

## Rebrand Request for Proposal

[The Natural Step Canada](#) (TNS) is seeking proposals for the development and launch of a new, future-focused and compelling brand to accompany our recent partnership with [Smart Prosperity Institute](#) (SPI), which will serve as an umbrella for the initiatives within the partnership. This RFP represents an exciting opportunity to help ideate, create, and launch this new brand identity and story that embodies the present and long-term future of TNS-SPI and advances the mission of the partnership.

We invite interested parties to submit a proposal by **March 11, 2022** that includes timeline, cost, and deliverables, with more details below that outline our criteria for selection. The following RFP includes a background of our organization and describes the purpose of the rebrand, key deliverables, and specific requests relating to the proposal.

Note that we also have a website redesign RFP issued at the same time, to help bring to life our newly co-developed, approved strategic plan for the TNS-SPI partnership. Agencies with exceptional competencies in both areas are invited to submit to both.

## Table of Contents

1. Organizational Background
2. The Challenge
3. Project Scope
4. Key Deliverables
5. Brand Objectives and Tenets
6. Timelines and Key Milestones
7. Proposal Next Steps
8. Criteria for Selection
9. Fine Print
10. Ownership of Intellectual Property
11. Contact Information

## Contact Info

Alice Irene Whittaker

Director of Marketing and Communications  
[awhittaker@naturalstep.ca](mailto:awhittaker@naturalstep.ca)

## Organizational Background

The Natural Step Canada (TNS) and Smart Prosperity Institute (SPI) work together in close partnership to foster a strong and inclusive economy that thrives within nature's limits.

### About The Natural Step Canada

[The Natural Step Canada](https://naturalstep.ca/) is a national charity with over 25 years' experience advancing science, innovation and strategic leadership aimed at fostering a strong and inclusive economy that thrives within nature's limits. TNS engages thought leaders from industry, government, academia and civil society through labs, leadership coalitions and expert networks such as the Canada Plastics Pact, Circular Economy Leadership Canada, and the Energy Futures Lab. Learn more: <https://naturalstep.ca/>

### About Smart Prosperity Institute

[Smart Prosperity Institute](https://institute.smartprosperity.ca/) (formerly Sustainable Prosperity) is a national research network and policy think tank based at the University of Ottawa. We deliver world-class research and work with public and private partners – all to advance practical policies and market solutions for a stronger, cleaner economy. Learn more: [institute.smartprosperity.ca](https://institute.smartprosperity.ca/)

## The Challenge

Over its 25-year history, The Natural Step Canada has proven itself to be a leader in advancing innovation and strategic leadership, through the engagement of leaders from industry, academia, government, and civil society. Its labs and initiatives tackle some of our country's most pressing problems, including the [Energy Futures Lab](#) which is advancing the energy future of Alberta; the [Canada Plastics Pact](#) which is working to end plastic waste; and [Circular Economy Leadership Canada](#), which is accelerating the transition to a low-carbon, circular economy in Canada. Over the past decade, Smart Prosperity Institute has established itself as a preeminent think-tank at the cutting edge of environment-economy research and policy in Canada. These two organizations, The Natural Step Canada and Smart Prosperity Institute, are coming together in partnership to have greater impact together, by fostering a strong and inclusive economy that thrives within nature's limits.

As we all grapple with how we rise to meet our most pressing challenges - climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, inequality, and economic uncertainty - the TNS-SPI Partnership offers evidence-based and bold solutions. At a time when there is division and separation in our echo chambers, the TNS-SPI Partnership brings together leaders with disparate viewpoints and finds common ground and new thinking that are necessary to create the economy of the future.

This exciting and groundbreaking partnership requires a bold, future-focussed, and undeniably compelling brand that can serve as an umbrella for the initiatives within the partnership. Beyond the brand, the partnership also requires a powerful narrative that tells the story of the whole partnership, as well as its dynamic, high-impact initiatives and the relationships between them all. This RFP represents an exciting opportunity for an agency to help ideate, create, and launch this new umbrella brand and narratives that captures the imaginations of key audiences - namely leaders from industry, government, media, academia, foundations, and civil society -

and spurs them to use their influence to create the positive change we need for a prosperous, sustainable, and inclusive future.

## Project Scope

The scope of this project is to **develop and support in launching a new, partnership-wide umbrella brand** across all platforms, with a brand identity and story that embodies the present and long-term future of TNS-SPI and advances the mission of the partnership. TNS itself will be rebranded as the umbrella brand, while the brands of SPI, EFL, CPP, and CELC (and possibly other brands in the future) will retain their current brands in order to focus attention on those distinct brands and target key constituencies in those issue spaces. The selected agency will **strategically develop the shared story and messaging of TNS-SPI as a whole**, with TNS specifically being rebranded to serve the unifying role across the partnership, while clearly developing the respective brand identities, messages, and stories of *all* TNS-SPI brands, how they fit within the larger umbrella brand, and their relationships to one another.

Beyond the scope of this rebranding project, there is potential for extensive future work with this growing partnership of brands. There is also a concurrent RFP for a website redesign, and agencies with excellence in both rebranding and website development are encouraged to bid on both projects.

This partnership will be brought to life by a new strategic plan that has been co-developed and approved, and this plan will serve as a critical input that will inform the rebranding process.

## Key Deliverables

The selected agency will be expected to fulfill the following deliverables, in close collaboration with the Director of Marketing and Communications, and select Executives and staff members.

1. **Brand Development:** new brand name (English and French); brand positioning; brand narrative; topline key messages
2. **Brand Identity:** logos (English and French); colour palette; guidelines on look and feel; guidelines on imagery selection
3. **Brand Relationships:** recommended strategy on the overarching brand and sub-brands; align all brand logos and brand identities; recommend how they interact and message the relationships
4. **Asset Development:** brand guidelines; PPTs; e-signatures; others TBD through rebrand process
5. **Website:** recommendations on website strategy between brand and sub-brands; overarching brand website development; this would feed into the separate website project
6. **Launch:** recommendations on rollout and launch strategy

## **Brand Objectives and Tenets**

### **Brand Objectives**

1. Evoke a bold and positive vision for the future
2. Create and establish an identity that is credible, influential, and captivating over the long-term
3. Tell a story of the “why” of the TNS-SPI partnership, and how exactly we are bigger than the sum of our parts as a partnership, while embodying the historical brands of The Natural Step Canada and Smart Prosperity Institute, and creating space for alignment with the various initiatives
4. Distinguish the brand, and increase recognition, in an increasingly crowded economic-environmental landscape, by being provocative, creative, and memorable
5. Convey our unique value proposition to funders, resulting in increased funding
6. Instil in our broad audiences a sense of trust, influence, and momentum, and compel them to participate in our mission
7. Compel our closest internal and external stakeholders to be proud and ardent brand advocates who directly support and/or advance our mission

### **Tenets of the Brand**

Our new brand needs to be:

1. Future-focussed, visionary
2. Inclusive of well-being for the natural world, the economy, and human beings
3. Captivating, novel, memorable
4. Rooted in the big picture transformation of systems
5. Credible and evidence-based
6. Resonant with diverse audiences, including business leaders, foundation funders, government decision-makers, media, and civil society
7. Colloquial, jargon-free, with the ability to shape public narratives directly and/or indirectly

### **Timelines and Key Milestones**

1. RFP issued: Feb. 22
2. Briefings on requests: Feb. 23 - Mar. 8
3. RFP deadline: Mar. 11
4. Agency selection: Mar. 18
5. Phase 1 (Planning, Learning, Initial Options for Name, Identity, Roll-out): Mar. 18-31
6. Phase 1 consultations with stakeholders (rebrand committee, Board, SC, leadership, staff): Mar. 31 - Apr. 8
7. Phase 2 (Decision on final name, development of assets for final consultation, recommended approaches developed): Apr. 8-18
8. Phase 2 Consultations with stakeholders: Apr. 18-22
9. Finalization of deliverables: Apr. 29
10. Brand rollout and launch approach developed and prepared: May 2-27
11. Brand/partnership launch: Week of June 6-10

## Proposal Next Steps

We request that you submit a proposal to Alice Irene Whittaker (awhittaker@naturalstep.ca) by **March 11, 2022**. We invite all applicants to [set up a briefing](#) in advance of submitting a proposal. In your proposal, please include:

- Company overview
- Biographies of the main employees who will work on the project
- Budget
- Timelines
- Examples of past work and reference from past clients
- Any additional information that showcases why you are the right agency for this project

## Criteria for Selection

1. Agency credibility, capabilities, and relevant experience
2. Proven excellence in strategy development, brand strategy, brand development
3. Team working on the account
4. Project management capabilities
5. Pricing
6. Relevant case studies and examples showcasing brand strategy excellence and aptitude navigating complexity in a compelling way
7. Ability to also successfully deliver on a parallel website redesign project is a nice-to-have factor in the selection process (please contact us for further specifications).
8. Canadian agencies will be given preference.

## Fine Print

Technically and legally speaking, it is The Natural Step Canada that is rebranding. TNS and its new umbrella brand will play the unifying function across the whole TNS-SPI partnership. The names of individual brands (SPI, CELC, CPP, EFL) will remain the same and there may be moderate brand changes to create better alignment and consistency within and across the umbrella brand, and to illustrate the relationships across the partnership.

## Ownership of Intellectual Property

As part of the RFP response, firms will need to provide a brief statement regarding the ownership of the produced materials or provide the firm's policy regarding intellectual property issues. Please include in the proposal what will be required for The Natural Step Canada to own the final work produced.

## Contact Information

Agencies bidding on this RFP are strongly encouraged to [set up a briefing conversation](#) with Alice Irene Whittaker to discuss the project in advance of submitting a proposal.

Alice Irene Whittaker  
Director of Marketing and Communications  
[awhittaker@naturalstep.ca](mailto:awhittaker@naturalstep.ca)