

Request for Information Temporary Help Services Questionnaire for Suppliers

Background

Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) is committed to Smart Procurement principles. The objective of this Request for Information (RFI) is to engage with stakeholders to obtain a better understanding of the Temporary Help Services (THS) needs of client departments and agencies, gain more knowledge of supplier capabilities and views, and improve the procurement processes for THS. In order to do this, PWGSC is reviewing the present THS procurement processes, and using a scenario based approach to determine federal department and agencies' needs for THS. This RFI contains two sets of questions concerning THS. The first set pertains to the present THS procurement processes, and the second pertains to various THS scenarios. The scenarios represent different situations in which federal departments and agencies may need or could use THS. The scenarios will help to align the THS needs of federal departments and agencies with procurement trends, supplier capacity and business dynamics. They will also help to identify business opportunities that could allow THS to be procured and managed more effectively and efficiently. The THS scenarios have already been reviewed and discussed in consultation with the Temporary Help Services Advisory Committee, which consists of THS industry and federal government client representatives. It is important to note that when reading the scenarios, the following three reasons define the context for when clients may use THS and should be taken into consideration when responding to the scenario based questions. When a public servant is absent for a temporary period of time. When there is a requirement for additional staff during a temporary workload increase. When a position is vacant and a staffing action is being completed. While THS procurement processes across Canada are currently supported through existing methods of supply (i.e. Standing Offers and Supply Arrangements) and tools, the THS scenarios were developed in the absence of restrictions based on pre-established methods of supply and tools. Client departments and agencies and suppliers are encouraged to respond to the questionnaire as the responses will have an impact on the development of a Procurement Strategy for THS. Why Is Your Feedback Valuable and Important? Feedback from federal government clients and the THS industry regarding present THS procurement processes and the scenarios will be taken into consideration in the development of a responsive Procurement Strategy for THS. PWGSC will be in a better position to review and as necessary, modify procurement processes to support federal government clients' needs for THS, taking into consideration how suppliers can meet those needs. The final strategy will support the development of a robust framework for the procurement of THS on a going forward basis.

Part I – Respondent and Supplier Profile

1. Name of Respondent:

2. What is your role within the company?

- Management
- Marketing or Government Sales
- Other, please specify... _____

3. What is the legal name of your company?

4. Identify your company's current status with respect to providing THS to the Government of Canada:

- Currently a THS Supply Arrangement (SA) and/or Standing Offer (SO) holder
- Currently a subcontractor to a THS SA and/or SO holder
- Currently a provider of THS to the Government of Canada, but not as a THS SA and/or SO holder, nor as a subcontractor to one
- Currently not a provider, but was previously a provider
- Have never provided THS to the Government of Canada

5. Please indicate the region(s) in which your business provides THS to the Government of Canada. Select all responses that apply.

- National Capital Region (NCR; it includes Ottawa, Gatineau, and surrounding urban and rural communities)
- Pacific (British Columbia and Yukon)
- Western (Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut)
- Ontario (Ontario, excluding the NCR)
- Quebec (Quebec, excluding the NCR)
- Atlantic (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island)

6. Please indicate the size of your business:

- Micro Business (1 to 4 employees)
- Small Business (5 to 49 employees)
- Medium Business (50 to 499 employees)
- Large Business (500 or more employees)

7. Indicate the client type(s) to which your company provides THS. Select all responses that apply

- Federal Government of Canada
- Provincial or Territorial Government – Canadian
- Municipal Government
- Private Sector - Canadian
- Private Sector - Foreign
- Foreign Government
- None of the above
- Other, please specify... _____

8. Indicate the associations of which your company is a member. Select all responses that apply

- Association of Canadian Search, Employment and Staffing Services (ACSESS)
- Canadian Advanced Technology Alliance (CATA)
- Canadian Association of Management Consultants (CAMC)
- Canadian Business Information Technology Network (CABiNET)
- Canadian Information Technology Providers Association (CITPA)
- Information Technology Association of Canada (ITAC)
- National Association of Computer Consulting Businesses (NACCB) Canada
- Public Sector Aboriginal Business Association (PSABA)
- None of the above
- Other, please specify... _____

Part II – Present processes for the procurement of THS for the Government of Canada Please respond to the questions related to your experience within the last 12 months.

1. Indicate the number of THS requirement(s) for the Government of Canada (GoC) for which your company was invited to submit a bid (i.e. in the last 12 months).

- 0
- 1 to 4
- 5 to 10
- 11 to 20
- More than 20

2. Indicate the number of bid(s) your company submitted in response to THS requirements for the GoC (i.e. in the last 12 months).

- 0
- 1 to 4
- 5 to 10
- 11 to 20
- More than 20

3. If your company received any THS Requests for Availability and/or Requests for Services in the last 12 months, indicate the number to which it did not respond.

- 0
- 1 to 4
- 5 to 10
- 11 to 20
- More than 20
- Not applicable

4. If your company did not respond to one or more Requests for Availability and/or Requests for Services, identify why. Select all responses that apply.

- Resource(s) would not meet all of the mandatory requirements (e.g. education, experience) specified for the classification and level
- Resource(s) would not meet the language requirement specified
- Resource(s) would not meet the language requirement specified
- Resource(s) was not available for the specified assignment period
- Encountered resource and/or supplier security clearance issue(s) or delay(s)
- Not able to compete with the hourly rates of other suppliers
- Insufficient time given to meet response deadline(s)
- Not applicable
- Other, please specify... _____

5. Could your company have provided THS resources to the GoC which are not described by an existing THS classification?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

6. If “Yes”, describe up to 3 new classifications (maximum of 250 words) for which your company could have provided THS resources to the GoC, and rank them from 1 to 3 in order of interest to your company (i.e. 1 of most interest and 3 of least).

7. Did your company experience challenges with the current THS methods of supply in the last 12 months?

- Yes

- No
- Not applicable

8. If “Yes”, please list up to 3 challenges experienced (maximum of 250 words) and rank them from 1 to 3 in the order of priority for consideration (i.e. 1 highest priority and 3 lowest).

1.
2.
3.

Part III – THS Scenarios Long Term Absence Scenario Please review the scenarios described below and answer the related questions. The Long Term Absence Scenario describes the situation when a supplier provides a temporary resource based on an individual need, and when it is necessary to have a temporary resource replace a federal employee for the full duration of time that the employee is away from the office. For the purposes of this scenario, “long term” is defined as more than 48 weeks. For example, a department may require a temporary resource to replace an employee for the full duration of time (eighteen months) that the employee is on education leave. Retention of the same temporary resource throughout the entire period that the federal employee is away from the office will reduce indirect costs related to losses in productivity, slips in schedules, loss of corporate knowledge, etc. At the same time, a contract for the full duration of time will be more effective and efficient and reduce the number of contract amendments and further competitive processing to cover the extended period of time when the employee is on leave.

1. Could your company respond to the Long Term Absence Scenario?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

2. Please identify potential risks associated with the Long Term Absence Scenario. Select all responses that apply.

- Difficulty retaining the same temporary resource throughout the duration of the contract.
- Development of an employer-employee relationship between the federal government supervisor and the temporary resource.
- No foreseen risk(s).
- Other, please specify... _____

3. If you have indicated potential risks associated with the Long Term Absence Scenario, identify how the risks could be mitigated. Select all responses that apply.

- There are incentives to retain temporary resources on assignment throughout the entire duration of the contract (e.g. pay incentives).
- Take measures to prevent a potential or perceived employer-employee relationship developing between the federal government supervisor and the temporary resource.
- Other, please specify... _____

4. Please select statement a or b, whichever you think best describes the Long Term Absence Scenario.

- a. A temporary resource(s) complements an internal team(s), and a federal government project authority commits to providing the strategic direction, oversight and monitoring of the work for which the resource is contracted.
- b. A federal government project authority seeks a solution to its departmental or agency business requirement(s), and therefore needs support from a supplier with expertise in a specific area.

2. Project Team Scenario The Project Team Scenario describes the case when a federal government organization requires a team of temporary resources (with different skill sets) to support a project. For example, Department "X" will be implementing a major IT project and needs to assign a team of temporary resources with different skills to work in the Project Office. For this particular requirement, there is a need for a senior project officer to manage the project and 4 officers to handle the administration. All the temporary resources would be retained for pre-determined timeframes throughout the life of the project. The department would save time and costs if it were able to hire a team of resources and award a contract to one supplier for an entire team to handle the logistics of a project. **1. Could your company respond to the Project Team Scenario?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

2. Please identify potential risks associated with the Project Team Scenario. Select all responses that apply.

- No foreseen risk(s).
- Suppliers may not be able to provide temporary resources for pre-determined timeframes throughout the life cycle of the project.
- Single supplier may not be able to provide all the required temporary resources.
- Other, please specify... _____

3. If you have indicated potential risks associated with the Project Team Scenario please identify how the risks could be mitigated. Select all responses that apply.

- There are incentives to commit resources for pre-determined timeframes throughout the life cycle of the contract.
- Allow qualified suppliers to compete for the provision of some of the required resources.
- Federal departments clearly indicate when and where resources are required during the life cycle of a project.

Other, please specify... _____

4. Please select statement a or b, whichever you think best describes the Project Team Scenario.

- a. A temporary resource(s) complements an internal team(s), and a federal government project authority commits to providing the strategic direction, oversight and monitoring of the work for which the resource is contracted.
- b. A federal government project authority seeks a solution to its departmental or agency business requirement(s), and therefore needs support from a supplier with expertise in a specific area.

3. Administrative Support Pool Scenario The Administrative Support Pool Scenario describes the situation in which a supplier provides a pool of Temporary Help Services resources, with each resource pre-qualified to perform administrative work. Two types of Administrative Support Pool would be possible. One would consist of a pool of administrative resources accessible to different organizations within one federal department or agency at one geographic location, and a second would consist of a pool of administrative resources accessible to multiple federal departments and/or agencies within the same city. In the latter situation departments and/or agencies that may not have sufficient demand individually to require a pool of temporary resources, could combine their requirements with other departments and/or agencies in the same city in order that a supplier could be contracted to provide a single pool. Each temporary resource within a pool would have the necessary skills to allow them to perform various administrative tasks required for different assignments. For a pool accessible to different organizations within one federal department or agency at one geographic location, each temporary resource within the pool would also carry throughout the duration of the contract the necessary security clearance, building pass, departmental knowledge and IT Log in and Password. A readily accessible Administrative Support Pool would hasten the processing time to acquire the services of a temporary resource, and would guarantee a stable temporary workforce, which would result in a more knowledgeable temporary workforce, and produce better quality work. Presently, it may take a considerable amount of time and effort for a solicitation process and to award a contract for a supplier to provide a temporary resource to replace a federal employee who is on leave. Most departments and agencies contract temporary resources on an individual basis. Often they plan at least two months in advance to acquire a temporary resource to replace an employee who will be taking an extended leave. Federal departments and agencies would benefit from having contracts with suppliers who provide pools of temporary resources that immediately replace federal employees as required without having to go through the rigorous competitive process of hiring temporary resources whenever there is an individual

need; thus saving a considerable amount of time and costs. Each supplier awarded a contract for an Administrative Support Pool would also benefit by having one contract for multiple resources. This would reduce the supplier's time and effort by requiring the supplier to respond to only one solicitation for a multiple number of temporary resources. Questions for Suppliers:

1. Could your company respond to the Administrative Support Pool Scenario?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

2. If "Yes", what is the estimated percentage of your company's volume of temporary resources that could be allocated to meet the requirements of an Administrative Support Pool Scenario?

- 1 to 19%
- 20 to 39%
- 40 to 59%
- 60% or more

3. Indicate the minimum number of temporary resources in an Administrative Support Pool that would be considered cost effective for your company.

- 2 to 5
- 6 to 9
- 10 to 15
- More than 15

4. Please identify potential risks associated with the Administrative Support Pool. Select all responses that apply.

- Suppliers have difficulty maintaining a pool of available resources throughout the contract as there is no preset assignment period commitments.
- Delays receiving payments for temporary resources working in different organizations within a federal department or agency because of the multiple client signatures required.

- Delays receiving payments for temporary resources working in different federal departments and/or agencies because of the multiple client signatures required.
- Under utilization of the resources in the pool, resulting in resource retention problems.
- No foreseen risk(s).
- Other, please specify... _____

5. If you have indicated potential risks associated with the Administrative Support Pool Scenario, identify how the risks could be mitigated. Select all responses that apply.

- There are incentives to retain temporary resources on assignment for the duration of the contract (e.g. pay incentives).
- Ensure that a well coordinated process for payments is in place prior to contract award.
- The number of temporary resources in the pool must be carefully planned relative to anticipated client demand.
- Ensure sufficient planning to coordinate the assignment of temporary resources to different organizations within the department or agency, or to different departments and/or agencies.
- Other, please specify... _____

6. Indicate the optimal contract period for an Administrative Support Pool:

- 1 year
- 2 years
- 3 years
- 4 years
- Other, (in months)... _____

7. Please select statement a or b, whichever you think best describes the Administrative Support Pool Scenario.

- a. A temporary resource(s) complements an internal team(s), and a federal government project authority commits to providing the strategic direction, oversight and monitoring of the work for which the resource is contracted.
- b. A federal government project authority seeks a solution to its departmental or agency business requirement(s), and therefore needs support from a supplier with expertise in a specific area.

4. Senior Staff ScenarioThe Senior Staff Scenario describes the situation in which a federal department or agency requires a temporary resource to fulfill an assignment that would normally be fulfilled by an executive in the federal government. There is a lot of movement in the federal government, with new organizations, employees retiring and employees leaving their positions for other opportunities. This has created a gap in the public service workforce that has required the use of temporary resources until staffing is completed. For example, if Department "X" required a Director to lead an organization until a staffing process was completed, a temporary resource could fulfill some of the required tasks so that operations could continue.

Questions for Suppliers:

1. Could your company respond to the Senior Staff Scenario?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

2. If you responded "Yes" to question 1, what is the estimated percentage of your company's volume of temporary resources that could be allocated to meet the requirements of the Senior Staff Scenario?

- 1 to 19%
- 20 to 39%
- 40 to 59%
- 60% or more

3. Please identify potential risks associated with requirements similar to the Senior Staff Scenario. Select all responses that apply.

- Development of an employer-employee relationship between the supervisor in the federal government and the temporary resource.
- Temporary resource provides strategic direction to the organization.
- No foreseen risk(s).
- Other, please specify... _____

4. If you have indicated potential risks associated with the Senior Staff Scenario, identify how the risks could be mitigated. Select all responses that apply.

- Take measures to prevent a potential or perceived employer-employee relationship developing between the federal government supervisor and the temporary resource.
- The project authority commits to providing strategic direction, oversight and monitoring of the work for which the resource is contracted.
- Other, please specify... _____

5. From the following statements, please select a or b, whichever best describes the Senior Staff Scenario.

- a. A temporary resource(s) complements an internal team(s), and a federal government project authority commits to providing the strategic direction, oversight and monitoring of the work for which the resource is contracted.
- b. A federal government project authority seeks a solution to its departmental or agency business requirement(s), and therefore needs support from a supplier with expertise in a specific area.

5. Recurring Workload Increase Scenario The Recurring Workload Increase Scenario applies when there is cyclical work volume increase in a federal department or agency to the extent where it needs to hire more than 10 temporary resources. The department or agency could benefit from having a contract with one or more suppliers for multiple resources to handle the increase in workload during a specific period. For example, Department "X" has a seasonal need for additional personnel in Shawinigan, Quebec during tax season. An additional 30 temporary resources may be required to meet the demand for processing tax returns during this time. In this case, CRA has determined an estimated start date, duration of work, location of work, and the required tasks. Another example would be the requirement for temporary workers to do seasonal work or work that demands many temporary resources across many Canadian cities for agriculture programs, elections or census studies. With the Recurring Workload Increase Scenario, departments and agencies would need to plan ahead of time to anticipate the logistics necessary to acquire temporary resources for the increased workload or seasonal work. By awarding one contract to one or more suppliers who could provide multiple temporary resources that are assigned to a federal department or agency during certain seasons or periods of the year, several competitive processes to hire temporary resources on an individual basis would be eliminated. Suppliers would also benefit from having a sufficiently stable demand to allow for investment, remuneration, retention of quality staff and the ability to meet the department's or agency's needs as they change over time. Questions for Suppliers:

1. Could your company respond to the Recurring Workload Increase Scenario?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

2. If “Yes”, indicate the service types that you think could be included in the Recurring Workload Increase Scenario. Select all responses that apply.

- Clerical Services
- Administrative Services
- IT Technical Services
- Procurement Services
- Scientific or Health Services
- Engineering or Architectural Services
- Professional services – Business, Financial or Human Resources
- Other, please specify... _____

3. If you responded “Yes” to question 1, what is the estimated percentage of your company’s volume of temporary resources that could be allocated to meet the requirements of the Recurring Workload Increase Scenario?

- 1 to 19%
- 20 to 39%
- 40 to 59%
- 60 % or more

4. If a contract was awarded to a supplier to provide temporary resources to meet the requirements of a Recurring Workload Increase Scenario, indicate the preferred contract duration.

- 1 year
- 2 years
- 3 years
- 4 years
- Do not know

5. Please identify potential risks associated with the Recurring Workload Increase Scenario. Select all responses that apply.

- Difficulty retaining the same temporary resources for the duration of the contract.

- Level of recurring demand for resources may fluctuate resulting in either an under or over supply of resources.
- No foreseen risk(s).
- Other, please specify... _____

6. If you have indicated potential risks associated with the Recurring Workload Increase Scenario, identify how the risks could be mitigated. Select all responses that apply.

- There are incentives to retain temporary resources on assignment throughout the duration of the contract (e.g. pay incentives).
- The number of temporary resources required must be carefully planned relative to anticipated client demand.
- Include a minimum revenue guarantee for suppliers as an incentive for providing resources on a cyclical basis.
- Other, please specify... _____

7. Please select statement a or b, whichever you think best describes the Recurring Workload Scenario.

- a. A temporary resource(s) complements an internal team(s), and a federal government project authority commits to providing the strategic direction, oversight and monitoring of the work for which the resource is contracted.
- b. A federal government project authority seeks a solution to its departmental or agency business requirement(s), and therefore needs support from a supplier with expertise in a specific area.

Part IV – Acquisitions Program E-Procurement Solution PWGSC’s Acquisitions Program intends to acquire a modern, robust, highly efficient, effective, bilingual and sustainable e-procurement solution for the timely and responsive acquisition of goods and services (including THS) for the Government of Canada. The e-procurement solution is expected to provide suppliers and federal government clients with secure access to procurement information and services (e.g. spend, utilization and vendor performance data, e-soliciting, e-bidding, e-pricing, e-ordering, e-invoicing, e-payment) via a web based portal.

1. The e-procurement solution is expected to include the elements listed below. Select all elements that would be acceptable to your company for the provision of THS to the Government of Canada. Elements not selected will be recorded as unacceptable to your company.

- All bids submitted exclusively on-line, with the exception of bids that exceed the Security level accepted or when there is a requirement to send physical items (e.g. samples)
- Suppliers manage their pricing electronically
- Orders only sent electronically to suppliers
- Invoices only submitted electronically by suppliers
- Suppliers only paid electronically (e.g. direct deposit, Government of Canada Acquisition Card)

2. Does your company currently accept credit card payments?

- Yes
- No
- We are currently investigating this

3. Could your company’s business model for the supply of THS resources to the Government of Canada support the refreshing of THS Standing Offer classification prices on a quarterly basis only?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

4. If “No”, please explain why (maximum of 100 words).

5. As part of the e-procurement solution, the Government of Canada is investigating the possibility of including the capability of providing discounts (e.g. 2/10, net 30) with respect to the payment of supplier invoices. Would this new capability present any issues for your company?

- No issues
- Potentially some minor issues
- Potentially some major issues
- This would be a major issue

Part V – Federal Government Clients’ Needs Not Identified in the Temporary Help Services Scenarios

1. Please identify other scenarios (up to 3 scenarios) that describe common situations in which the federal government requires temporary resources (maximum of 250 words per scenario).

1.

2.

3.

2. If you have any further comments, please include comments (limit to 500 words).