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National Goods and Services Procurement Strategy: Communication Services

November 2012



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Executive Summary

Introduction

Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) has undertaken a review of how communication services are procured for federal government departments with the objective of developing a national procurement strategy. Engaging government departments and suppliers to assess their needs and concerns was a key component of this review.

This National Procurement Strategy for communication services aims to provide a Canada-wide approach. When implemented, this approach will improve the ease and effectiveness of the procurement process for all stakeholders.

Definition

The Government of Canada (GC) communication services category is made up of Advertising Services (including campaign planning and production, and media purchases); Public Opinion Research Services; Audio-Visual (film, video and multimedia) Production Services; Media Monitoring Services; Exposition and Exhibit Services; Events Management Services; Graphic Design and Exhibit Design Services, web design services; and Strategic Communication Services (including public relations, marketing, planning, writing and editing, and other related services).


Please note that printing services, including reprographic/photocopying services, are excluded from the definition. These services will be the subject of a separate national strategy to be published at a later date.

Background

Over the last five years, the GC has spent approximately \$229 million annually on communication services; this figure is taken from the Spend Cube, a PWGSC procurement reporting and spend analysis tool that captures 87% of the total GC spend. The remaining 13% is assumed using an extrapolation of Public Accounts.

The GC acquires a wide range of communication services to inform and engage the general public regarding ongoing public policies, acts and regulations. The dominant subcategory of communication services is advertising; this includes the cost of acquiring advertising media space or time from media outlets, as well as professional services to develop advertising campaigns. Media buying represents the majority of the dollars spent.

As prescribed in the *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada*, Treasury Board has mandated that all government departments must engage the services of PWGSC to compete contracts for the communication services sub-categories of Advertising Services, Public Opinion Research Services and Audio-Visual Production Services.



Government departments can acquire many communication services subcategories under their own procurement authority; however, financial data indicates that they often choose to use PWGSC procurement services, offered to them on an optional basis. PWGSC has contracted communication services on behalf of 88 clients over the last six years. Standing Offers (SOs), Supply Arrangements (SAs) and Requests for Proposals (RFPs) are the main procurement instruments used by PWGSC in acquiring these services.

The procurement strategies used by PWGSC for communication services are often subject to consultations with the Privy Council Office (PCO), government departments and the PWGSC Integrated Services Branch (ISB) Government Information Services Sector, which is responsible for vetting government departments' requirements in the areas of Advertising and Public Opinion Research.

The subcategories of Advertising Services, Audio-Visual Production Services, Exposition and Exhibit Services, Events Management Services, Graphic Design and Exhibit Design Services, and Strategic Communication Services are subject to the voluntary set-aside of the Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business (PSAB). Requirements that fall within the scope of the Comprehensive Land Claim Agreements (CLCA) are published on the Government Electronic Tendering Service (GETS), currently MERX[™], for all to access.

Market Analysis


The economic cycle has a significant impact on communication services, as expenditures for such services by governments and businesses tend to be one of the first areas to be decreased when business confidence and economic growth decrease. The demand is particularly sensitive to corporate profit, government investment and household disposable income.

The communication services industry is labour intensive as it relies on the creativity, knowledge and skills of its workforce to harness new technology and master the use of traditional delivery channels successfully as well as the increasing popularity of social media to remain competitive. Also, suppliers of communication services from all segments of the industry often rely on technologically innovative tools and techniques to differentiate themselves.

Findings

Stakeholders identified the following key issues during the consultation process:

- The wording on solicitation documents is inconsistent; examples include the number of work samples required, and imprecise wording to describe project-specific requirements.
- Comments received from stakeholders indicate that there are strong concerns about the use of lowest "cost-per-point" evaluation and supplier selection methodologies. More specifically, there is insufficient emphasis on qualitative criteria that are representative of value-added or creative content.

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- There are conflicting evaluation methods; examples include evaluation criteria that are unnecessarily specific, that overemphasize qualifications required and seem designed to exclude new bidders.
 - There is undue complexity in two areas within the RFP process: overly restrictive requirements and bundling/contract consolidation.
 - There is inadequate communication with stakeholders with respect to changes to procurement processes.

Strategic Direction

PWGSC will improve the procurement process for communication services further by:

- adapting the definition of communication services to better reflect industry trends and eliminate any overlap of services that exist across other categories;
- simplifying the writing in proposal requirements and solicitation documents;
- placing greater emphasis on the service aspect of the proposal, such as the creative approach and methodology;
- eliminating barriers in the procurement process that unnecessarily restrict the participation of qualified suppliers;
- incrementally incorporating appropriate and consistent environmental considerations; and
- improving communications with stakeholders through government department Procurement Advisory Committees and supplier-based working groups.

1 Purpose

Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) has engaged key stakeholder groups, including government departments and suppliers, as part of a detailed review of how it procures communication services on behalf of government departments. The review has identified strengths in the current process; it has also uncovered areas of opportunity that, if leveraged, should benefit government departments, existing and potential suppliers, and Canadians overall. More specifically, standardized approaches to procurement should lead to enhanced transparency, greater efficiency and more predictability.

This National Procurement Strategy outlines the strategic direction for procuring communication services, based on the opportunities identified by key stakeholder groups.

2 Scope

This National Procurement Strategy examines the procurement of communication services by Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) on behalf of government departments.

2.1 Definition

Communication services are primarily defined as different types of activities related to transmitting information to the public as well as understanding public opinion, as performed by a large grouping of many industries and disciplines.

Included in this grouping are the following industries or subcategories:

Advertising Services

In the *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada*¹ (article 23), “Government of Canada advertising is defined as any message, conveyed in Canada or abroad, and paid for by the government for placement in media such as newspapers, television, radio, Internet, cinema and out-of-home.

“Institutions may place advertisements or purchase advertising space or time in any medium to inform Canadians about their rights or responsibilities, about government policies, programs, services or initiatives, or about dangers or risks to public health, safety or the environment.”

¹ *Communication Policy of the Government of Canada* website: <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=12316>

Public Opinion Research Services

Public Opinion Research Services, in the *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada*² (article 8), is described as “the planned gathering, by or for a government institution of opinions, attitudes, perceptions, judgements, feelings, ideas, reactions, or views that are intended to be used for any government purpose, whether that information is collected from persons (including employees of government institutions), businesses, institutions or other entities, through quantitative or qualitative methods, irrespective of size or cost.”

“The information gathering may be associated with a broad range of activities, for example: policy research; market research; communications research, communication strategies and advertising research; program evaluation; quality of service/customer satisfaction studies; omnibus surveys, with the placement of one or more questions; syndicated studies; or product development.”

Audio-Visual Production Services

Audio-Visual Production Services comprise the production, distribution and evaluation of motion picture films, videotapes, television programs, interactive videodiscs, CD ROMs, multimedia productions (any work in any medium or format containing a sound and/or a visual component), duplication, webcasting, host broadcasting, and satellite transmission.

Media Monitoring Services

Media Monitoring Services consist of media monitoring of radio and television broadcasts, Internet and social media, press clippings, newswire distribution, and transcripts of scrums and live events.

Exposition and Exhibit Services

Exposition and Exhibit Services encompass exhibit space rental; the design and fabrication of exhibit stands and kiosks; installation, dismantling, transportation and storage; and any related on-site or off-site exhibit services.

Events Management Services

Events Management Services are defined as all services related to the management of meetings and events.

GC institutions use exhibits, trade shows and event planning services in organizing, promoting and/or managing events such as exhibits, trade shows, recruitment campaigns, conventions, conferences and meetings.

² Communication Policy of the Government of Canada website: <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=12316>

Graphic Design and Exhibit Design Services

Graphic Design and Exhibit Design Services are defined as design services for a wide variety of end products. They include, custom turnkey exhibits, pop-up stands and pull-up banners, graphic design, web design and promotional items.

Strategic Communication Services

Strategic Communication Services include all services related to Corporate Communications and Public Relations (PR); they include writing, editing, speechwriting, language adaptation, research and analysis, planning, strategy development, project management, telephone referral, program planning and development, and report production.

PR agencies may be called upon to manage the communications between an organization and its publics in order to promote favourable relationships and portray a desired image; these publics might include Canadian citizens, employees, investors, customers, analysts and other stakeholders.

Excluded from the Definition

This strategy does not include communication services used by political parties, which are not considered federal government entities, to promote their image, to broadcast policy or to measure their support in polls. Overall, the objectives of government and political parties are different; unless communication services are purchased with the intent to support government initiatives, they are excluded from this definition.

Printing services, including reprographic/photocopying services, are excluded from the definition, as well. They will be the subject of a separate National Procurement Strategy.

3 Background

3.1 Canadian Market Information

According to Statistics Canada, the communication services category includes a large grouping of agencies carrying out many types of activities including advertising and various ways (display, direct mail, material distribution, and other specialty distributions), public relations, media buying and representations, as well as all other related services (Statistics Canada, 2010).

In 2010, the advertising, public relation and related services industry was valued at \$7 billion, representing an increase of 13% from 2006; the economic crisis of 2008 had a negative impact on the communication services industry with the revenues declining by 2.2% between 2008 and 2009 (Statistics Canada, 2010).

There were around 11,749 establishments in Canada engaged in the advertising, public relation and related services industry in 2011, the majority of which were small businesses hiring less than 50 employees geographically concentrated in Ontario (50%), Quebec (28%) and British Columbia (14%) (Statistics Canada, 2011).

This industry is characterized by intense competition based on the price, creativity, knowledge, delivery time, quality of the service provided, reputation, new technologies adopted and development of networks and connections (IBISWorld, 2010).

Large companies offer a variety of services while small businesses can compete and attract clients based on their niche expertise and innovative campaigns (Datamonitor, 2009).

This industry is labour intensive because of the direct contacts with clients, the high degree of interaction with media and the creativity aspect of the task at hand (IBISWorld, 2010).

With the economic crisis, the industry has been trying to remain cost effective: several sub-industries have been going through a merger and acquisition phase in order to expand geographic coverage, gain industry knowledge, and acquire specific service capabilities, which have enhanced the concentration level, incidentally giving some companies more pricing power (IBISWorld, 2010; First Research, 2012).

Also, the rise of social networking and new media thanks to internet and the proliferation of mobile devices have increased the level and intensity of communication, to which companies of this particular industry need to adapt in order to reach and engage an active audience by notably developing internet panels, virtual meetings, podcasts, search engine marketing, etc (IBISWorld, 2010; First Research, 2012)..

3.2 Overview of Procurement Process

Communication services procurement, within the Government of Canada (GC), encompasses both mandatory and optional subcategories.

Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) currently provides mandatory procurement services for Advertising, Public Opinion Research and Audio-Visual Production (film, video and multimedia). It also offers optional procurement services for Media Monitoring, Exposition and Exhibits, Events Management, Graphic Design and Exhibit Design, and Strategic Communication Services (including public relations, planning, writing and editing, and other related services).

Though government departments can acquire most optional communication services under their own procurement authority, they choose to use the procurement services offered by PWGSC on a regular basis.

The Communication Procurement Directorate (CPD) of the Services and Specialized Acquisitions Management Sector (SSAMS) manages the procurement process for communication services centrally, in the National Capital Area. PWGSC regional offices handle a small percentage of non-mandatory communication services procurement.

Communication Services Procurement

- Communication services are being purchased efficiently.
- The GC is getting good value for money.
- Procurement practices comply with the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada and all referenced legislation.
- Typically, communication services require custom creative work (e.g. custom-designed exhibits, management services for special events, specific strategic communications projects and custom-designed public opinion research projects). Because the final deliverables often have qualitative differences from similar products and services provided across the industry, they cannot be commoditized readily. It is important to note that some suppliers are very concerned about the commoditization of communication services; in fact, this is their main concern.
- The majority of the time, the purchases are of a custom nature, tailored to the client department's preferences.
- There can be significant breadth in the required services. For example, a small ad in a regional newspaper will differ significantly from a national census campaign.
- The typical evaluation approach for communication services, regardless of method of supply, takes into consideration technical merit and price.
- A review of existing procurement instruments has shown that the use of the current methods of supply (including contracts, standing offers and supply arrangements) is fair, open and straightforward to use.
- Advertising Services, Audio-Visual Production Services, Exposition and Exhibit Services, Events Management Services, Graphic Design and Exhibit Design Services, and Strategic Communication Services are subject to the Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business (PSAB) voluntary set-aside. Requirements that fall within the scope of the Comprehensive Land Claim Agreements (CLCA) are published on the Government Electronic Tendering Service (GETS), currently MERX™, where Aboriginal firms can access them.
- PWGSC primarily uses procurement instruments – including standing offers, supply arrangements and contracts – to acquire communication services.

- These procurements are competitive, fair and open.
- Information-gathering sessions have confirmed that these common procurement instruments are easy to use.

Supply Base and Vendor Performance

- There are a few large, full-service communication services firms in Canada. However, most suppliers are Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs).
- Vendor performance is monitored through investigation of government departments' claims. For example, when a client has problems with a supplier's performance, they advise PWGSC who investigates the claim and applies PWGSC Vendor Performance Policies as applicable.
- Discussions are held with suppliers with the objective of resolving any issues and agreeing on mutually acceptable solutions, corrective measures are taken as warranted when issues cannot be resolved.

Acquisition of Communication Services Subcategories

The current method of supply for each subcategory is shown in Table #4.

Table #4. Current Method of Supply

Sub-category	Method of Supply
Advertising Services (for the development of advertising campaigns)	<p>All procurement for this mandatory subcategory is done by PWGSC.</p> <p>Departmental Individual Standing Offers (DISOs) (≤ \$350,000)</p> <p>Supply Arrangements (>\$350,000)</p> <p>Competitive Contracts (all dollar values):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for complex, thematic and multi-component advertising projects usually spanning more than one year; - for media placement services, a sub-set of Advertising services.

Sub-category	Method of Supply
Public Opinion Research Services	<p>All procurement for this mandatory subcategory is done by PWGSC.</p> <p>Departmental Individual Standing Offers (≤\$200,000)</p> <p>Competitive Contracts (>\$200,000)</p>
Audio-Visual Production Services	<p>All procurement for this mandatory subcategory is done by PWGSC.</p> <p>Directed Contracts (≤\$25,000)</p> <p>Supply Arrangements (from \$25,000 to \$400,000)</p> <p>Competitive Contracts (>\$400,000)</p>
Media Monitoring Services	<p>Departmental Individual Standing Offers (DISOs) and National Master Standing Offers (NMSOs) (≤\$200,000)</p> <p>Supply Arrangements (≤\$400,000)</p> <p>Directed Contracts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - when competition is not possible due to copyright or intellectual property.
Expositions and Exhibit Services	Competitive Contracts (>\$25,000)
Events Management Services	<p>National Master Standing Offers (NMSOs) (≤\$25,000)</p> <p>Supply Arrangements (from \$25,000 to \$400,000)</p> <p>Competitive Contracts (> \$400,000)</p>

Sub-category	Method of Supply
Graphic Design and Exhibit Design Services	National Master Standing Offers (NMSOs) (\leq \$25,000) Supply Arrangements (from \$25,000 to \$400,000) Competitive Contracts ($>$ \$400,000)
Strategic Communication Services	Supply Arrangements (from \$25,000 to \$400,000) Competitive Contracts ($>$ \$400,000)

4 Summary of Analyses

The review brought to light the following issues:

1. There is a need to clarify the definitions of communication services.
2. PWGSC needs to standardize the processing of procurement transactions.
3. Procurement must be improved by:
 - standardizing the wording used in solicitation documents – examples include the number of work samples required, and imprecise wording to describe project-specific requirements.
 - simplifying evaluation methods – examples include eliminating evaluation criteria that are unnecessarily specific, or that overemphasize the qualifications required; and
 - developing evaluation criteria that emphasize quality over price, with contracts awarded to more dynamic and creative companies as a result.
4. There is a need to simplify the solicitation process by removing overly restrictive requirements and broadening access to bid opportunities.
5. There is a need to consult and communicate more often with stakeholders with respect to changes to procurement processes.

5 Action Plan

Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) will improve the procurement process for communication services further by:

- adapting the definition of communication services to better reflect industry trends and eliminate any overlap of services that exist across other categories;
- simplifying the writing in proposal requirements and solicitation documents;
- placing greater emphasis on the service aspect of the proposal, such as the creative approach and methodology;
- eliminating barriers in the procurement process that unnecessarily restrict the participation of qualified suppliers;
- incrementally incorporating appropriate and consistent environmental considerations; and
- improving communications with stakeholders through government department Procurement Advisory Committees and supplier-based working groups.

5.1 Review and Revise Communication Services Definitions

Strategic Direction

PWGSC will clarify inclusions and exclusions within the communication services subcategories. In addition, definitions will be updated to reflect developments in technology (e.g. social media), and to make specialization within each subcategory clear.

As procurement instruments are renewed, changes will be introduced to align the services on offer with updated category definitions as applicable, ensuring there are no duplications with other PWGSC procurement tools. In response to the advent and growth in importance of social media, future procurement instruments will include relevant services to ensure GC has multiple channels to reach Canadians. The PWGSC website³ and Communication Branch website⁴ provides information on social media tools and resources.

Context

PWGSC will continue to assess industry capabilities, as technology continues to evolve and have an impact on the communication services required by government departments. For example, social media is rapidly transforming the way people interact and this interaction is impacting the way that business is being done. The Government of Canada uses social media networks to interact and engage with internal and external audiences in an effort to share and promote useful information about a variety of programs and services, and to promptly address issues and/or questions.

Implementation Plan

PWGSC will implement as follows:

Activity	Timeframe
Clarify and update communication services definitions for all subcategories to align with current industry practices.	Year 1
Review services covered by other category groups within PWGSC to identify overlaps in other categories.	Year 1
As procurement instruments come up for renewal, align with the updated definitions as needed, while ensuring there are no duplications with other PWGSC procurement tools.	Starting in Year 1
Establish procurement instruments to provide new communication services according to the new category definitions as needed, e.g. social media design and implementation.	Starting in Year 1

³ PWGSC website: <http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/comm/ms-sm/outils-tools-eng.html>

⁴ Communication Branch website (GC access only): <http://source.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/comm/sc-cs/ms-sm/ms-sm-eng.html>

5.2 Standardize Procurement Through Continued Development and Implementation of Self-Serve Procurement Instruments for Optional Services

Strategic Direction

Enable government departments to complete certain procurement transactions by implementing and promoting the use of PWGSC self-serve procurement instruments and electronic tools.

PWGSC will continue to improve support to government departments in the acquisition of communication services in order to meet operational requirements more effectively. This will be done by:

- standardizing and simplifying processes to procure communication services; and
- developing, implementing and promoting self-serve procurement instruments for optional services or non-mandatory subcategories, including Standing Offers (SOs) and Supply Arrangements (SAs).

Context

Because the contracting authority for the mandatory communication services subcategories are limited to PWGSC and cannot be delegated, use of the ePurchasing tools will not be applicable to all communication services subcategories. This is detailed in the *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada*⁵ and applies to Advertising Services, Public Opinion Research and Audio-Visual Production Services

The communication industry strongly encourages the adoption of Electronic Bid Submissions (eBidding) by the Government of Canada (GC). The Communication Procurement Directorate will adopt eBidding once the PWGSC Acquisitions Branch develops an ePurchasing Policy.

Implementation Plan

PWGSC will implement the recommendation as follows:

Activity	Timeframe
Continue to standardize and simplify procurement processes	ongoing

⁵ *Communication Policy of the Government of Canada* website: <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=12316>

5.3 Improve the Procurement Process

5.3.1 Standardize Methods of Supply

Strategic Direction

PWGSC will continue to use SOs and SAs as the main methods of supply for communication services, for both mandatory and non-mandatory subcategories. In an effort to standardize the methods of supply, PWGSC will introduce the following changes:

- standardize the terms and conditions used for SOs and SAs; and
- standardize the duration to two fixed years and two one-year options for SOs and SAs, with a notice sent before the options are invoked.

Future SAs, for the following non-mandatory subcategories, will allow suppliers who are not included in the SA the opportunity to qualify. This opportunity will be presented during the periods when the SAs are being renewed:

- Media Monitoring Services;
- Events Management Services;
- Graphic Design and Exhibit Design Services; and
- Strategic Communication Services.

Context

SOs and SAs for communication services are mature procurement vehicles that have a high degree of acceptance from both government departments and suppliers.

A longer duration reduces the administrative efforts for suppliers to compete. At the same time, government departments can study and use the procurement instruments effectively over a longer period. Feedback from industry and government departments indicates strong support for the use of multi-year SOs and SAs.

PWGSC works with industry and government departments on an ongoing basis to improve the process. The use of option periods gives contracting authorities the flexibility to address concerns raised by stakeholders during the initial year of an instrument's implementation, and to revisit any substantial changes in technology or process that might warrant an alternate procurement tool or approach.

SOs and SAs normally contain options for extending the term of the SO or SA for defined periods past the stated expiry date. These optional periods provide the

Government of Canada (GC) with the flexibility to either extend the SO or SA – or re-compete it – if feedback from industry or government departments indicates a need to do so.

Suppliers have identified “entry to market” as a potential barrier. New suppliers can only be considered for a SO when new solicitations are published; often, this occurs at the end of a given SO’s effective period.

5.3.2 Simplify Requirements

Strategic Direction

PWGSC will focus on simplifying proposal requirements by:

- introducing templates with simplified and standardized wording;
- encouraging precise descriptions of project-specific requirements; and
- where appropriate, reducing the requirement that “bundles” services or requires a “team”.

Context

Most GC communication services are provided by Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs). This reflects the composition of the communication service industry, which is dominated by SMEs.

Requirements specifying a team, or asking a supplier to demonstrate the ability to perform all of the services listed in a subcategory, is perceived as a barrier to SMEs.

5.3.3 Simplify Solicitations

Strategic Direction

PWGSC will focus on simplifying solicitations by:

- introducing templates with simplified and standardized wording;
- standardizing the wording used on individual summary pages in solicitation documents; and
- imposing page limits on proposal submissions.

Context

Most GC communication services are provided by Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs). This reflects the composition of the communication service industry, which is dominated by SMEs.

SMEs find the GC procurement process challenging; specifically, responding to solicitations can be labour-intensive. Suppliers have asked that solicitations be simplified, and that standardized templates be used.

5.3.3.1 Consistent Bid Evaluation and Supplier Selection Criteria

Strategic Direction

PWGSC will continue to eliminate the use of evaluation and selection criteria that restrict participation by qualified suppliers unnecessarily. The process has been – and will continue to be – simplified.

Bid Evaluation Criteria

PWGSC will revisit the bid evaluation criteria for each communication services subcategory, to ensure that evaluation methodologies are clear and not overly restrictive. This will be done by:

- reviewing how evaluation criteria are developed;
- explaining why specific evaluation methodologies are selected;
- linking criteria to the size and complexity of the requirements; and
- ensuring that the criteria relate to the requirements and are not unnecessarily specific.

Greater emphasis will be placed on the qualitative measurement of the solution presented within proposals by:

- allocating more weight to the evaluation of technical requirements over price; the ratio will be aligned with industry expectations, based on the degree of specialization required in each sub-category;
- allowing work samples to be part of the evaluation;
- eliminating requests for speculative creative samples; and
- adding flexibility to resource requirements to allow for innovation and adaptability to industry trends.

Supplier Selection Criteria

PWGSC will revisit the supplier selection criteria for communication services to facilitate access to the government marketplace by:

- accepting alternatives to (or substitutes for) education criteria (e.g. years of professional experience);
- accepting alternatives to (or substitutes for) government-based professional experience (e.g. private-sector experience);
- acknowledging the value of professional certifications;
- removing burdensome contractual conditions (e.g. requiring suppliers to have excessive insurance coverage);
- removing business volume criteria (e.g. minimum number of public-sector projects and minimum number of employees);
- allowing subcontracting;
- limiting the number of references required (e.g. accepting contact information for references in lieu of formal letters of reference); and
- limiting the number of work samples requested.

Context

Government departments and suppliers in the communication services industry have expressed concerns regarding the evaluation criteria applied to GC communication services opportunities.

Where appropriate, PWGSC has already implemented an evaluation strategy which places greater weight on the “creative” or “approach and methodology” aspects of a proposal, as opposed to costs.

In the current model being used for Audio-Visual Production Services, Events Management Services and Strategic Communications Services, approach and methodology are the most important evaluation factors. Moreover, the criteria and methodologies developed for the evaluation are not unnecessarily restrictive, thus ensuring new suppliers can readily qualify. A similar approach will be adopted at the next opportunity for other subcategories.

Implementation Plan

To improve the procurement process PWGSC will implement as follows:

Activity	Timeframe
Continue to develop and implement self-serve procurement instruments for optional services or non-mandatory subcategories, including SOs and SAs, if and when appropriate.	ongoing
Conduct a review of the approaches used to develop evaluation criteria.	Year 1
Clarify the evaluation criteria in solicitation documents, and facilitate broader understanding of the methodologies to be used.	Year 1
Implement the use of SOs and SAs as the main methods of supply.	Starting in Year 1
Specify a duration period of two fixed years and two one-year options in new SOs and SAs	Starting immediately
Include a statement explaining the reasoning behind the chosen evaluation approach in future solicitation documents, where appropriate.	Year 1
For sub categories other than Audio-Visual Production Services, Events Management Services and, Strategic Communications Services, adopt a similar approach to evaluation criteria (which places greater weight on the approach and methodology over price) as the need arises for new procurement instruments.	Year 1
Continue to engage suppliers and government departments to gather information.	ongoing
Identify and eliminate barriers in the selection and evaluation process that restrict the participation of qualified suppliers unnecessarily.	Starting in Year 1

5.4 Incorporate Environmental Criteria

Strategic Direction

PWGSC will continue to explore all applicable environmental considerations and standards, and will include them in the evaluation of all goods and services.

PWGSC will introduce appropriate and consistent environmental considerations into solicitation and contract documents over a five-year period. This will give government departments and the supplier community time to adjust to changing requirements, and work with PWGSC to define capabilities more adequately.

PWGSC will continue to support emerging environmental technologies, and will demonstrate environmental leadership by encouraging suppliers and government departments to use environmentally preferable goods, service and process. At the same time, it will continue to strive for an optimal balance between departmental requirements, supplier capabilities and value to Canadians.

Context

The National Procurement Strategy aims to raise awareness of environmental issues among suppliers, and demonstrate that the federal government is meeting its *Policy on Green Procurement*. For details, see <http://tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/ecologisation-greening/achats-procurement/politique-policy-eng.html>

By developing and incorporating appropriate and consistent environmental considerations in communication services solicitations and contract documents, PWGSC will provide government departments with effective procurement instruments they can use to meet their requirements under the Policy on Green Procurement, and their targets under the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy (FSDS).

For a list of current green considerations and related information that will be incorporated into communication services solicitations and contracts, visit the PWGSC Green Goods and Services website at <http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/app-acq/ae-gp/paer-cgpp-eng.html> The green scorecards illustrate the progression of evaluation criteria and initiatives, moving from potential, through optional, to mandatory over time.

Implementation Plan

PWGSC will implement as follows:

Activity	Timeframe
Incorporate appropriate and consistent environmental considerations in solicitation documents on an incremental basis and seek to identify benefits.	ongoing
Develop and update Green Procurement Plans for each subcategory.	ongoing
Expand the environmental evaluation criteria for each subcategory over time, as appropriate.	ongoing
Work with industry to define environmental capabilities more adequately.	Starting Year 1
Support emerging environmental technologies, and demonstrate environmental leadership by encouraging suppliers and government departments to use environmentally preferable goods, service and processes through point-rated environmental criteria in the solicitations.	Year 4

5.5 Improve Education and Communication

Strategic Direction

PWGSC will launch and coordinate client-based Communication Services Procurement Advisory Committees for each subcategory, as warranted. This will include training on the procurement process and available evaluation methodologies. Communication professionals from government departments will be invited to participate.

To increase communications with suppliers, keep pace with industry trends, and better educate suppliers on the procurement process, PWGSC will launch and coordinate communication services supplier working groups for each subcategory, as warranted. Communication services suppliers and/or representatives of supplier associations will be invited to participate.

Context

PWGSC recognizes that regular communication mechanisms are needed in order to promote ongoing information gathering and sharing.

Implementation Plan

PWGSC will implement as follows:

Activity	Timeframe
Create and coordinate Communication Services Procurement Advisory Committees (by subcategory).	Starting Year 1
Create and coordinate communication services supplier working groups (by subcategory).	Starting Year 1
Share action plans outlining the direction planned for procurement of communication services, including new trends, with government departments and industry.	Annually starting Year 1

6 Next Steps

The National Procurement Strategy will be posted on MERX™

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