Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks | Centre des niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODERNIZED CLB AND NCLC WEB PLATFORM

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1. Context

The Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB) is currently modernizing the Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens (NCLC) and the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB), Canada's national reference frameworks describing the language proficiency of adults learning French or English as a second language.

This modernization is intended to ensure that the frameworks continue to reflect the current realities and needs of the people and organizations that use them. **Their theoretical foundations remain unchanged**, while their content, presentation and user experience are being modernized.

In addition to the PDF version of the modernized frameworks, **a Web version will be developed to provide a more intuitive, accessible and interactive digital experience**. This version will be integrated into the CCLB's WordPress environment and hosted on the CCLB website. **Its design and launch will be entrusted to a specialized Web agency or consultant.** The PDF version of the modernized frameworks remains the intellectual property of the Government of Canada, while the Web platform developed under this mandate will be owned by the CCLB.

2. Purpose of the Mandate

The mandate is to translate the structure, content and relationships among the components of the two frameworks (the NCLC for French and the CLB for English) into an intuitive, accessible Web experience centred on users' needs.

The proposed solution must preserve the **integrity and theoretical foundations of the frameworks** while taking full advantage of digital possibilities to facilitate consultation, understanding, exploration and use, and to incorporate interactive features where they add value to the user experience.

The objective is therefore not simply to convert or reproduce NCLC and CLB content in a Web environment. The mandate should identify **the best way to express the logic of the frameworks digitally** while respecting their conceptual architecture and distinctive features.

As inspiration for the possibilities offered by the digital transformation of a language framework, the CCLB invites applicants to consult **l'Échelle québécoise** (the Québec

Scale of French Proficiency Levels). This reference illustrates different approaches to navigation, exploration and connections among content, **without constituting a structural model to be reproduced**.

3. Proposed Mandate

In collaboration with the CCLB team, the selected Web agency or consultant will be expected to design and develop an experience that will, among other things:

- translate the structure and relationships among the components of the NCLC (for French) and the CLB (for English) into a **clear and coherent information architecture and Web navigation**;
- enable intuitive exploration of levels, skills, descriptors and other framework components, including their progression and relationships;
- propose relevant digital functionality, including **navigation, search, filtering, comparison, visualization and interactivity**;
- explore options for offline consultation of selected content, including **downloading or printing**;
- design **a scalable content architecture** that supports centralized management, updates, replacement and version control of content.
- design the “CLB Online” and “NCLC en ligne” logos, develop the related visual identity guidelines and, as needed, update the icons representing the language skills;
- design an accessible and responsive experience that considers different user profiles, needs and journeys;
- ensure a coherent experience in French and English while respecting the distinctive features of the NCLC and CLB;
- carry out prototyping, user testing, development, quality assurance and deployment of the solution.

As the modernized frameworks are currently under development, the CCLB is seeking a collaborative approach that will allow the digital design to evolve **in parallel with the modernization work**.

4. Design Principles

The solution must be developed in accordance with the following principles:

Integrity of the frameworks

The digital design must be grounded in the structure and foundations of the NCLC and CLB. The technology and interface must **serve the frameworks**, rather than restructuring their concepts to fit the constraints of a tool or platform.

Distinction between content types

Official framework content must be **clearly distinguished, visually and functionally, from any explanatory or supplementary content** that may accompany it.

User-centred experience

The design must consider the diversity of people who consult and use the frameworks, their needs and their varying levels of familiarity with the NCLC and CLB. **The digital experience must be designed and validated iteratively with key user profiles.**

Accessibility by design

Accessibility must be integrated into the information architecture, interactions and interface from the earliest stages of the project, rather than addressed solely as a final technical check. The solution intended for publication must take into account the **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.2), Level AA**.

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The design must also reflect the equity, diversity and inclusion principles guiding the modernization of the frameworks, including in the user experience, visual choices, cognitive accessibility and the diversity of use contexts.

Responsive design

The experience must be usable across major screen sizes and devices and remain effective when content is accessed on a computer, tablet or mobile device.

French and English

The solution must fully support the French- and English-language environments required for the NCLC and CLB and enable efficient management of content in both languages.

This requirement does not mean that the two frameworks should be treated as translations or exact reproductions of one another. **The solution must respect the structure and distinctive features of each framework while ensuring a coherent digital experience.**

5. Preliminary Scope of Work

The mandate is expected to include the following phases:

A. Analysis and Design

- become familiar with the NCLC and CLB, their foundations and the modernization work underway;
- analyze the content structure, relationships among content, and key user needs and journeys;
- provide recommendations on information architecture, navigation and the opportunities offered by digital delivery.

B. UX/UI and Prototyping

- design navigation journeys and search, filtering, comparison and exploration functions;
- develop wireframes and interactive, responsive and accessible prototypes;
- in collaboration with the writing teams, develop a mock-up of the accessible Stage I (for CLB) / Stade I (for NCLC) PDF, including internal navigation and accessibility considerations, while taking into account relevant design elements developed for the Web experience;
- validate with the CCLB and users, followed by the required approvals and adjustments before launch.

C. Development and Integration

- develop the Web solution and selected functionality;
- progressively integrate NCLC and CLB content;
- conduct functional, technical and accessibility testing across different devices, operating systems and browsers.

D. Deployment and Handover

- prepare for and support the launch;
- provide documentation, knowledge transfer and training for the responsible team;
- transfer to the CCLB all source files, access credentials and other elements required to administer, maintain, update and manage content, and to support the ongoing evolution of the platform.

6. Expertise Sought

The CCLB invites expressions of interest from Web agencies or consultants with demonstrated expertise in several of the following areas:

- UX/UI design and user-centred design;
- information architecture and complex or highly interconnected content;
- Web development and responsive design;
- digital accessibility;
- search, navigation, filtering and other forms of interaction with structured content;
- usability testing and quality assurance;
- excellent command of French and English, both spoken and written, as well as experience designing bilingual or multilingual Web solutions.

Excellent command of French and English is essential to collaborate effectively with the Francophone and Anglophone teams **and to understand the content**, structure and distinctive features of the NCLC and CLB.

Demonstrated experience digitizing reference frameworks, standards, educational resources or other complex structured content is strongly preferred. Particular consideration will be given to applicants that demonstrate an ability to translate complex conceptual structures and the relationships among their components into intuitive and accessible digital experiences.

7. Expression of Interest

Interested Web agencies and consultants are invited to submit:

- a brief introduction to their organization, team or professional profile;
- a description of their relevant expertise;
- a few examples of comparable projects or work;
- a brief description of their proposed approach, accompanied by a concrete, illustrated example showing how the structure and relationships within complex content could be translated into an intuitive and accessible digital experience;
- their experience in accessibility and user-centred design;
- an indication of their availability and capacity to carry out the mandate;
- a preliminary budget range, presented separately for **January to March 2027** and **April 2027 to March 2028** (for further details, see Section 8 below: Project Timeline).

Expressions of interest will be assessed based on **the relevance of the experience, the quality of previous work, UX/UI and Web expertise, accessibility expertise, the ability to work with complex content, and an understanding of the project's specific considerations.**

8. Project Timeline

The mandate will run **in parallel with the drafting and modernization of the NCLC and CLB**, with content becoming available progressively. **Stage I, comprising Levels 1 to 4 across the four language skills**, is expected to provide the first set of reference content from which the information architecture and Web experience can begin to be developed.

The preliminary timeline is as follows:

- **January to March 2027:** become familiar with the frameworks and the needs of key user profiles; design the information architecture and navigation journeys; develop initial UX directions and **prototype the Web experience**; design of the **logos and visual identity guidelines**; preparation of the **accessible Stage I and Stade I PDF mock-up**.
- **April to October 2027:** develop the solution and progressively integrate the three Stages and related and cross-cutting content as it becomes available; **conduct**

usability testing with representatives of key user profiles and make iterative adjustments to the solution;

- **November to December 2027:** overall validation, usability and accessibility testing, quality assurance, required approvals, revisions and final adjustments;
- **January 2028:** planned launch of the Web solution.
- **From the date of launch: 180-day warranty period** covering correction of defects and technical issues related to the delivered solution, as well as the support required to stabilize it.

The approach must allow for **validation and adjustment cycles throughout the mandate**, as well as the time required for applicable approvals before launch.

Given the CCLB's fiscal year, **which ends on March 31**, an initial contract will cover **January to March 2027**. Continuation of the mandate beginning in **April 2027** will be covered by a **subsequent contract**.

9. Deadline and how to apply

Deadline to submit an expression of interest:

November 27, 2026. The CCLB reserves the right to continue seeking candidates beyond this date, if necessary.

To submit an expression of interest or request additional information:
[Krista Walsh-Murray, Senior Project Manager: kwalsh-murray@language.ca]

Please use the following subject line when submitting your expression of interest:
EOI - Modernized Frameworks Web Platform