

Questions and Answers to RFP 201303022

Q19 On page 23, section 4.1, there is a statement to the fact that “*Elaborate or unnecessary voluminous proposals are not desired*”. CMHC is requesting comprehensive information from bidders (ref.: namely sections 4.6 to 4.8). Bidders will also have to provide elaborate answers to section 3.5.1 (points a to g) and to the mandatory section titled “Administrative / Infrastructure” (points 1 to 17) on pages 19 and 20 or risking not be compliant. There are also references in various sub-sections to the need to be comprehensive and complete. CMHC also requires that we attach various documents to the proposal. These requests and requirements will lead to a voluminous proposal.

Question 1: Given that section 4.1 is also a requirement, would it be possible to change that statement to simply “*Unnecessary voluminous proposals are not desired*”?

A19. Proponents are encouraged to take care in completely answering questions and proposal requirements and to avoid submitting extraneous materials that do not show how the proponent intends to meet requirements.

Q20. On page 20, point 11: CMHC requires that “*The proponents must demonstrate that they have the necessary technological infrastructure to deliver secure Internet-based on-line, anonymous and confidential 360 degree feedback questionnaire administration services with user-friendly products that provide sufficient guidance to enable respondents to complete the questionnaire approximately in 20-25 minutes.*”

Question 1: Do our answers to Mandatory Requirement “Administrative/ Infrastructure” suffice to provide evidence to this criteria and our “*technological infrastructure*”?

Question 2: if not, would it be desirable for CHMC to be given the opportunity to complete one of the bidder’s on-line 360 degree tool? Added to our answers to Mandatory Requirement “Administrative/Infrastructure” we believe that this experience would provide sufficient evidence of our firm having “*the necessary technological infrastructure to deliver secure Internet-based on-line, anonymous and confidential 360 degree feedback questionnaire administration services with user-friendly products that provide sufficient guidance to enable respondents to complete the questionnaire approximately in 20-25 minutes*”. Does CMHC agree?

A20. Question 1 and 2:

Proponents should provide enough detailed information relative to the specifications in order for CMHC to be able to evaluate the proponent’s

ability to perform the work. Proponents who wish to include a link to their on line 360 degree feedback tool as part of their proposal may do so.

- Q21. Page 20, point 12: CMHC requires the development of a custom 360 assessment (as reference in section 3.4 on page 16, in point 10 on page 20, and elsewhere in the RFP). Point 12 requires that “*the proponent must provide evidence of the validity of the tools which they currently use or propose to use*” (emphasis added). We understand that development of the 360 assessment tool is part of the bidder’s deliverable – confirmed as well by Table 1 of the Pricing proposal (4.10). It is our understanding that a tool measuring CMHC’s competencies does not yet exist (please correct us if we are wrong).

Question 1: Are we correct to assume that CMHC simply wants to see “*evidence of the validity of the tools which they currently use*”? Also, we have a multitude of 360 assessments with validity data; are we correct to assume that only one validation study for one 360 tool would suffice?

Question 2: In the event that a tool already exists, will we be able to use this tool for this project, even in the event it is the property of another firm?

Question 3: In the event that a tool already exists and is the property of another bidder, will this bidder have to provide evidence of the validity of that specific tool as well as all cost related to its usage in order to complete Table 1 of 4.10 appropriately?

We are asking questions 2 and 3 because having access to an already existing 360 tool could lower our Start-Up cost estimates. If the tool has not been validated, it would again impact the Start-Up cost (ref. table 1, page 27).

- A21. CMHC wishes to enter into a three (3) year contract with a proponent for the purpose of purchasing 360 degree feedback assessment services. This includes developing as required and providing a tailored, user-friendly, automated, confidential and anonymous 360 degree feedback tool. By submitting a proposal, proponents are providing a solution. Based on the Statement of Work, proponents should present the tool they would recommend and how the tool can be tailored to meet CMHC’s needs.
- Q22. On page 20, point 14: “*The proponents must provide samples of material to support employees when conducting the 360, 360 questionnaires, reports, information and debriefing materials and developmental plans in both official languages that have been used with other clients.*” Given the IP clauses found in all contracts we sign with our clients, we are confident CMHC understands that bidders are uneasy with providing other clients’ deliverables and their IP property to a third party. We are assuming that CMHC would not want its proprietary material provided to other clients as well. Our concerns (for our clients’ propriety) are heightened given clause 2.13 on page 10 who allude to CMHC not returning these documents, and these documents becoming “the property of CMHC” and potentially accessible by others. The issue is compounded by the fact that

bidders cannot ask for their clients' permission to release such information to CMHC, as clause 2.14 states that the information in this RFP is to be considered proprietary information and cannot be disclosed to any party. Bidders wanting to provide such documents to CMHC are placed in an uncomfortable position of either breaching confidentiality in relation to other clients, or breaching clause 2.14.

Question 1: At the minimum, can the clients' name be taken out of these documents and accept to return information from other clients? All of the requested information/documents are part of appendices. Thus, these could be returned by having bidders provide CMHC with self-addressed envelopes.

Question 2: If not possible, as CMHC will call clients to conduct reference checks, would it be possible for CMHC to obtain clients' impression of bidders capacity to provide "...360, 360 questionnaires, reports, information and debriefing materials and developmental plans in both official language"?

Question 3: Can CMHC elaborate as to how the provided documents, if not returned, will be handled?

Question 4: What will assure bidders

A22. Question 1: Proponents should provide generic or anonymized materials. Proponents need not provide client information in responding to the question, and can provide a sample of the types of materials that they would make available. The objective is for CMHC to have an opportunity to review sample documents.

Question 2: Should CMHC decide to contact references, it will request consent from the proponent.

Question 3: CMHC can commit to keeping the information confidential and restricting access to those employees involved in the procurement process. CMHC can also commit to signing a confidentiality agreement if required, all of that subject to the provisions of access and privacy legislation.

Q.23 On page 20, point 16: (i.e. "The proponents must demonstrate superior interpersonal skills to deal with a variety of very sensitive situations")

Question 1: Are we correct to assume that reference check will be used to assess this point?

A23. Question 1: Proponents should describe in their proposal, how they will meet the requirement on page 20, point 16. The reference checks may be an avenue for CMHC to verify the proponent's interpersonal skills to deal with a variety of sensitive situations.

Q24. On page 28, section 4.10. Table 2, row no. 6: We are unsure of the number of “Additional coaching sessions following a 360 degree feedback, if required and in the language of choice of the employee”.

Question 1: Would it be possible to have estimates of the total number of additional coaching sessions, please? Or are we correct to assume that this amount in row 6 is for information only and does not count in the total budget of \$159,000?

Question 2: Row 7. We could envision additional administrative costs. Such costs are related to having to reproduce a report later lost by a recipient. Yet, it is challenging to estimate the numbers. Can bidders simply list the potential additional cost but since they are not automatic, not include it in the total amounts?

A24. Question 1: For the purpose of responding to Table 2, proponents can provide the cost per participant or per hour and indicate in the “Notes” column any factors and assumption made in determining the cost. The information provided in Table 2, will be used to assess the pricing of the proposal.

Any additional coaching sessions requested from the successful proponent will be included in the \$159,000 budget.

Question 2: Proponent should indicate the potential additional costs based on previous experience with other clients for this type of program. Fees per unit should be indicated and any factors and assumption should be included in “Notes” column.

Q25. On page 29, section 4.10. Table 3, all sections: We are unsure of the number of “items” that would be required in these sections as the scope of the work has not been established precisely in the RFP. It seems that some of these services, while relevant to competency-based management and 360 assessments, could be out of scope given the description of the work to perform in 1.2 (page 3) and the statement of work as described in 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5.

Question 1: Items 1 to 4 seems to be ad-hoc items that could be out of score based on the SOW. Are we correct that price estimates in this table would not count for evaluating compliance with total budget? It seems that section 3.5.2 uses the conditional tense “...*the successful proponent may also provide recommendations on CMHC’s internal assessment tools....*” There is no indication of the number of tools to analysis, or the comprehensiveness of the required analysis, etc.

Question 2: Can we suggest that bidders add simply a per hour rate to be used at the discretion of CMHC provided that the need arises and or that the budget allows?

Question 3: If this part of the SOW and included in the total budget and must be estimated, could we have precise estimate of unit requirements, as to develop a competitive proposal?

A25. Question 1: The information provided in Tables 1, 2 and 3, will be used to assess the pricing of the proposal. The indication of “...*the successful proponent may also provide recommendations on CMHC’s internal assessment tools...*” is for CMHC’s prerogative to request the additional work by the successful proponent.

Question 2: Should CMHC request work on CMHC’s Behavioural Competencies, the cost will be included in the \$159,000 budget. For the purpose of responding to Table 3, proponents can provide the cost per diem or per hour and indicate in the “Notes” column any factors and assumption made in determining the cost.

Question 3: Response is part of question 2 above.

Q26. As the proposed team would conduct the work, when you refer to proponent, are you referring to the proposed team?

A26. The word “proponent” refers to the organizations that submit a proposal. Proponents must respond to section 4.6 “Proponent’s qualifications”, which would include profiles of the project team.

Q27. We have read through the proposal and have some questions. We are hoping that you will be agreeable to having a brief conference call to discuss this with us. Please let us know when you might have some time for us to speak.

A27. Proponents must submit a proposal and follow the evaluation process indicated in the Section 5 – Evaluation and Selection. CMHC will answer questions, but will not engage in any conversations or meetings with potential proponents prior to the submission of the proposals. We encourage proponents to include in the “Notes” columns any factors and assumptions.

Q28. We are in the process of completing the current 360 Degree Feedback RFP for CMHC.

We are looking for some clarity surrounding the GOC Common Look and Feel 2.0 guidelines (found in 3.5.1 Administrative/Infrastructure (9)(k)). We have done some research on the topic and have found several websites, and we are unsure exactly what it is that we need to comply with. Can you please provide us with more detail?

A28. These are standards for the Internet. Proponents can refer to Treasury Board <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ws-nw/index-eng.asp> - Accessibility.

Q.29 Item #3 in Table 3 on page 29 seems to cover the same requirement as Item #2, only there is an additional requirement included in Item #3 to provide recommendations on the competency dictionary. If one assumes that there is a need to revise the competency dictionary, then it would not be necessary to undertake the work included under Item #2. Is this correct? If not, can you please clarify?

A.29 Item #2 is specific to providing recommendations on internal tools should there be a change to the behavioural competencies, e.g., the assessment questionnaire or learning activities, etc. Item #3 is specific to providing recommendations on the competency

New questions not reviewed by Procurement (need to discuss response to 30)

- Q30. a) In reference to answer to Q5 provided by CMHC:
- Based on CMHC's additional instructions in A5, are we correct to state that bidders can only enter "the cost per diem or per hour" in the column titled "Fee basis unit (i.e. per diem or hour), ignore the next 3 columns, and simply provide some explanations in the last column (titled "Notes")?
 - If so, bidders do not have to add anything for row titled "Total Ad hoc Work Costs"?
 - If this is incorrect, and CMHC wants bidders to make assumptions about the Ad-Hoc Work Cost (Table 3), if the total amount (tables 1 + 2 + 3) is above the stated budget, are bidders deemed non-compliant? Perhaps it is CMHC's intentions to stay within budget, but adjust the number of 360s and feedback/coaching sessions bidders are to provide (and other related services found under Tables 1 and 2) in order for bidders to supply services required under Table 3?
- A30. In Table 3, proponents are to provide the cost per diem or per hour and indicate in the "Notes" column any factors and assumptions made in determining the cost. Proponents do not have to complete the other columns in the Table 3.
- Q31. We appreciate CMHC's transparency in answers no. A4 and A14:
- a. Is Ellis Locke and Associates allowed to bid on this work again?
 - b. Our understanding from A4 and A14 is that CMHC's decision to go to "open bidding" for these services despite, perhaps, being satisfied with the current provider's services, is a procedural requirement aligned with its procurement rules. We respect that. Is there any additional insights that CMHC can provide on its assessment or competency needs so that bidders can distinguish their offerings from those of the current provider? For instance, any additional services, training, accreditations, formal development solutions (for instance) that would level the playing field?
- A31. a. The procurement process is open to all proponents. CMHC shall conduct the RFP process in a visibly fair manner and will treat all proponents equitably.
- b. CMHC uses a Request for Proposal (RFP) to describe its requirements, the criteria which will be used in evaluating proposals and selecting a lead proponent or lead proponents. It is the role of the proponents to respond to the statement of work and requirements and demonstrate how their proposed solutions and experience with the type of work makes them the best proponent.