**Experimentation Works (EW) Project Proposal Template**

EW is a scalable initiative to build public service capacity in experimentation through a learning-by-doing model that supports and showcases a variety of experiments in the open.

**Project focus, scope and methodology**

The initiative is looking to select and support projects that specifically focus on experimentation. Briefly defined, experimentation refers to activities which seek to explore, test and compare the effects and impacts of policies, interventions and approaches in order to inform sound decision-making.

The projects EW is looking to select can focus on various areas -- policy, program, service delivery, regulatory, internal services, etc -- and can be small, medium or large-scale (e.g. multiple sites, complex issue, high-level policy). From a methodological point of view, EW is seeking projects that implement experimental or quasi-experimental designs to mainly include:

- Randomized designs (e.g. randomized controlled trials, A/B testing)
- Quasi-experimental designs (e.g. difference-in-differences, regression discontinuity)
- Structured pre-post designs (e.g. controlled before and after)

In addition, the current cohort is open to exploratory research (e.g. qualitative research, baseline study, surveys), where the intention is to gather insights and data to inform a future experiment. Finally, this cohort is also open to project teams who wish to observe and learn without proposing a specific project.

**Assessment process and criteria**

The projects will be assessed by an expert panel composed of experimental design experts and the TBS experimentation team.

 The project template below is made up of four sections:

1. **Proposal Summary**. Provides basic information about the team and the project.
2. **Project Details**. Describes the problem statement, research question, and proposed methodology.
3. **Practical considerations.** Describes some of the practical requirements to support the project, such as access to expertise, resources, etc.
4. **Self-Assessment**. Allows for project teams to self-assess their internal capacity, experimental ambition and overall readiness.

The input in these sections will be assessed using the following criteria:

- **Clarity.** Are the problem, question, and design options sufficiently clear in order to understand what is proposed?
- **Feasibility.** Is the proposed design appropriate in order to answer the proposed research question? Can the proposed design be reasonably implemented as part of the current cohort?
- **Readiness.** Does the project team have the necessary project management expertise / resources to initiate and implement the proposed project (knowing they would receive expert support, should they require it)?
- **Relevance/usefulness of evidence for decision-making**. Is the project relevant from a decision-making point of view? (i.e. will the evidence generated be valuable to inform decisions?)

We ask that applicants self-assess their own capacity, experimental ambition and overall readiness in the last section of the application form. The assessment panel will take into consideration the existing level of expertise and capacity from project teams and will accordingly recommend the appropriate level of support.

Finally, the assessment panel will also consider balancing a diversity of projects in the final selection (i.e. varying levels of capacity, different functional and thematic areas of government, and similarity between project designs).

**Instructions**

> ***Before filling and submitting your proposal, seek your management approval (Director and above) to design and implement this project. In addition, selected projects will need to formalise their partnership by signing (DG-level or above) a Memorandum of Understanding with TBS, outlining respective roles and responsibilities.***

- Respect the word limit indicated in each section;
- Be as specific as possible;
- In cases where project elements have not yet been defined (for instance, the experimental design or measured outcomes) indicate what you would hope to develop and have as a goal, even if tentatively;
- Once sections 1-3 are completed, select which category would best fit your project scope, ambition, and readiness in section 4;
- If you do not want to run a project but would still like to be part of the EW cohort as an observer, you do not need to submit responses to sections 2 and 3, simply select this category in the self-assessment in section 4;
- Once complete, send back the saved document (in .docx or .pdf format) to zzexper@tbs-sct.gc.ca **no later than COB on Friday December 13, 2019**.

1. **Proposal Summary**

| **Project Title** |
| --- |
| |

| **Lead Department** |
| --- |
| |

| **Proposed Team** (names, affiliation) |
| --- |
| |

| **Proposed project thematic focus** (e.g. health, employment, etc.) |
| --- |
| |

| **Proposed project government area** (select all that apply if more than one) |
| --- |
| ☐ *Policy* <br> ☐ *Program* <br> ☐ *Service Delivery* <br> ☐ *Regulatory* <br> ☐ *Internal services* <br> ☐ *Other (please specify)* |

| **Proposed project summary overview of proposed experiment(s)** <br> (context, background, work-to-date, resourcing) |
| --- |
| *<provide no more than 300 words>* |

| **Comments** (if any) |
| --- |
| |

2. **Project details**

Please provide details on the proposed experimental project. Try to be as clear as possible when providing information. While the project may be still in the early development stage, provide indications on what is intended at this current stage.

| 1. Problem statement |
| --- |
| *What is the problem you want to tackle through the experiment? Describe the current situation and why it would benefit from experimental evidence.* |
| *<provide no more than 100 words>* |

| 2. Research question |
| --- |
| *What do you want to know?* |
| *<provide no more than 50 words>* |

| 3. Intervention |
| --- |
| *What specific intervention or element (of your program, service, policy, etc.) do you want to test as part of the experiment? Is this intervention part of an existing practice that can be manipulated (e.g. program, service, policy, etc.) or is it something new that needs to be developed and implemented?* |
| *<provide no more than 100 words>*<br><br>*N/A for exploratory projects* |

| 4. Outcomes and data |
|---|
| *What do you intend on measuring (e.g. behavior, opinion, process, etc.)? Do you currently have data on this outcome (if not, how will you collect it)?* |
| *<provide no more than 100 words>* |

| 5. Design |
|---|
| *To the extent known, what is the proposed design? If known, please indicate whether the project might be:*<br>● *Experimental (e.g. RCT, A/B test);*<br>● *Quasi-experimental (e.g. regression discontinuity, difference-in-differences, etc.);*<br>● *Structured pre-post (e.g. controlled before-and-after study);*<br>● *Exploratory (e.g. qualitative, baseline study);*<br>● *Other (please explain).* |
| *<provide no more than 100 words>* |

| 6. Evidence use |
|---|
| *How will the results from the proposed experiment be used within your organization? What impact do you hope to have with respect to priorities, strategy, decision-making, resource (re)allocation, etc.?* |
| *<provide no more than 100 words>* |

### 3. Practical considerations

Please provide details on your team's current ability to support the design, implementation and analysis of your proposed experimental project. For practical elements that are not yet finalized (which is acceptable at this stage), please indicate what you intend to do to fulfill those practical considerations.

| 1. Skills and expertise |
| --- |
| *To what extent do you consider that you might require access to EW expertise? Do you currently have access to some or all of the envisioned expertise to implement and analyze the experiment? If not, will you be able to acquire some or all of this expertise before/during the course of the experiment?* |
| *< provide no more than 100 words>* |

| 2. Dedicated resources |
| --- |
| *Do you currently have any or all of the envisioned resources to support the management and implementation of the project (e.g. FTEs, budget)? If not, will you be able to acquire resources before or at any point during the course of the experiment?* |
| *<provide no more than 100 words>* |

| 3. Technical resources |
| --- |
| *To your knowledge, does your project have specific technical requirements (e.g. software, IM/IT, communications)? If so, do you currently have or envision having access to any or all of the known required technical resources?* |
| *<provide no more than 100 words>* |

## 4. Partnership(s)

*Are you partnering with anyone else in support of your project (e.g. other parts of your department, other departments, other governments, academics, consultants)?*

☐ *Yes*

☐ No

*<If yes, please list the partners and their role in the project>*

*Is there a dedicated unit on experimentation within your organization?*

☐ *Yes*

☐ No

*<If yes, describe this unit and their role in the current project>*

## 5. Feasibility

*Are you confident that your proposed experimental project could be initiated, implemented and completed within the cohort timeline of approximately one calendar year?*

☐ *Yes*

☐ No

*<If no, please explain why that is and what would be needed to complete the project with a calendar year - no more than 100 words>*

## 6. Management support & approval

*Has the project been approved, at least in principle, by your management (e.g. Director and above), recognizing the dedicated time and resources required?*

☐ *Yes*

☐ No

*<If no, please explain what is the current plan on getting the project approved - no more than 100 words>*

## 7. Ethics

*Has the project been formally or informally assessed (e.g. through an ethics board, or through a self-assessment tool/checklist)?*

☐ *Yes*

☐ No

*<If no, are there any currently known or foreseeable ethical concerns to implementing your project? - no more than 100 words >*

**4. Self-assessment**

The current cohort model of Experimentation Works is designed to allow for project teams with different levels of expertise and capacity and with different levels of experimental ambition. Based on the responses you provided in both the project details and in the practical considerations sections, please select where you think your project/team might be with respect to the following 4 categories:

| | Category | Selection |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Not in a position to run an experiment, but is interested in the experimentation process as an observer. Will join training sessions and EW events. | |
| 2 | Looking to conduct exploratory research (e.g. qualitative research, non-experimental) in order to eventually design and implement an experiment, informed by this exploratory work but not in this second EW cohort (running 2020-2021). | |
| 3 | Looking to conduct an experimental or quasi-experimental project. The proposed project is small/medium scale and is reasonably straight-forward given EW2 timelines. | |
| 4 | Looking to conduct an experimental or quasi-experimental in a particular area (e.g. policy, large-scale program) that requires additional expertise in design, implementation and analysis. | |