CRDSC SDRCC
Centre de Règlement des Différends Sportifs du Canada
Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Independent Review of the SDRCC's Mandate, Service Delivery and Sustainability

The Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (SDRCC) is seeking proposals from qualified individual consultants, firms or teams to support a comprehensive review of its services, governance and institutional role in the Canadian sport system.

The consultant will undertake research, stakeholder consultations and analysis, identify feasible options and their estimated costs, and assist the SDRCC Working Group in formulating recommendations for consideration by the SDRCC Board. The objective is to support informed decision-making regarding service delivery, access, sustainability and governance, and to develop a phased implementation roadmap.

Deliverables will be prepared in English; the SDRCC will arrange French-language translation separately.

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Issuer	Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (SDRCC)
RFP Issue Date	October 23, 2026
Proposal Closing Date	November 12, 2026, 4:00 p.m. ET Offers must remain valid for 30 days after closing.
Questions and Submissions	applications@crdsc-sdrcc.ca Questions deadline: November 5, 2026, 4:00 p.m. ET Submit by email only: one PDF, maximum 5 MB.
Selection and Agreement	Selection and signed agreement targeted by November 19, 2026.
Expected Timeframe	Appointment and kickoff during the week of November 23, 2026, subject to a signed agreement. Final report and recommendations targeted for March 2027. Current funding must be used by March 31, 2027; any work after that date requires the written approvals and funding arrangements described under Schedule adjustments.

Background and Purpose

The SDRCC wishes to strengthen access to timely, fair and credible sport dispute resolution, improve cost predictability and administrative efficiency, and assess how its governance and expertise can better serve the Canadian sport system. The review covers its subsidized national mandate, non-subsidized or cost-shared services, prevention activities, complementary services and potential partnerships or new jurisdictions.

The work must compare feasible options objectively, without a predetermined conclusion. Recommendations may address changes within the SDRCC's authority and changes requiring government action, including legislative amendments. The result must support Board decisions and, where appropriate, proposals to government. Findings must distinguish verified evidence, stakeholder views, assumptions and limitations.

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Working Group and Project Roles

A nine-member Working Group, including two Board members of the SDRCC, will oversee the review, assess the findings and formulate recommendations to the Board. Its members and Chair will be selected through a separate process by November 19, 2026. Sport Canada may participate as an observer. The consultant will be responsible for conducting the majority of the research, consultations and analysis, preparing draft materials, and supporting the Chair and Working Group with concise briefing documents and options for consideration.

The consultant is responsible for ensuring the quality, objectivity and independence of the analysis, while the Working Group will formulate recommendations, and the Board will retain decision-making authority within the SDRCC's mandate. The SDRCC's designated project lead will oversee the contract and approve any changes to the scope of work, budget and schedule; the Working Group will not have the authority to approve additional services or expenditures.

Project Scope

Needs assessment, access and current operations

- Review existing data related to inquiries, cases, timelines, costs, jurisdiction and procedural barriers of the SDRCC. Identify the data required for the review, recommend an appropriate period of analysis and highlight any gaps or limitations that may affect the findings. Consult a proposed and justified sample of current, former and potential dispute resolution services users, sport organizations at national, provincial, territorial and community levels, roster members, counsel and relevant partners. Include athlete perspectives and clearly identify the scope and limitations of the consultation sample. Consultations must enable users and athletes to contribute independently of their sport organizations. Assess unmet needs, barriers to accessing services, reasons why inquiries do not become cases, and differences in the needs and experiences of users accessing subsidized and other services. Access to case information and consultation data is subject to availability and applicable confidentiality safeguards.

The proposed sampling approach and participant profiles will be reviewed with the Working Group and approved by the SDRCC's project lead within the agreed scope of work and budget. Within the agreed sample and where evidence is available, consider experiences involving completed proceedings, withdrawn matters or informal resolutions, as well as situations in which individuals did not initiate or continue a process because of perceived barriers.

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Project Scope

Service Delivery, Procedures and Sustainability

- Assess the SDRCC's intake, triage, mediation, arbitration and simplified dispute resolution processes, including circumstances requiring more formal procedures and the respective responsibilities of staff, including case managers, and roster members. Examine jurisdiction and access rules, procedural fairness, confidentiality, publication practices and unauthorized disclosure. Evaluate roster expertise, selection, diversity and specialization. Identify practical improvements and their potential impact on participant access, independence, service quality and administrative capacity.
- Examine alternative fee structures, including flat fees, cost-sharing arrangements and remuneration models, while considering which services should remain free of charge. Assess operational costs, funding and revenue sources consistent with independence and access. For prioritized scenarios, estimate implementation and recurring costs, resource needs and potential revenues. Clearly identify assumptions regarding demand, case volumes, staff and roster involvement, and assess how changes in these assumptions could affect viability and affordability. Distinguish estimates supported by available evidence from those requiring further validation.
- Assess differentiated, shared or pooled service delivery models, including facilitation, referral and early intervention. For simplified processes, identify the services included, proportionate procedural parameters, criteria for moving to fuller procedures, and arrangements for cost control and predictable billing. Identify any broader changes to the Canadian Sport Dispute Resolution Code needed to support the proposed models, taking account of parallel review work.

Governance and Institutional Framework

- Assess the SDRCC's framework under the Physical Activity and Sport Act, distinguishing statutory obligations from voluntary standards and recommended practices. Consider applicable governance requirements for national sport organizations and multisport organizations, the Canadian Sport Governance Code and other relevant best practices as points of comparison, while recognizing the SDRCC's distinct institutional role. Examine appointment processes, Board composition and terms of office, independence, athlete representation, diversity, committee structures, Board evaluation and accountability. Identify the authority and processes required to implement proposed changes, clearly distinguishing measures within the SDRCC's authority, those requiring amendments to ministerial guidelines and those requiring legislative amendments.
- Consider relevant sport system reforms, including the work and recommendations of the Future of Sport in Canada Commission, as available, and parallel work identified by SDRCC staff. Assess how proposed changes could improve coordination among sport organizations and across national, provincial, territorial, local and community levels, and reduce fragmentation of dispute resolution mechanisms.

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Project Scope

Prevention, Complementary Services and Partnerships

- Assess the Dispute Prevention Resource Centre, practical tools, training initiatives and support services for sport organizations. Explore opportunities to offer complementary expert services such as governance and policy reviews, vetting and discipline and appeal process reviews, as well as professional partnerships, including pro bono and lower-cost service models. Define the purpose and intended users of selected services; assess demand, added value, quality, pricing, responsibilities and resource needs. Identify considerations relating to professional expertise, confidentiality, conflicts of interest and liability, and recommend appropriate safeguards to maintain a clear separation between advisory and adjudicative functions. Examine how roster expertise could support these services under SDRCC oversight, including through mandates from Sport Canada or direct contracts with organizations, and assess their added value compared with existing private-sector services.

Specialized Services and Other Jurisdictions

- Explore opportunities to establish specialized chambers and provide dispute resolution or tribunal administration services to other sports, bodies or jurisdictions within Canada or abroad. Assess potential demand, mandate compatibility, organizational capacity, financial viability, independence and applicable recognition requirements. Identify which opportunities should be pursued, deferred or declined, providing evidence-based justification for each recommendation. Conduct a more detailed assessment of priority opportunities, as agreed upon with the Working Group and confirmed by the SDRCC's project lead within the approved scope of work and budget. Identify any further feasibility or legal reviews needed before implementation.

Comparative Models, Scenarios and Recommendations

- Examine a justified selection of relevant Canadian and international models in sport and other sectors. Compare prioritized scenarios with the current model of the SDRCC across legal, financial, operational and institutional implications, including resource needs, risks and potential impacts on current and prospective users. Explain the relevance of each model and identify any limitations to its applicability within the SDRCC's context. Develop practical, evidence-based recommendations and a phased implementation roadmap, outlining priorities, estimated costs, responsible parties, dependencies, decision-making authorities, potential partners and required government approvals. Assess the likely effects of each scenario and recommendation on accessibility, timeliness, procedural fairness, independence and affordability for current and prospective users. For dispute resolution services, also assess users' ability to obtain an effective remedy. Identify potential implementation steps beginning in 2027–2028 and beyond, along with appropriate measures to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.

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Project Scope

Comparative Models, Scenarios and Recommendations (Continued)

- Bidders must propose an appropriate and proportionate methodology justifying the proposed consultation sample, number of comparative models, scenarios and depth of analysis. Address all six workstreams, distinguishing initial screening from detailed analysis and explaining how priorities will be established. Confirm priorities at kickoff within the agreed scope of work and budget. Bidders must identify anticipated evidence gaps, key assumptions and the information and support required from the SDRCC. The assessment may draw on parallel work identified by the SDRCC, including the review of internal appeal mechanisms and focused revisions to the Canadian Sport Dispute Resolution Code, while avoiding duplication of those activities.

Deliverables and Schedule

Target Date	Deliverable or Project Milestone
Week of November 23, 2026	Appointment and kickoff with the SDRCC and the Working Group, subject to a signed agreement. Confirm a work plan covering priorities across all six workstreams, methods, consultation sample, comparisons and scenarios, meetings, the SDRCC staff contributions, data safeguards, review windows, translation-review support and exact report dates.
November 2026 to January 2027	Research and consultations. Submit a brief interim findings report on needs, current operations, selected comparative models and initial governance issues, with sources, consultation coverage and evidence limitations. Present findings to the Working Group, provide concise progress updates and flag gaps or delays.
February to March 2027 *Draft report date to be agreed at kickoff	Present and test scenarios, estimated costs, governance options and selected opportunities with the Working Group. Submit a complete draft report covering all six workstreams and proposed recommendations early enough for consolidated review, revisions and the final presentation within the planned schedule.
March 2027 *Final report target March 31 funding deadline	Final report with an executive summary, evidence and limitations, comparison of prioritized scenarios and estimated costs, prioritized recommendations and a phased implementation roadmap. Distinguish the consultant's findings and recommendations from the Working Group's recommendations and document material differences in views. Provide the final report, supporting analytical materials and a concise summary of the treatment of substantive review comments. Present results to the Board and Working Group.

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Deliverables and Schedule

Propose exact interim dates and review windows, allowing time for consolidated comments, revisions, the final presentation and translation-review clarification. Deliver reports in editable MS Word and PDF, with editable analytical tables and presentation materials. Provide the revised final report in clean and tracked versions. The fixed fee must include meeting preparation and participation at the proposed frequency, one consolidated review of the draft, revisions for the final report, the final presentation, reasonable responses to substantive translation-review questions and correction of errors identified during validation.

Schedule Adjustments

- March 2027 is the target for the final report; delays may arise from consultations, deliberations or review. Current funding must be used by March 31, 2027. The proposed work plan must ensure that all funded activities and deliverables are scheduled for completion by this deadline and include a contingency plan should the full review not be completed as anticipated. Flag risks promptly and identify the work affected, its cost and the proposed response. Any extension must receive prior written approval from the SDRCC's project lead, including agreement on revised milestones, outstanding work, any additional fees and confirmed funding arrangements. Work undertaken after March 31, 2027 cannot be charged to the current funding allocation or undertaken on an assumption of future funding. A revised date alone does not in itself authorize additional services or fees.

Working Arrangements and Boundaries

Working Group meetings are expected approximately every three weeks, mainly virtually; one or two in-person meetings may be held with the SDRCC's prior written authorization. The consultant is responsible for preparing concise materials before meetings, supporting discussion at the Chair's request and incorporating consolidated feedback. The consultant must specify the number of Working Group meetings, kickoff sessions and final presentations included in the fixed fee, as well as the associated preparation and follow-up work. The proposal must clarify whether proposed in-person meetings would replace or be in addition to virtual meetings.

The SDRCC will designate a project lead, provide available materials and operational data, facilitate contacts, coordinate staff contributions and consolidate review comments with the Chair of the Working Group. The SDRCC will be responsible for Working Group member selection, agreements, member honoraria and travel arrangements, which will be managed separately from the consultant's contract. The consultant will remain responsible for completing the agreed research, consultations, analysis and deliverables. The SDRCC's project lead will review and approve deliverables to ensure compliance with the agreed scope of work, evidentiary requirements and standards of completeness. Acceptance does not require endorsement of the consultant's findings or recommendations by the SDRCC or the Working Group.

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Working Arrangements and Boundaries

Working Group activities and deliverables will be in English. Consultations must accommodate participation in both English and French. The consultant must explain how bilingual participation will be supported and identify any assistance required from the SDRCC. The SDRCC will arrange French-language translation separately. The proposed budget and schedule must include reasonable responses to substantive questions arising during translation review, with the timing confirmed at kickoff and any work after March 31 governed by Schedule adjustments.

This mandate is limited to assessment, analysis of options and development of recommendations. Implementation of new services, negotiation of partnership agreements, drafting amendments to the Canadian Sport Dispute Resolution Code or preparing legislative amendments are excluded from the scope of work. The consultant must identify any work outside the agreed mandate and obtain prior authorization from the SDRCC before proceeding. Any additional services require the SDRCC's prior written authorization and agreement on scope, price, timing and funding.

Qualifications

- Demonstrated experience in organizational or service reviews, qualitative research, stakeholder consultation and comparative analysis, with the ability to produce practical recommendations supported by evidence.
- Knowledge of Canadian sport governance and dispute resolution, with access to the legal, financial and operational expertise needed to assess the proposed options.
- Ability to work efficiently and collaboratively with the SDRCC staff and an external Working Group, facilitate discussions, explain choices, manage differing views and meet agreed milestones.
- Ability to support consultations in English and French and collaborate with the SDRCC's translation review process. Identify the language capacity of the proposed team and any support required.

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Proposal Contents and Pricing

Submit a concise proposal, preferably no more than eight pages excluding CVs, references and work samples. Include CVs for all proposed individuals and at least one short, relevant work sample that may be shared without breaching confidentiality. The proposal must address:

- **Understanding and approach:** Propose a practical method covering the six workstreams, consultations, comparative research, scenario and financial analysis, and Working Group support. Specify and justify the number and profiles of organizations and users consulted, comparative models and scenarios proposed, and the depth of each analysis. Explain how evidence will be obtained, identify consultation languages and limitations, and distinguish screening from detailed study.

- **Relevant experience and personnel:** Describe relevant experience with comparable organizational review, governance or dispute resolution work and provide two references. Identify the project lead, the roles, qualifications and availability of all team members, and any subcontractors. Specify who will be responsible for legal and financial analysis and explain how their expertise will be incorporated into the review.

- **Schedule and staff support:** Provide a detailed work plan outlining key milestones, estimated days or hours allocated to each task and team member, assumptions regarding meetings and review processes, and the specific support expected from the SDRCC staff. Confirm availability from kickoff through March 2027. Describe a contingency respecting the March 31, 2027 funding deadline, identify any availability for a separately authorized extension and explain material delivery risks and assumptions.

- **Fees and expenses:** Quote a fixed professional fee for all required services, broken down by workstream or deliverable, with estimated effort and assumptions regarding meetings, revisions and clarification requests related to translation review. Itemize anticipated expenses and applicable taxes separately and provide the total proposed cost in Canadian dollars. The fixed fee must include all required research, consultations, virtual meetings, revisions, analytical materials and the final presentation. Consultation tools, transcription services and any other anticipated costs must be itemized, indicating zero or “included” where appropriate.

- **In-person meetings and additional services:** Provide separate cost estimates for one or two potential in-person meetings, including additional professional fees, travel and related expenses for the consultant and proposed team. Specify whether each in-person meeting would replace or be in addition to a scheduled virtual meeting. The SDRCC will manage Working Group members’ honoraria and travel expenses separately. Provide rates for additional meetings or services that may be required during an authorized extension and quote separately for any optional services. All travel expenses and additional services require prior written authorization from the SDRCC. Optional services must not reduce or replace the scope of required work.

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Proposal Contents and Pricing

- **Conflicts and restrictions:** Bidders must disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest, including current or recent engagements, roles or relationships that could reasonably affect, or appear to affect, independence in carrying out this assignment. This includes relationships involving the SDRCC, Sport Canada, organizations or service providers under review, and relevant dispute resolution proceedings. Bidders must describe any proposed measures to address identified conflicts. The SDRCC will determine whether a disclosed circumstance can be managed, requires mitigation or renders a proposal ineligible. Bidders must also disclose any restrictions affecting availability, use of subcontractors or use of the resulting work product.

All services required to complete the proposed assessment, support the Working Group, prepare revisions, and deliver the final presentation, including clarification requests related to translation review, must be included in the base price. Bidders must identify material assumptions and explain their potential impact on the scope of work, level of effort, costs and schedule. The SDRCC reserves the right to clarify or negotiate the scope of work and budget in accordance with its procurement process. Any changes following contract award will require prior written authorization from the SDRCC.

Evaluation and Award

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Responsiveness to the scope, deliverables and timeline, including the suitability and feasibility of the method and Working Group support.
- Relevant experience and reputation of the consultant, firm or team in relation to the assignment.
- Professional qualifications of the individuals assigned to the project.
- Competitiveness of cost and level of services, including pricing assumptions.

The SDRCC may interview shortlisted prospective service providers, contact any references provided and seek additional references reasonably known to the SDRCC. The SDRCC reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to amend, suspend, cancel or reissue this RFP, reject any or all proposals, and negotiate scope and pricing with one or more proponents in accordance with its procurement process. Issuance of this RFP does not obligate the SDRCC to award a contract. Any contract award will be subject to the SDRCC internal approvals and the execution of a written agreement. Payments will be tied to the satisfactory completion and acceptance of agreed deliverables.

The selected consultant and all members of the proposed project team, including subcontractors, will be required to undergo a criminal background check satisfactory to SDRCC prior to commencing work. All checks will be conducted in accordance with applicable laws and privacy requirements.

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Rights and Confidentiality

The consultant must protect all confidential and non-public information obtained during the assignment including after its completion or termination. Informed consent must be obtained from consultation participants and findings must be reported anonymously unless identification has been expressly authorized. The proposed work plan must outline measures for the secure handling of case records and consultation information. Requirements regarding data access, retention and return or destruction will be established in the contract. The consultant must promptly disclose any new or changed actual or perceived conflicts of interest and comply with the agreed safeguards.

The proposed work plan must explain how individual users and athletes will be recruited independently. Sport organizations and other participating institutions may circulate invitations or suggest contacts, but must not determine which users or athletes may participate or screen their responses. The consultant must provide a direct and confidential means for individuals to express interest in participating.

All draft and final deliverables, working papers, research memoranda, analysis notes and related materials prepared under the contract will become the exclusive property of the SDRCC upon payment. The contract will secure the SDRCC's rights to use, share with Sport Canada, reproduce, translate and publish these materials, subject to confidentiality and any disclosed pre-existing or third-party rights. The proposal must identify those rights and any restrictions; the contract must secure the permissions the SDRCC needs for these uses.

Proposal submissions will be retained by the SDRCC and will not be returned. Identify proprietary or confidential material in the proposal and explain the requested protection.

Questions and Submissions

A detailed project description is available upon request. Prospective bidders may obtain a copy by emailing applications@crdsc-sdrcc.ca.

Send questions to applications@crdsc-sdrcc.ca by 4:00 p.m. ET on November 5, 2026. Responses and any RFP amendments will be shared in writing with all interested bidders known to the SDRCC.

Submit the proposal only by email to applications@crdsc-sdrcc.ca, as a single PDF file no larger than 5 MB, received by 4:00 p.m. ET on November 12, 2026. Offers must remain valid for 30 days after closing. Proposal preparation costs are the bidder's responsibility.

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