

Request for Proposals – AGF Evaluation Frameworks & Process Review

If you would like a **plain language format** (a version written in clear, straightforward wording and adapted as needed for accessibility) or if you have any **questions**, require **accommodations**, or need assistance during the RFP submission process, please **contact Tara-Leigh Heslip** at theslip@saskculture.ca or 306-780-9265. We welcome your suggestions to improve accessibility; your feedback is valuable and will help enhance SaskCulture's accessibility efforts.

- Date RFP Posted: Sept 22, 2025
- Deadline for Submission of Proposals: October 15, 2025
- Awarding of Contract: November 7, 2025
- Anticipated Project Completion: January 30, 2025

1. Introduction

1.1 SaskCulture's Strategic Plan and Funding Program Renewal Project

SaskCulture is dedicated to ensuring that proceeds from Saskatchewan Lotteries support cultural activities that reflect the province's diverse population. The Board of Directors, through the development of the 2020-2026 Strategic Plan, identified the need for a comprehensive program renewal project to evaluate and enhance existing practices.

This larger Funding Program Renewal Project aims to:

- Ensure the effectiveness of current processes and practices in relation to current and promising practices.
- Prioritize the advancement of Truth and Reconciliation initiatives across cultural networks.
- Emphasize Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) within SaskCulture's programs and services, as well as across the broader cultural ecosystem in Saskatchewan.

Through this renewal project, SaskCulture seeks to improve inclusivity, diversity, equity and accessibility of cultural programming and activities supported by the Sask Lotteries Trust Fund.

1.2 Overview of Annual Global Funding

Since 1984, the Culture Section of the Sask Lotteries Trust Fund has provided Annual Global Funding (AGF) as its primary program to support Eligible Cultural Organizations (ECOs). AGF is an operational grant that offers flexible financial assistance to 30 ECOs across Saskatchewan, enabling them to deliver a wide range of cultural services and activities.

SaskCulture Inc. manages the Culture Section of the Trust, ensuring the proper distribution and accountability of funds through a three-year grant cycle. This process includes an initial application, annual submissions, and follow-up reports. ECOs are required to submit a

comprehensive application every three years, which is assessed based on performance criteria by volunteer peer assessors from the cultural community. This ensures that funding is allocated fairly and equitably.

1.3 Resources:

- 2020-2026 Strategic Plan - <https://www.saskculture.ca/about/our-role/strategic-plan>
- SaskCulture's Funding Program Renewal Project updates - <https://www.saskculture.ca/programs/funding-program-renewal-project>
- Saskatchewan Lotteries Public Interest Priorities – Pg 5-7 https://www.saskculture.ca/content/documents/2025_AGF_Guidelines.pdf
- SaskCulture Annual Global Funding Performance Criteria-Pg 24-27 https://www.saskculture.ca/content/documents/2025_AGF_Guidelines.pdf
- SaskCulture's Program Renewal Research Objectives- Contact: Tara-Leigh Heslip theslip@saskculture.ca or 306-780-92656

1.4 Project Values

This initiative is rooted in the principles of **equity, accessibility, and reciprocity**. The project acknowledges the need for assessment and evaluation methods that support both funders and recipient organizations—fostering meaningful learning, accountability, and impact, while avoiding unnecessary administrative burden.

SaskCulture aims to develop assessment and evaluation practices that are not only more effective but also more inclusive, transparent, and reflective of real-world impacts. These improvements will contribute to better decision-making and enhanced outcomes for all communities across Saskatchewan.

2. Objectives and Scope

2.1 Project Purpose

The primary goal of this project is to review and analyze existing performance criteria and impact evaluation approaches, assessing how they function in practice and identifying opportunities to improve effectiveness and alignment with current needs and promising practices. The project is not intended to create or implement new performance criteria or evaluation mechanisms at this stage; rather, it will provide a thorough snapshot of the current state and highlight opportunities for future development. If the review reveals a need for change, any new development work will be addressed in a separate phase or project after proper engagement and consultation.

Feedback from grant applicants (ECOs), volunteer peer assessors, and staff, along with insights from the broader non-profit and cultural sectors, indicates a strong desire and opportunity to enhance both the assessment process and practices for measuring and evaluating impact.

SaskCulture is seeking an external consultant or agency to design a research and consultation process, resulting in a comprehensive report of findings and analysis. The project must include consultation, secondary research and review of comparable institutions and innovative practices, findings analysis, and opportunity identification (evidence based).

2.2 Project Scope and Components

This project involves a detailed review of three interconnected areas:

- **Performance Criteria** (assessment criteria): Evaluating how current criteria are used and interpreted by applicants and peer assessors, identifying strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement, and drawing insights from successful models employed by other funders.
- **Impact Evaluation & Measurement:** Investigating how SaskCulture can better assess the impact of its investments at both organizational and community levels, with an emphasis on meaningful, reciprocal, and accessible practices for funded groups. This includes exploring approaches distinct from the assessment process, with a focus on long-term outcomes.
- **Evaluation Tools & Supports:** Identifying tools, resources, and capacity-building strategies to help funded groups—especially those smaller in size or equity-seeking—engage in effective measurement and evaluation. The objective is to create an inclusive and supportive evaluation environment for all partners.

Each component is conducted in two phases:

- **Review:** Assessing what currently exists, identifying strengths, weaknesses, gaps, and opportunities through document analysis, surveys, and consultations with ECOs (funded organizations), volunteer peer assessors, and SaskCulture staff.
- **Identification of Opportunities:** Proposing potential improvements or innovations based on the review, including secondary research into effective strategies adopted by other funding organizations facing similar challenges

2.3 Project Themes

- **Equity and Reciprocity:** The project places a strong emphasis on equity by ensuring that the voices and needs of diverse communities are prioritized throughout the process. Reciprocity is also central, promoting mutual benefit and shared learning among everyone involved.
- **Consultation and Participation:** Involving stakeholders as partners in shaping evaluation practices that work for all.
- **Distinctions and Connections:** Maintaining clarity between performance assessment and wider impact evaluation, while identifying where these areas may usefully intersect.

2.4 Clarifying Key Concepts

Performance criteria are core to application review—they inform the questions in application forms and score sheets used to guide funding decisions. In contrast, impact measurement and

evaluation focus on understanding the outcomes of funded work. While some impact considerations may be embedded in assessment criteria, the broader purpose of impact evaluation is to track and assess the difference that funding makes over time, benefiting both SaskCulture and funded organizations by supporting meaningful, practical, and manageable outcomes .

3. Work Requirements and Deliverables

3.1 Key Deliverables

The successful consultant/agency will be expected to provide the following deliverables

- Organize and attend consultations(with detailed notes).
- Development of a final written report, analysis and identification of opportunities.
- Presentation of findings to Staff
- Presentation of findings to stakeholders (ECOs)
- Supplementary documentation, including:
 - A detailed annotated spreadsheet of organizations and individuals who participated in the consultation process.
 - An electronic (PDF) copy of all raw data collected during the consultation process.
 - Notes from consultations (for those that aren't confidential)

3.2 Project Management and Communication

The successful consultant/agency will be expected to:

- Participate in an initial planning meeting with SaskCulture to develop a project plan (i.e. confirm scope, timelines, etc.)
- Maintain regular communication with the project lead at SaskCulture
- Provide bi-weekly progress updates throughout the project

3.2 Relevant Expertise and Capacity

We welcome proposals that demonstrate the following experience, knowledge and capacities. While not all are mandatory, they will strengthen the proposal.

- Understanding of the role of SaskCulture.
- Intercultural Competency – demonstrates a strong understanding of inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility, Truth and Reconciliation, anti-racism and anti-oppression.
- Knowledge of culturally competent research, including methodologies and ethics;
- Ability to meet with SaskCulture to provide feedback and written updates according to agreed schedules; and
 - Experience and knowledge of operational funding programs.

SaskCulture seeks to be an equitable organization. Priority will be given to groups or individuals who experience barriers to full participation in SaskCulture's network, systems and structures.

4. Submission and Review Process

4.1 Submission Details

What should be included in the RFP:

- Outline of experience and qualifications.
- Detailed plan, including timelines and methodology (approach/ethics).
- Budget.
- What assistance would be required from SaskCulture staff;
- References; and
- Location of firm/agency.

4.2 RFP Evaluation

Submitted proposals will be evaluated by the following criteria:

- The submitted proposal, including methodology and work plan.
- The proposed cost of the project (relative to the proposed work plan).
- Demonstration of cultural competence and knowledge specific to inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility.
- Experience and qualifications of the Consultant in conducting similar work for non-profit or member-based organizations.
- Ability to meet timelines set out by SaskCulture.
- A review of sample work for non-profit or member-based organizations; and
- Shortlisted proposals will be selected for an interview as part of the evaluation process.

4.3 Budget and Submission Details

The project budget, inclusive of all related fees and expenses, is within the range of \$10,000 - \$15,000.

Consultants may submit their proposals electronically to: Tara-Leigh Heslip, Program Renewal, at theslip@saskculture.ca. Questions may be sent by email to theslip@saskculture.ca, no later than October 10th, 2025.