CALL FOR PROPOSALS
A systematic review of the body of research on innovation for sustainable business

Question: What best practices drive innovation and intrapreneurship for sustainable business?

Funding: Cdn$25,000 (unrestricted), including taxes

Proposal Deadline: December 5, 2011

Project Deadline: August 20, 2012

1. Background
The Network for Business Sustainability (NBS) funds systematic reviews based on the top priorities for business sustainability identified by its Leadership Council. These reviews have two objectives:

1. Inform business sustainability practice by providing business decision-makers with a synthesis of what we know and what we don’t know on the topic at hand based on the best available evidence.
2. Facilitate the development of future business sustainability research by describing the state of the existing body of literature and identifying important gaps.

These projects provide an opportunity for researchers to shape practice by addressing a topic that is top of mind for practitioners. They are disseminated worldwide to researchers and practitioners through NBS and its partner institutions.

The outputs from past NBS systematic reviews are available here.

2. Systematic Reviews
Systematic reviews are a relatively new methodology in management research. They do not involve new, basic research. Nor are they a traditional narrative literature review. Rather, they involve a comprehensive, transparent and replicable review of existing research (both published and unpublished) from academic and practitioner sources. Interested parties should download and read our Guide to NBS Systematic Reviews at http://nbs.net/wp-content/uploads/Guide-to-NBS-Systematic-Reviews2011.pdf.

3. Project Description
What best practices drive innovation and intrapreneurship for sustainable business?
Business is a key driver of innovation and many businesses have well established innovation management systems. Many people believe business can innovate solutions to today’s social and environmental challenges. But to do so, executives require guidance on how to adapt their innovation systems to drive sustainable outcomes.

This project seeks to review and synthesize the existing body of knowledge on best practices that drive innovation and intrapreneurship for sustainable business. We include products, processes and entire business
models in our view of ‘innovation and intrapreneurship.’ We loosely define ‘sustainable business’ as a way of conducting business that strengthens both the business (i.e., generates profits, builds resilience, etc.) and society (i.e., generates positive externalities for the environment, communities, employees, etc.).

Below are some related questions that may help research teams scope their project:

- What best practices for innovation in general might apply to innovation for sustainable business?
- What are the best practices in organizational design and structure to innovate for sustainable business?
- What are the best practices in organizational processes and activities to innovate for sustainable business? For example: How can sustainability considerations (or desired sustainable outcomes) be incorporated into existing innovation management systems (e.g., new product development)? How can executives create a culture of innovation for sustainable business? What incentive systems are most effective? Is there a special role for information technologies in driving innovation for sustainable business?
- How do these best practices vary by context (e.g., industry, geography, etc.)? What contextual factors within and outside the organization enable innovation for sustainable business?
- What are some examples of innovations for sustainable business?
- What can business do to influence public policy related to innovation for sustainable business?

Not all of these questions will fall within the ultimate scope of the project. Some may not be possible to answer with existing knowledge, and others may cross bodies of literature. Research teams are encouraged to propose specific project scopes within the broad project question. The final project scope will be refined and finalized through discussion between the successful research team, the Guidance Committee and NBS (see Guide to NBS Systematic Reviews for a detailed description of the process).

4. Project Deliverables and Proposed Schedule

Deliverables

This project has several deliverables.

- **The systematic review:** The primary deliverable for this project is a systematic review and synthesis of the most rigorous published and unpublished, academic and practitioner knowledge related to the Question. The target audience is practitioners, although the document must stand up to academic criticism and communicate the full rigour of the systematic review process (in appendix). The body of evidence should be synthesized (see Guide to NBS Systematic Reviews for details). Gaps in the literature should be identified. Total length should be a minimum of 30 single-spaced pages plus appendices (methodology, systematic descriptive mapping of the body of knowledge, references, etc.). Any publications or presentations stemming from this work must acknowledge NBS as the funder.

- **Extracted data:** As an interim project deliverable, the extracted data will be submitted at the halfway point in the project. These are the raw data from which the project’s conclusions are drawn.

- **A public presentation (and slideshow):** You may be asked to present the review findings at an event. Your slideshow for such a presentation will be made public and circulated widely by NBS to ensure greater uptake and impact of the research.

- **Feedback on process for NBS administrators:** We aim to improve the process every year by taking into account an internal report of your recommendations for improvements.
Proposed Schedule

The following table includes tentative deadlines for each of the deliverables and other key activities. The final schedule may be refined through discussion with the selected research team.

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<tr>
<th>Deliverables and Other Activities</th>
<th>Tentative Deadlines*</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Define research question on conference call with NBS and Guidance Committee.</td>
<td>January 2012</td>
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<td>2. Develop and justify the review methodology and get input from NBS and academic advisor.</td>
<td>February 2012</td>
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<td>3. Conduct literature search and apply eligibility criteria.</td>
<td>Feb-March 2012</td>
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<td>4. Give written progress report to NBS and Guidance Committee, then discuss on conference call.</td>
<td>March 2012</td>
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<td>5. Read, analyze and assess quality of all studies in the review.</td>
<td>April-May 2012</td>
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<td>installment will be released based on adequate progress.</td>
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<td>7. Synthesize the review findings into a framework.</td>
<td>June 2012</td>
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<td>8. Discuss the emerging framework on a conference call with NBS and Guidance Committee.</td>
<td>Late June 2012</td>
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<td>9. Finalize synthesis, write report and submit first draft to NBS for review.</td>
<td>July 2012</td>
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<td>11. Rework the report and submit it and all final deliverables to NBS.</td>
<td>August 20, 2012</td>
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<td>12. Present project findings at an event targeting practitioners.</td>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
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* May be negotiated with Guidance Committee and NBS.

All deliverables should be submitted in English in Microsoft Word formats. Final reports must adhere to style guidelines provided by NBS.

5. Funding

The funding for this project is Cdn$25,000 including taxes, in unrestricted funds to be granted in three stages contingent upon progress. The funds will be distributed according to the following schedule: $10,000 upon acceptance of the project, $5,000 upon delivery of the extracted data and contingent on adequate progress, and the balance upon successful completion. (Note that some universities deduct 'overhead' from all incoming funds.)

6. Eligibility

Anyone is eligible to respond to this Call. Interested applicants should bear in mind that to conduct a systematic review successfully requires strong capabilities with and extensive experience in both conducting and reviewing academic research. We strongly encourage interested parties to contact us prior to applying to learn more about the process, and to read past NBS systematic reviews to understand the scale and the scope of the work to be completed (e.g. http://nbs.net/wp-content/uploads/Systematic-Review-Sustainability-and-Corporate-Culture.pdf).

7. Proposal Requirements and Criteria for Evaluation Proposals

The project will be conducted in English. All proposals and project deliverables must be written in English, and all oral communications throughout the project, including conference calls with the Guidance Committee, will be conducted in English.
Proposals must have one lead researcher, who is solely accountable for the deliverables and who is the main point of contact for the project. For training purposes, we encourage applicants to involve graduate students in the project. The research team may also include research associates and other partners.

Proposals should be limited to the following sections:

1. Impacts, Knowledge, and Activities (no more than 1,500 words)
   i. The envisioned impacts from the project. For example, who will be impacted by the knowledge? What they will do with it? Where you will publish and present the outputs? Given the NBS' focus on impacting business practice, you are encouraged to highlight how this research will impact the business community.
   ii. Details of the body of knowledge that you feel are relevant to the Question and that you will synthesize. Applicants are encouraged to scope the existing literature briefly to inform their proposal content and scope.
   iii. A very rough, preliminary protocol for the project (see Guide to NBS Systematic Reviews for details).

2. Team Expertise (no more than 500 words per researcher)
   iv. Description of the specific experience and expertise of each team member as it relates to this project. It is important to show both that the research team has both the skills necessary to understand the academic research and those required to communicate knowledge effectively to practitioners.

3. A Curriculum Vitae for the lead researcher

Proposals must be submitted in Microsoft Word format to Pamela Laughland (plaughland@nbs.net) by December 5, 2011. Winning proposals will be announced within four weeks. Proposals may be made publicly available after the competition has closed.

Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated by a Guidance Committee, comprised of selected members of the NBS Leadership Council. They will also help scope the project with the research team and guide them throughout the process.

Your proposal will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Does the research team understand the project question and have significant knowledge of the relevant literatures?
- Is the research team equipped to read, evaluate and synthesize peer-reviewed academic research?
- Is the preliminary protocol proposed appropriate?
- Does the research team have the ability to communicate with practitioner audiences? Does the proposal highlight appropriate strategies for impacting these audiences?