonable duration in advance (typically months).
- A maximum contract amount is set with a provider, based on GCC estimates, against which services for innovators are expected to be invoiced at a regular frequency.

D. Use of AI

The Applicant may use artificial intelligence ("AI") tools in performing the services, provided that:

- (a) All AI-generated outputs are reviewed and approved by a qualified individual before submission to Grand Challenges Canada, its representatives, or its innovators;
- (b) Final decisions regarding deliverables remain with the Applicant's personnel and are not delegated to AI systems;
- (c) The Applicant remains fully responsible for the quality and accuracy of all deliverables, regardless of AI use;
- (d) Upon request, the Applicant discloses the nature and extent of AI tools used; and
- (e) The Applicant shall comply with GCC's policies on AI usage and the terms and conditions in the resultant contract.

The use of AI tools does not relieve the Applicant of any obligation or warranty under the resulting contract.

Part 2: Standard Instructions, Clauses and Conditions

2.1 – Submission of Proposal

- a. Applicants are requested to submit a Proposal to the email address in Section 2.2, **by September 18, 2026, at 11:59pm EST (“first phase Applicants”)**. While GCC will give preferential selection to first phase Applicants, applications may continue to be accepted on a rolling basis until **September 18, 2027, at 11:59pm EST** (the **“Closing Date”**) if GCC’s needs under this RFP are not fully met by September 18, 2026 (in GCC’s sole discretion). **Proposals will be accepted from August 10, 2026 (the “Opening Date”) until the Closing Date (the “RFP Period”).**
- b. The timeline for the application process established for first phase Applicants is as follows (dates may change in GCC’s sole discretion):

Milestone	Date
RFP issued	10 August 2026
Questions due from interested Applicants ³	30 August 2026
Answers to common questions shared through uploaded FAQ	7 September 2026
Proposals due (first phase)	18 September 2026
Applicants invited to interview by	5 October 2026
Applicants notified	19 October 2026
Contract negotiation	19 October – 20 November 2026
Engagements begin	01 January 2027

- c. The Proposal must include the Applicant’s firm name, contact name, address, telephone number, and email address.
- d. Each Proposal must include a covering letter signed by the Applicant or an authorized representative, referencing the RFP Reference Number. The signature confirms acceptance of the terms of this Request for Proposals. A contract will not be awarded without a signed covering letter; failure to provide one upon request will result in disqualification.
- e. It is the Applicant’s responsibility to:
 - i. Obtain clarification of the requirements contained in the Request for Proposals, if necessary, prior to submitting a Proposal

³ Please note that we will not respond to questions submitted directly, rather we will respond to common questions through the FAQ to enable a fair process with equal access to information.

- ii. Prepare their Proposal in accordance with the instructions contained in the Request for Proposals
 - iii. Submit their Proposal by the Closing Date
 - iv. Send their Proposal only to Grand Challenges Canada named in Paragraph 2.2 below
 - v. Provide a contact name, address, telephone number and email address in its Proposal, as indicated in 2.1c above
 - vi. Provide a detailed Proposal, including all requested pricing details, sufficient for complete evaluation under the criteria in this Request for Proposals.
- f. First phase Applicants are **asked to submit their proposal by September 18, 2026**. Grand Challenges Canada may extend the Request for Proposals Period for first-phase applications for up to an additional twenty-one (21) calendar days. Proposals will remain **open for acceptance** for over one year from the Opening Date (up to September 18, 2027).
- g. Proposals and/or amendments thereto will only be accepted by Grand Challenges Canada if they are received at the email address indicated below in Paragraph 2.2, on or before the Closing Date specified herein.
- h. Proposals received will become the property of Grand Challenges Canada and will not be returned.
- i. All information learned throughout this Request for Proposals, including without limitation the process and GCC is to be held in confidence by Applicants.
- j. Grand Challenges Canada will evaluate Proposals only on the documentation submitted. Information not included in the Proposal (such as website links or external brochures) will not be considered.

2.2 – Grand Challenges Canada

Grand Challenges Canada

661 University Avenue, Suite 1720

MaRS Centre, West Tower

Toronto, Ontario, M5G 1M1

Attention: TTS Portfolio Managers, Sanjana Janardhanan & Brittney Dudar

Subject line: RFP Venture Advisory Support Provider(s)

Email: PortfolioManagement@grandchallenges.ca

2.3 – Late Proposals

- a. The Applicant has sole responsibility for the timely receipt of a Proposal by Grand Challenges Canada and cannot transfer this responsibility to Grand Challenges Canada.

- b. Grand Challenges Canada will return Proposals delivered after the stipulated Request for Proposals Closing Date referred to in Paragraph 2.1(a), unless they qualify as a “Delayed Proposal” (see below).
- c. A Proposal received after the Closing Date but before contract award may be considered if the Applicant can prove the delay was caused solely by incorrect handling by Grand Challenges Canada (a “**Delayed Proposal**”).
- d. Misrouting, traffic volume, weather disturbances, labour disputes or any other causes for the late delivery of Proposals are not acceptable reasons for the Proposal to be accepted by Grand Challenges Canada.

2.4 – Legal Capacity and Checks

- a. The Applicant must have legal capacity to contract. If requested, the Applicant must provide documentation indicating the laws under which it is registered or incorporated, together with its registered name and place of business. This applies equally to joint venture Applicants.
- b. As a condition of award, the Applicant may be required to provide information for legal capacity, sanctions, and related searches. The outcome of such searches will determine eligibility.

2.5 – Rights of Grand Challenges Canada

- a. Grand Challenges Canada reserves the right to:
 - i. Reject any or all Proposals;
 - ii. Negotiate with Applicants on any aspect of their Proposals;
 - iii. Accept any Proposal in whole or in part without negotiations;
 - iv. Interview Applicants or request clarification, at Applicants' cost, upon notice of forty-eight (48) hours of weekday time;
 - v. Accept or reject deviations from the terms of this Request for Proposals;
 - vi. Survey Applicants' facilities or examine their technical, managerial, and financial capabilities;
 - vii. Contact references to verify information submitted;
 - viii. Correct any mathematical errors in the extended pricing of financial Proposals by using unit pricing and the quantities stated in the Request for Proposals;
 - ix. Verify information through independent research or third parties;
 - x. Incorporate any portion of the Statement of Work, Request for Proposals, or successful Proposal into the resulting contract;
 - xi. Cancel, reissue, or extend the Request for Proposals at any time without liability;
 - xii. Re-tender the requirement to original Applicants if no compliant Proposals are received;

- xiii. Award one or more contracts, or not award a contract at all.
 - xiv. GCC may at any time seek and enter into a services agreement with an Applicant for Venture Advisory Support Provider(s) for support areas or modalities beyond what is specifically listed under 1 through 6 in this Scope of Work, if it contributes to serving the general purpose of supporting innovators.
- b. Applicants will have the number of days specified by Grand Challenges Canada to comply with any requests. Failure to comply may result in the Proposal being declared non-responsive.

2.6 – Communications – Solicitation Period

- a. All enquiries regarding this Request for Proposals must be directed by email only to Grand Challenges Canada as identified above. Failure to comply may result in disqualification.
- b. Significant enquiries and replies will be shared with all Applicants without revealing the source.

2.7 – Costs

- a. No payment will be made for costs incurred in preparing and submitting a Proposal. All such costs are the sole responsibility of the Applicant.
- b. No costs incurred before receipt of a signed contract or written authorization from the Grand Challenges Canada may be charged to any resulting contract. Only the Grand Challenges Canada can commit Grand Challenges Canada to fund expenditure under this requirement.

2.8 – Governing Law

This Request for Proposals is governed by the laws of the Province of Ontario and applicable federal laws of Canada. The parties shall attempt to resolve disputes in good faith. Any action relating to this Request for Proposals may be brought in a court of competent jurisdiction in Ontario, and each party irrevocably submits to such jurisdiction.

Part 3: Proposal Preparation Instructions and Evaluation Procedures

3.1 – Format of Proposal

Please prepare one general application, covering 1-5 below and a separate category outline (6-8) for each category you are applying to, if applying for multiple categories:

1. Organization or individual overview, and the category(ies) you are applying for. (1-2 pages maximum)
2. Team members who would lead this work, with resumes showing direct hands-on experience within specific service area. Identify team members unique to categories.
3. Your geographic coverage and delivery model — e.g., in-country presence, regional network, remote/global delivery, or a combination — and where you are best positioned to add value. (1-2 pages maximum)
4. Your approach to using AI responsibly within your work (see Section 1.4, D). (1 page maximum)
5. Five professional references from engagements in the past three years, with contact details. These can include innovators and others. Please indicate which category(ies) they serve as reference for. GCC will contact references directly. (1 page maximum)

Category Outline must include:

6. Your proposed approach for this category, and how you would scope and structure a typical engagement. (3 pages maximum)
7. Previous success: Two or three examples of past engagements, describing the problem, what you did, and what changed for the client afterward that you can reasonably attribute to your support. (2-3 pages maximum)
8. A proposed fee structure for this category in CAD. Engagement-based or time-based rates (include where possible expected number of hours per support delivered). Include the hourly rate for all personnel, if applicable. Applicable taxes (e.g., HST, GST) must be shown separately.

Page numbers are inclusive of figures and graphics.

3.2 – Evaluation Procedures

- a. Proposals will be assessed against all mandatory and rated requirements identified in this Request for Proposals and evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria specified in Appendix A.
- b. Any firm currently providing audit services to Grand Challenges Canada cannot be considered for this Request for Proposals, due to the need for independence and perception of independence.

Appendix A: Evaluation Criteria and Basis of Selection

What to Include in Your Proposal

Only Proposals meeting all mandatory requirements outlined in Part 3 of this RFP will be further evaluated based on the criteria in the below table. The Proposal should be concise and address all mandatory requirements in sufficient depth.

How we weight your Proposal	What we are looking for
Track record (30%)	We are looking for examples where your input made a demonstrable difference, not just a description of services delivered. Your success, how you attribute that to the activity delivered, and how you have tracked it. Information the Applicant provides will be validated through references.
Relevant hands-on expertise and networks (25%)	Direct experience in the specific category, not general consulting breadth. Strong network of team members and partners with the potential to catalyze demand, scale and sustainability of innovations funded by GCC.
Fit and approach (20%)	Whether your proposed approach matches how GCC works: practical, needs-focused, time-bound engagements. How you track outcomes, communicate and surface insights from engagements.
Local contexts (5%)	We are looking for a match with our geographic priorities, especially in areas where local expertise is critical. Ability to serve innovators in local languages including French, Arabic and Spanish.
Cost (20%)	Value for money. To include fees and costs for the services in CAD excluding applicable taxes, including hourly rates. Show balanced considerations for senior versus junior roles and global versus local expertise, where relevant.

Expertise and networks related to GCC's core areas of investment such as primary healthcare, climate and health, and youth mental health is an asset.

GCC expects to shortlist applicants for a short interview before finalizing selections.