

## **Answers to questions asked during the “Doing Business with the Government of Canada” webinar on conference interpretation services**

### **Question 1**

- a) What was the purpose of the webinar?
- b) Has the Bureau made a decision about the procurement method for conference interpretation services?

### **Answer 1**

- a) The purpose of the webinar was to provide basic information on the main procurement tools used by Public Works and Government Services Canada. Developing common procurement tool terminology should help suppliers participate actively in the consultation process that will take place over the next year.
- b) No decision has been made yet regarding the future method of procurement for interpretation services. The Acquisitions Branch and the Translation Bureau plan to launch an extensive consultation process on the design and implementation of a new procurement tool for conference interpretation services for the Bureau. Our goal is to work with the interpretation industry in order to develop a solution that meets Canada’s operational requirements and takes the realities of interpreters into account.

To obtain additional information on upcoming engagement activities, suppliers should check the following link: <https://buyandsell.gc.ca/procurement-data/tender-notice/PW-ZF-523-28082>

### **Question 2**

- a) Do all of the online sites for which your department is responsible conform to the W3C standard, an international standard related to Web access for persons with disabilities? You are certainly aware of the Supreme Court of Canada’s decision that all government websites must be accessible.
- b) Where there is an unresolved access problem, are you prepared to assist a registrant who has a disability?

### **Answer 2**

- a) Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) is responsible for ensuring that its public-facing websites comply with the suite of Web Standards for the Government of Canada (GC), which includes the Standard on Web Accessibility. The Standard on Web Accessibility came into effect on August 1, 2011, and follows the international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0. PWGSC continuously works to ensure a high level of Web accessibility across its websites and applications. Its Web presences are regularly reviewed for compliance, and if an issue of non-compliance is identified, PWGSC addresses the issue with the appropriate

corrective action. Please let us know if you have encountered an issue that has prevented you from accessing information on a PWGSC website.

- b) Public Works and Government Services Canada is committed to ensuring that its services are delivered in a fair and equitable manner. We are prepared to address any issues which may negatively impact our clients' ability to fully benefit from our services. We would appreciate your feedback if you have experienced a situation which you feel has prevented you from registering and participating in an activity. We will work with you to assess the issue, and to provide a solution that meets your needs.

### Question 3

Since there were some technical issues during the webinar, is it possible to re-schedule it?

### Answer 3

At this point, we do not plan to hold the webinar again. However, a copy of the presentation and a recording of the webinar were forwarded by email to all the participants on November 18, 2014. Please note that this material will also be available through the Buy and Sell website.

### Question 4

- a) How can an interpreter request a security classification, and what does "security clearance" mean?
- b) Your webinar focuses on businesses; what about professionals?

### Answer 4

- a) A security classification and a security clearance mean the same thing.

If your organization is interested in working on a GC or foreign contract with industrial security requirements, you will need to obtain the necessary security clearances through the Industrial Security Program (ISP). An organization may be a corporation, consultant, **sole proprietorship**, partnership, joint venture or public institution.

To obtain security clearance, an Approved Source recognized by the ISP must request that your organization be subject to security screening, which requires submitting a Request for Private Sector Organization Screening (PSOS) to the ISP.

The Approved Sources are:

- procurement officers;
- government security officers or project managers;
- prime contract holders (for approved sub-contracts only); and
- foreign industry and National Security Authorities (NSA).

To obtain additional information on how to register in the ISP, please contact the ISP directly or click on the following link <http://iss-ssi.pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca/outils-tools/so-os-eng.html>. Please note that you can submit an application for sponsorship to the contracting authority when the draft (i.e. provisional) procurement tool becomes publicly available.

- b) An organization may be a corporation, consultant, **sole proprietorship**, partnership, joint venture or public institution.

## Question 5

In your transparency policy, will all contracts, fees and names of interpretation services suppliers hired for these contracts be publicized so that they can be consulted by other bidders?

## Answer 5

As per section 5.1.6 of the *Contracting Policy*, deputy heads are required to publicly disclose quarterly, within one month after the close of each quarter, contracts entered into or amendments valued at over \$10,000. Please note that service provider fees are not disclosed.

For further information on reporting mechanisms, please check the following link: <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=14494&section=text#sec5.1>

## Question 6

Will all the questions sent by webinar participants and the answers provided by you be available for consultation by other participants? How will we have access to them?

## Answer 6

Yes. The questions and the answers to them will be forwarded by email to the suppliers that participated in the webinar. All the questions and the answers to them will also be posted on Buy and Sell.

## Question 7

- a) If conference interpreters have equal qualifications, how can the contracting authority tell whether retirees are not underbidding or are competing unfairly, and how can cronyism be avoided and the employer-employee relationship be severed?
- b) How many contracts under \$25,000 can be awarded to a contractor during a one-year period?

## Answer 7

- a) If the contracting authority suspects that any suppliers are using anti-competitive business practices or are involved in collusion-related activities, it may refer the file to the Competition Bureau. The Competition Bureau's mandate is to protect and promote competitive contracting. Depending on the nature of the allegations, the Competition Bureau will determine what steps need to be taken. For further information on the Competition Bureau, please check the following link: <http://www.competitionbureau.gc.ca/eic/site/cb-bc.nsf/eng/home>

Moreover, all contracts for the services of former public servants in receipt of a pension or a lump-sum payment (or both) must comply with the Treasury Board's *Contracting Policy*. For further information on contracts for the services of former public servants in receipt of a pension

or a lump-sum payment, please check the *Contracting Policy* at the following link: <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=14494&section=text>

- b) There is currently no provision stating the maximum number of contracts that may be awarded to a supplier.

## Question 8

- a) When will this system be effective?
- b) What does “emergency” mean when it is not included in a bid?
- c) How often will there be bids?
- d) How will we find out about the dates on which our services will be required?
- e) How will you check BEFORE and ON SITE that ALL the interpreters that are members of the team are really accredited?
- f) Why do you talk about an hourly rate when interpreters are always paid on a per-diem basis?

## Answer 8

- a) The Acquisitions Branch and the Translation Bureau have not yet determined the procurement method that they plan to use for conference interpretation services. For further information on the implementation of the new procurement tool and the proposed engagement activities, suppliers should check the following link: <https://buyandsell.gc.ca/procurement-data/tender-notice/PW-ZF-523-28082>
- b) A pressing emergency may be an actual or imminent life-threatening situation, a disaster which endangers quality of life or has resulted in loss of life, or an event that may result in significant loss or damage to Crown property. For additional instructions on emergency requirements, see section [3.22. Emergency Requirements \(Public Works and Government Services Canada as Contracting Authority\)](#).
- c) Please note that all these questions will be taken into consideration when the new procurement tool is developed, and suppliers will have a number of opportunities to express their views during the process.
- d) See answer a) above.
- e) At present, all freelance interpreters who obtain contracts from the Translation Bureau must have passed the Bureau's accreditation exam. For further information on the eligibility criteria, please check the following link: <http://www.bt-tb.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/btb.php?lang=eng&cont=166>.
- f) The information communicated during the webinar, including the basis of payment, applies to various categories of goods and services and is of a general nature.

## Question 9

For about the past seven years, I have been registered as a bilingual interpretation services provider and for Spanish as well. Is my registration still valid?

## Answer 9

To find out whether your registration is still valid, you need to contact the Translation Bureau at the following address:

Telephone: 1-855-997-3300

Email: [Bureaudelatraduction.TranslationBureau@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca](mailto:Bureaudelatraduction.TranslationBureau@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca)

For further information on instructions for registering in the Translation Bureau's Suppliers Directory, please check the following link: <http://www.bt-tb.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/btb.php?lang=eng&cont=1445>

## Question 10

The process for obtaining security clearance is very slow and many of our colleagues are still waiting for clearance. I wasn't aware of the fact that the Translation Bureau will not award contracts to people without security clearance, and even to those with the lowest clearance level.

What are the Bureau and PWGSC doing to modernize the ISS so as to ensure that it can perform its tasks in a way that we are entitled to expect, i.e. professionally and competently? If the ISS continues to function in the same way, as if there were no captain on board the ship, why should interpreters who don't yet have security clearance be deprived of contracts when they have no control over the lack of efficiency of the ISS? What do the Bureau and PWGSC intend to do to avoid penalizing interpreters if this situation persists?

## Answer 10

Security requirements for all contracting projects must be observed. The ISP protects sensitive GC and foreign government information and assets in contracts awarded to the private sector.

The Acquisitions Branch and the Translation Bureau, in collaboration with the Canadian Industrial Security Directorate, are seeking ways to speed up delivery of security clearances.

For further information on organizational security screening and personnel security screening, please check the following links:

<http://ssi-iss.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/ssi-iss-services/eso-oss-eng.html>

<http://ssi-iss.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/ssi-iss-services/esp-pss-eng.html>

## Question 11

- a) How are you going to tender if you don't know in advance where a conference will be held and therefore without knowing whether it will be possible to foresee possible travel costs if there are not enough ACCREDITED interpreters ON SITE?
- b) Won't this be a recurring and almost inevitable problem in cities with a very limited number of interpreters and where external interpreters regularly need to be used?

## **Answer 11**

- a) The Acquisitions Branch and the Translation Bureau have not yet determined the procurement method that they plan to use for conference interpretation services. Therefore, it is impossible to provide you with an answer to this question. Please note that all these questions will be taken into consideration when the new procurement tool is developed, and suppliers will have a number of opportunities to express their views during the process.
- b) See the answer above.

## **Question 12**

I acknowledge receipt of your email below, in reply to my registration in the webinar on Friday. However, I am shocked to read the following notice:

IMPORTANT NOTICE: This webinar includes a functionality that allows the audio content and any documents and materials shared or viewed during the session to be recorded. Please note that these recordings could be used during legal proceedings.

Could you please tell me what legal proceedings you might anticipate?

## **Answer 12**

The Department does not anticipate any legal proceedings. This disclaimer is part of the Government Teleconferencing Service / Web Conferencing GTS WebEx. For more information, please contact our Web conference service provider at the following link:

[https://signup.webex.com/webexmeetings/US/sem\\_acquisition.html?CPM=KNC-sem&TrackID=1031998&country=CA&psearchID=+webex](https://signup.webex.com/webexmeetings/US/sem_acquisition.html?CPM=KNC-sem&TrackID=1031998&country=CA&psearchID=+webex).