

RETURN BIDS TO:
RETOURNER LES SOUMISSIONS À:
Bid Receiving - PWGSC / Réception des
soumissions - TPSGC
11 Laurier St. / 11, rue Laurier
Place du Portage , Phase III
Core 0A1 / Noyau 0A1
Gatineau, Québec K1A 0S5
Bid Fax: (819) 997-9776

LETTER OF INTEREST
LETTRE D'INTÉRÊT

Comments - Commentaires

Vendor/Firm Name and Address
Raison sociale et adresse du
fournisseur/de l'entrepreneur

Issuing Office - Bureau de distribution
Land Projects and Communication System Support
Division/Div des projets terrestres et support de systèmes
de communication
11 Laurier St. / 11, rue Laurier
8C2, Place du Portage, Phase III
Gatineau
Québec
K1A 0S5

Title - Sujet ISSP - PEIS		
Solicitation No. - N° de l'invitation W8476-120005/A		Date 2013-03-14
Client Reference No. - N° de référence du client W8476-120005		GETS Ref. No. - N° de réf. de SEAG PW-\$\$\$RA-004-23638
File No. - N° de dossier 004ra.W8476-120005	CCC No./N° CCC - FMS No./N° VME	
Solicitation Closes - L'invitation prend fin at - à 02:00 PM on - le 2013-03-28		Time Zone Fuseau horaire Eastern Daylight Saving Time EDT
F.O.B. - F.A.B. Plant-Usine: <input type="checkbox"/> Destination: <input type="checkbox"/> Other-Autre: <input type="checkbox"/>		
Address Enquiries to: - Adresser toutes questions à: Juteau, Bernard		Buyer Id - Id de l'acheteur 004ra
Telephone No. - N° de téléphone (819) 956-0532 ()		FAX No. - N° de FAX () -
Destination - of Goods, Services, and Construction: Destination - des biens, services et construction:		

Instructions: See Herein

Instructions: Voir aux présentes

Delivery Required - Livraison exigée	Delivery Offered - Livraison proposée
Vendor/Firm Name and Address Raison sociale et adresse du fournisseur/de l'entrepreneur	
Telephone No. - N° de téléphone Facsimile No. - N° de télécopieur	
Name and title of person authorized to sign on behalf of Vendor/Firm (type or print) Nom et titre de la personne autorisée à signer au nom du fournisseur/ de l'entrepreneur (taper ou écrire en caractères d'imprimerie)	
Signature	Date

Solicitation No. - N° de l'invitation

W8476-120005/A

Amd. No. - N° de la modif.

File No. - N° du dossier

004raW8476-120005

Buyer ID - Id de l'acheteur

004ra

Client Ref. No. - N° de réf. du client

W8476-120005

CCC No./N° CCC - FMS No/ N° VME

See attached document.

Q&As

Merx Posting March 14, 2013

Q1. We propose that all UAPE evaluation criteria be rated.

Answer: the 9 mandatory criteria identified by the requirements authority represent the core aspects of the ISS capability and there is currently no plan to adjust the UAPE requirements further.

Q2. We recommend that a full debrief for previous bidders concerning bidder performance at UAPE be done.

Answer: comment noted.

Q3. We recommend the 77 mandatory requirements of the TPS that were deleted be retained and scored as rated requirements.

Answer: As explained during the Industry Day held on 5 March 2013, the number of TPS requirements evaluated at bid time has been reduced however, all original TPS requirements except one (headband and neckband for the audio display) remain in the ISS-A Resulting Contract. All TPS requirements will be validated during the System Qualification phase of the ISS-A Contract IAW with the assigned Verification Criteria.

Q4. If recommendation in Q3 is not considered, we recommend that the TPS list in Annex CB Appendix 1 of Volume 2 be updated to reflect the deletion of the 77 mandatory requirements in Volume 1.

Answer: please refer to the answer at Q2.

Q5. We recommends that Canada consider issuing the RFP only when funding for the entire Acquisition contract has been allocated instead of limiting the funding available to start the program and as a means to evaluate competitive BIDS to \$7.2M. Canada should consider this option and discuss it with industry while considering the impact that this approach would have on the Contract Award Date and resulting delivery schedule.

Answer: Canada plans to re-solicit on April 1, 2013. Once a bidder is selected for award, PWGSC & DND plan to proceed with a Joint Treasury Board Submission to get full funding and contracting approval for both contracts values prior to contract award. The whole ISSP funding requirement for the three cycles (\$316M) is included in the Departmental Investment Plan (IP) approved by TB. The Army has reiterated the importance and priority of ISSP for the Dismounted Soldier community.

Q6. All UAPS requirements should have objective, quantifiable measures (i.e. those that can be observed, recorded, and measured by evaluation staff) will help to validate the subjective ratings provided by soldiers. If it is not possible to develop objective measures by the date of publication of the RFP, at a minimum, objective measures should be developed for those UAPS requirements that are mandatory.

Answer: There are many aspects of human systems integration for which objective measures have not been developed and validated for the reliable prediction of Human Factors (HF) that contribute to the acceptance of a system by users.

Objective measures such as time to complete a task or number of errors in completing a task provide no direct correlation to overall system performance, acceptability or usability. The ISS-S is a multivariate and complex tool that cannot be assessed as a series of discrete, controlled psychomotor behaviour tests. In fact, this type of assessment speaks more to the soldiers motor and cognitive skills and less so to the system's capabilities. The evaluation soldiers involved in UAPE are "professionals at arms" and therefore understand from a usability perspective what is required to complete tasks assigned to the infantry.

Q7. We recommend re-wording of requirements to reflect more objective measurement. For instance, instead of "The ISS-S must be acceptable to soldiers ...", a mandatory requirement might be phrased as follows: "The soldier must be able to enter a standardized text message (to be provided) in under «x» seconds, with no more than «x» errors."

Answer: Objective measures in terms of an ISS-S must be approached from a holistic perspective by answering a question such as:

- How much more effective than the baseline are infantry soldiers at identifying and neutralizing the enemy with the ISS?
- How much more accurate/faster than the baseline is an infantry section at arrive at their intended destination?
- How much more efficient than the baseline is infantry section at completing their mission?

DND is very much interested in pursuing this research such that future similar bid evaluation processes may benefit from this type of assessment. It should, however, be noted that these types of objective measures will always be complemented by user acceptance evaluations.

Q8. Recommend the scoring methodology or statistical analysis of results be revised to eliminate the effects of "Rater bias" (Rater bias refers to the tendency of a rater to make ratings generally higher or lower than those of other raters); and " Rater distribution " (When an individual Rater, when one examines all ratings made by the Rater, has a noticeably different distribution than the distribution of ratings for all Raters combined). Suggestions to revise the scoring method, or conduct statistical analysis are:

- a) Only score rated requirements at the end of each evaluation block. Score mandatories once, at the end of the final evaluation block, by rank ordering the systems evaluated on the Likert scale.

- b) Establish that the data (i.e. the ratings from all the soldiers) is normal, or has positive or negative skew. Transform the data if necessary to make it normal, or else use non-parametric statistical methods to analyze the data. Again, industry would be happy to collaborate with the Crown to define an acceptable analysis method.
- c) Test the data for each questionnaire item for outliers, and delete values that are outliers. Then carry out the simple considerations of distribution that were used in the first ISSP competition.

Answer: For the UAPE, all evaluation soldiers' data will count therefore ensuring that a bid is not disqualified due to the application of a statistical method to address potential outliers.

Q9. Ensure that questionnaires are filled out individually and privately. Take other steps to ensure that the command structure is not reflected through the questionnaire results.

Answer: The completion of final scoring questionnaires is indeed done individually and in a manner that is fair, focused on individual evaluation and free of influence by peers and superiors within the test group.

Q10. Ensure all evaluation soldiers carry out all tasks, rather than respecting typical task distribution in the section, i.e. rather than be carried out by the Section Commander.

Answer: In most instances throughout UAPE, this is sustained. However, within a rifle section there are specific roles and tasks in which all ISS functions may or may not be utilized in a given circumstance. This is especially prevalent during operation/task focused scenarios and activity.

Q11: Develop a de-conflicted (between the different bidders) plan for the three days' training being provided by bidders so that bidders can adequately train navigation, planning, target designation, handoff, etc. without necessarily having to conduct the detailed recce that would be required to prepare this training.

Answer: The UAPE HQ will exercise the central control and management of resources and terrain with a view to providing space for each bidder to conduct outdoor training. Bidder must expect that, in the UAPE setting, other bidders will inadvertently see their P(Bid) system. DND will maintain positive control of equipment at all times and monitoring all frequencies radio frequencies used during UAPE.

Q12. When a solicitation is cancelled because no compliant bids were *received* Canada can limit its tendering to the original bidders. *However*, Canada is proposing an open tendering process. Introducing new bidders may significantly lengthen the procurement cycle. *Given* this new solicitation is being issued on the heels of the previous solicitation and therefore Canada already has obtained current expressions of interest from at least

five reputable companies, why is Canada engaging in an open tendering process which may lead to more delays?

Answer: Canada has decided to modify the RFP and open the tender to Industry to increase competition and the chances of success obtaining best value for Canada.

Q13. Why DND requires Treasury Board approval before it awards the ISSP production contract (Phase B)? Why is it that Treasury Board approval cannot be granted before the RFP is reissued? What criteria does DND need to satisfy in order to obtain this TB approval? Assuming that all the criteria can be satisfied, is the approval automatic or could there still be risks to the funding?

Answer: Treasury Board is the approval authority for Canada for this requirement. The identity of the selected contractor and the cost to Canada must be provided for approval before a contract can be awarded. Although approval is not an absolute guarantee, it is considered a low risk since ISSP is already fully budgeted within DND's Investment Plan (IP).

Q14. Re; Vol 1, Section 1.2.2. Part of the procurement approach is to break up the ISSP procurement into two (2) phases, the qualification phase and the acquisition/production phase. If the selected contractor fails to meet the qualification phase requirements, then Canada reserves the right to terminate the contract and award the contract to the "next ranked bid". Please confirm that the "next ranked bidder" would *have* had to first submit a compliant bid. Also, considering the results of the first ISSP solicitation, why does Canada think there will be two (2) qualified bidders *given* the ISSP procurement approach remain substantially unchanged? What happens if there is no second compliant bidder, specifically, will Canada be able to obtain ISSP contract award approval if there is no second source qualified?

Answer: We confirm that the "next ranked bidder" would have had to first submit a compliant bid. Canada does not claim to have any presumptions on the number of successful bidders. Having said that, it has simplified the RFP and reduced the number of mandatory requirements to increase its chances of obtaining a successful bid. In the case where there is no compliant 2nd ranked bidder, the tender process would be cancelled, and Canada would then decide what the following actions would be regarding re-solicitation.

Q15. Re; Vol 1, Part 1.1.b) and c) Introduction. We object to both methodologies as written since they present an uneven playing field for the bidders. Rather than reserving the right to reevaluate "non-substantial" non-compliance to mandatory requirements after the bids have been submitted, why doesn't Canada make those determinations in advance and change those requirements to "shoulds" instead of "shalls" in the solicitation document.

Answer: comments noted.

Q16. Insurance Requirements (Re: Vol 1, Section 6.4) It is difficult to get a letter from an insurance company/broker agreeing to provide future insurance without some caveats. If there are caveats in the letter then the bidder is possibly at risk of being deemed non-compliant. Instead of placing bidders in this position, will Canada waive the requirement to produce the insurance letter at bid submission and instead require the actual insurance certificates be presented to Canada as a condition precedent to contract award?

Answer: comment noted.

Q17. Re; Appendix 4, Annex CC to Vol 1. The number of mandatory UAPS has been reduced from 33 to 9. It is also noted that the UAPE scoring methodology has not changed from the original solicitation except for the fact that the minimum mandatory acceptance level has been lowered from 80% to 75% for all 9 mandatory UAPS. In order to avoid non-compliance but still maintains an ability to solicit soldier acceptance as part of the basis of evaluation, would it not make better sense to reassign the nine mandatory UAPS as rated requirements?

Answer: see Q1.

Q18. Contract Award : Re; Appendix 1, Annex CE, Vol 1. For purposes of project planning and scheduling bidders are to assume a contract start date of 01 October 2014. Can Canada confirm when they think contract award will actually occur? In turn, will Canada amend the planning date in Appendix 1, Annex CE, Vol 1?

Answer: Contract Award is anticipated for December 2014. Applicable changes to the RFP will be done.

Q19. Rechargeable Batteries: Re; Template 6, Paragraph 8.5, Appendix 1, Annex CF, Vol 1; Annex AB to Vol 2 (ISS-A Financial Bid Presentation Sheets); and Part 1 to Annex AB Vol 3 (ISS-OWSS Financial Bid Presentation Sheet). The logic behind the data fields in the references seems to assume the best re-chargeable power domain solution a bidder can offer from the market at time of solicitation is one in which a single (1) re-chargeable battery pack provides enough power to the ISS-S to meet the needs of the 24 hour soldier's battle day (BD). Indeed, these references have not altered since the original solicitation. However, since the issuing of the original solicitation, re-chargeable battery cell technology has continued to evolve rapidly. How would Canada reward a bidder that offers a re-chargeable power domain solution in which a single (1) re-chargeable battery pack provides enough power to support an ISS-S well beyond the exigencies of the 24 hour BD?

Answer: options will be examined to identify a way to reward Bidders who offer power capabilities with more than 24 hours autonomy.

Q20. Can Canada explain why many of the previous mandatory requirements in the Technical Performance Specification have been removed? Examples are TPS-5176,

TPS-5179 and TPS-2167. If Canada feels that some bidders may have difficulty achieving compliance to these requirements, would it not be of greater operational value to make them rated requirements as opposed to removing them? Given the rapid pace of technological development, the current approach gives Canada risk as Canada may not be able to procure the best value ISS-S there is on the market today.

Answer: see Q3

Q21. Re; Paragraph 5.2, Attachment 2, Appendix 2, Annex CB, Vol 1. It is noted that as part of the protocol progression during UAPE, Stage 1 is the Intuitivity Test Stand. It is further noted that this test stand is to occur prior to the Bidder Led Training Stand. All prospective bidder ISS-S system offerings contain hazardous materials and hazardous risks if not handled and worn properly. Paragraph 23 to B-GL-300-008/FP-001 Training Canada's Army clearly states that "[All] training must be conducted in a manner that is safe for the participants. Even classroom training, which may seem benign, may pose risks if munitions or hazardous materials are involved. Therefore, the safety regulations prescribed in B-GL-381-001rrS-OOO Training Safety, together with local safety policies, shall be adhered to without deviance. " Allowing soldiers to interact with bidder ISS-S without first proceeding through the Bidder Led Training Stand where proper and safe wearing and handling of the ISS-S are taught as part of the training poses such a risk. Will Canada revise the protocol progression to allow some bidder led training to occur prior to the Intuitivity Test Stand?

Answer: considering the feedback received from Industry on the subject of the Intuitivity test stand, DND will allow Bidders to introduce their P(Bid) system to the evaluation soldiers prior to any form of evaluation taking place. As a result, the original Intuitivity test stand has been removed. Functions listed in the original Intuitivity test stand will be used to validate Bidder led training and assess the evaluation soldiers' ability to interact with the P(Bid) system as part of test stand #18.

Q22: OWSS Model Subcontract, Vol 3, Section 2.2. Canada has made it mandatory that the BMA and SEP-S software be available at time of bid submission. Accordingly, the ISSP systems will be delivered with pre-existing software. Terms and conditions 400202 (2008-05-12), Application of Part I, state "This Part only applies if the Contract requires the Contractor either to design the Custom Software or to further develop an existing technical design for the Custom Software." Please confirm that the BMA and SEP-S software is not considered "custom software".

Answer: The BMA and SEP-S software provided with the bid are not considered "custom software".

Q23: Volume 2, Clause 2.2.1.4, Section 16 of 4003. Can Canada state how long the escrow agreement is to be maintained for?

Answer: tbd

Q24: Requirement for Open Source Certification, Vol 1, Section 5.1.3.

References:

- a) 2030 27 (2008-05-12) Intellectual Property Infringement and Royalties;
- b) 4003 13 (2008-05-12) Right to License
- c) 4006 05 (2008-05-12) Contractor's Right to Grant Licenses

The above software terms and conditions (reference b & c) require the contractor to warrant and represent that they have the rights to license the software to Canada. In addition, the contractor also agrees to indemnify Canada against any Intellectual Property Rights infringements including court awarded damages and legal defense costs (reference a). Each bidder must as part of its bid submission accept these terms and conditions. As this subject is already well addressed in the terms and conditions will Canada delete the requirement to provide an open source certificate?

Answer: Comment noted.

Q25: Vol 2, Basis of Payment, Section 6.1. In the prior solicitation, Canada did not insert the Basis of Payment codes into the financial bid presentation sheets. This caused confusion when cross referencing the basis of payment clauses contained in 6.1.1, 6.1.2, and 6.1.3 of Vol 2 to the applicable financial bid presentation sheets. It is important for the bidders to clearly understand what is subject to "firm price" versus those which are subject to a "ceiling" or "limitation of expenditure" price. Will Canada please insert the financial codes into the financial spreadsheets delivered with the solicitation?

Answer: Yes, Canada will insert the financial codes.

Q26: How can we be reassured that UAPE evaluation soldiers have a realistic concept of what constitute a "Borderline" soldier system in the context of the Likert scale?

Answer: Evaluation soldiers in the context of UAPE are offered (through the use of the Likert scale) seven rating anchors with the neutral point being neither agree nor disagree which is "borderline".

Rating scale anchors used by ISSP were developed with US Army soldiers (i.e. a relevant population for this evaluation) and selected so that that the word picture in each anchor set would be as nearly equidistant (one standard deviation) from each other as possible (Dyer et. al, 1974 & 1976, as cited by Meister, 1985). The specific set of word picture for this response scale was taken from set number one of Table 10.5 of Meister, 1985).

During the week preceding UAPE, evaluation soldiers will participate in a baseline exercise. The intent of the "baselining" is to allow evaluation soldiers sufficient time to understand the UAPE related questionnaires; the Likert scale and the entire set of test stands used during UAPE. The culmination of the baseline week consists of all evaluation soldiers going through UAPE test stands with in-service equipment and

surrogate system (Garmin Rino). This forms the baseline against which all P(Bid) systems will be evaluated.

Q27: Will DND consider using statistical functions to normalize or shape UAPE data?

Answer: Evaluation soldiers' responses will stand as a representation of the infantry community. If DND were to shape the data as requested, some bidders may benefit (increased score) while others may be harmed (lowered score). DND will not perform any data normalization on the UAPE scores. All evaluation soldiers' data will count therefore ensuring that a bid is not disqualified due to the application of a statistical manipulation.

Q28: Evaluation Methodologies: Option 1 and Option 2

Option 1 – we are not in favour of Option 1 for the primary reason that this provision only permits the correction of items which are "not significant". It is our opinion that permitting a bidder to correct information which changes a bidder's response from non-compliant to compliant is significant. Therefore, this clause may not satisfy Canada's intent to correct minor errors or omissions that affect a bidder's compliance. Also, without a defined process (like option 2) too much subjectivity could be introduced into the evaluation process and create a real or perceived bias.

Option 2 – we are in favour of a modified Option 2 process which incorporates the following elements:

- i) Clarification on what aspects of the bidders' proposal are subject to this "2 step" evaluation process.
- ii) Bidders are afforded only three (3) days to respond to a non-compliance letter with the caveat that this period cannot be extended unless all the other bidders agree to such extension. We believe a short response period of three days is warranted because the intent of this clause is to give a bidder a chance to correct minor non-compliances not re-write major sections of their proposal. Three days should be sufficient to correct minor non-compliances.

Answer: Comments noted.

Q29: Evaluation Flowchart -Slide 14 of Industry Day Briefing shows a decision after "Cost Per Point Calculation". It is our recommendation that this be followed by "lowest Cost Per Point Wins", before the "Tie Determined" block. For clarification of this request, and incorporating the two-step evaluation process, we have attached an amended flowchart depicting these recommendations.

Answer: Comment noted.

Q30: The schedule in Slide 64 of the Industry Day does not show the break in production between Qualification and the beginning of the Production Contract for the

first 1,600 systems as briefed at Industry Day.

Also mentioned at Industry Day was the fact that Canada will not be conducting a parallel process (as in the previous ISSP competition), to obtain simultaneous approval for both Qualification and Initial Production. This would indicate that there is no guarantee of follow-on production after the Qualification Phase, making this a difficult business proposition to present to Industry senior management to obtain investment approval. Please clarify that this interpretation is correct, i.e. that only Qualification is approved at this time. It would be our recommendation that the procurement of the initial 1,600 systems be guaranteed, so as to mitigate against a break in production (loss of critical skills and knowledge), and to get these capabilities to the field soldiers as quickly as possible.

Answer: The funding authority for the Qualification Phase is approved, but the contract approval from TB can be obtained once successful bidder has been selected. See Q5 for more details.

Q31: Financial Evaluation Process

The Industry Day indicated that the Bidder's Conference will include a briefing on how to respond to the Financial Proposal requirements. It is recommended that the RFP include an explanation of how the financial submissions will be evaluated, and scored.

Answer: The financial bid will be evaluated as described in Volume 1, Annex AE Calculation of Cost per Point. There is no scoring for the financial bid.

Q32. Debriefs to make a Bid/No Bid Decision

It is formally requested that the first round of bidders be formally debriefed, as this information is needed as part of Industry's evaluation as to whether or not the requirement has changed sufficiently to justify the needed investment to resubmit a proposal. We need to understand why we were deemed to be non-compliant, so that we can apply the same "lessons learned" concept, should we decide to rebid. We also understand that the precedent exists within PWGSC and DND for bidders to be formally debriefed on why they were found to be in non-compliance, before the rebid process was started. The letters provided to non-compliant bidders listing those mandatory requirements are inadequate and bidders, even after careful review, cannot find a reason for Canada's findings.

Answer: Comments noted.

Q33. Evaluation Methodology – Options 1 and 2 :

We are pleased to provide to Canada the following feedback regarding the

new Evaluation Methodology options identified in Volume 1, Part I - General Information, of the draft Reference C) Integrated Soldier System Project (ISSP) Request for Proposal (RFP). We have reviewed the two options presented in the Introduction paragraph 1.1 and wish to inform you that we would fully support Canada to apply the three-step approach which is outlined under c) OPTION 2 - Evaluation Methodology. We believe that this approach would allow Canada to exercise more flexibility while conducting the evaluation of the bids, which would ultimately increase the Government's chances to receive a compliant bid and ensure a successful procurement.

Answer: Comments noted.

Q34. We recommend the UAPE achieved score by the company be part/included in the total cost per point evaluation. Also, apply to the UAPE score a multiplication factor of X in order to represent the importance of UAPE in the overall scoring system.

Answer: The UAPE is already a major factor in the selection process through its mandatory status. Also, the "20% from highest UAPE score achieved" part of the basis of selection is a powerful tool that highlights the profile / importance attributed to the UAPE outcome.

Q35. Evaluation Methodology: We support either Option 1 or Option 2. They would both provide PWGSC staff with additional flexibility to clarify information contained in bidders proposals without having to declare them non-compliant unnecessarily. We believe that PWGSC Contract Authorities, as procurement professionals, should be provided the opportunity to exercise their good judgement on these matters while maintaining a fair process for all competitors.

Answer: Comments noted.

Q36: P Bid Evaluation (Radio)

The Integrated Soldier System -Suite (ISS-S) radio is a key component of the overall ISS-S solution given its intended use in the context of Adaptive Dispersed Operations (ADO). We recommend that the Integrated Soldier System Project includes more hands-on evaluation of the ISS-S radio during the bid evaluation process in order to confirm the vendors' claims on various technical requirements and therefore mitigating risks during the system qualification phase of the acquisition contract which is only nine months in duration.

Answer: Canada recognizes that not all mandatory requirements are evaluated at bid time, and that in most cases Canada requires a description or analysis instead of the execution of a test or demonstration as proof of compliance. A balanced approach between what can be physically evaluated at bid time, what will be evaluated on paper only and what will be verified during the system qualification phase must be maintained when considering the resources involved in the process and the quality of the bids expected. In the end, the contractor is bound by the resulting contract and all requirements will be validated during the system qualification phase to ensure they are satisfied as claimed in the bid submission.

