RETURN BIDS TO:
RETOURNER LES SOUMISSIONS À:

Bid Receiving - PWGSC / Réception des soumissions - TPSGC
11 Laurier St. / 11, rue Laurier
Place du Portage, Phase III
Core 0B2 / Noyau 0B2
Gatineau
Quebec
K1A 0S5
Bid Fax: (819) 997-9776

LETTER OF INTEREST
LETTRE D'INTÉRÊT

Comments - Commentaires

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

Issuing Office - Bureau de distribution
Mainframe & Business Software Procurement Division / Div des achats des ordi principaux et des logiciels de gestion
11 Laurier St. / 11, rue Laurier
4C1, Place du Portage III
Gatineau
Quebec
K1A 0S5

Title - Sujet		
LANGUAGE LEARNING APPLICATION		

Solicitation No. - N° de l'invitation		Date
C1111-160782/A		2016-12-22

Client Reference No. - N° de référence du client	GETS Ref. No. - N° de réf. de SEAG
C1111-160782	PW-$EEM-052-30681

File No. - N° de dossier	CCC No./N° CCC - FMS No./N° VME
052eem.C1111-160782	

Solicitation Closes - L'invitation prend fin	Time Zone
at - à 02:00 PM	**Fuseau horaire**
on - le 2017-02-03	Eastern Standard Time EST

F.O.B. - F.A.B.

Plant-Usine: ☐ Destination: ☐ Other-Autre: ☐

Address Enquiries to: - Adresser toutes questions à:	Buyer Id - Id de l'acheteur
Nkiama, Ngoma	052eem

Telephone No. - N° de téléphone	FAX No. - N° de FAX
(873) 469-3368 ( )	(819) 953-3703

Destination - of Goods, Services, and Construction:
Destination - des biens, services et construction:

See Herein

Instructions: See Herein

Instructions: Voir aux présentes

Delivery Required - Livraison exigée	Delivery Offered - Livraison proposée
See Herein	

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

Telephone No. - N°de téléphone
Facsimile No. - N° de télécopieur

Name and title of person authorized to sign on behalf of Vendor/Firm (type or print)
Nom et titre de la personne autorisée à signer au nom du fournisseur/ de l'entrepreneur (taper ou écrire en caractères d'imprimerie)

Signature   **Date**

Canada

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION REGARDING

A MOBILE APPLICATION
FOR LEARNING AND RETAINING ENGLISH AND FRENCH AS SECOND LANGUAGES

FOR

THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1) Background and Purpose of this Request for Information (RFI)

This RFI is addressed to all Canadian or international public-, semi public or private sector organizations that are able to design and develop a mobile educational application (mobile application) to be used primarily on mobile devices (tablets and smart phones) as well as on a conventional website.

2) Nature of Request for Information

This is not a bid solicitation. This RFI will not result in the award of any contract. As a result, potential suppliers of any goods or services described in this RFI should not reserve stock or facilities, nor allocate resources, as a result of any information contained in this RFI. Nor will this RFI result in the creation of any source list. Therefore, whether or not any potential supplier responds to this RFI will not preclude that supplier from participating in any future procurement. Also, the procurement of any of the goods and services described in this RFI will not necessarily follow this RFI. This RFI is simply intended to solicit feedback from industry with respect to the matters described in this RFI.

3) Nature and Format of Responses Requested

Respondents are requested to provide their comments, concerns and, where applicable, alternative recommendations regarding how the requirements or objectives described in this RFI could be satisfied. Respondents are also invited to provide comments regarding the content, format and/or organization of any draft documents included in this RFI. Respondents should explain any assumptions they make in their responses.

4) Response Costs

Canada will not reimburse any respondent for expenses incurred in responding to this RFI.

5) Treatment of Responses

a) **Use of Responses:** Responses will not be formally evaluated. However, the responses received may be used by Canada to develop or modify procurement strategies or any draft documents contained in this RFI. Canada will review all responses received by the RFI closing date. Canada may, in its discretion, review responses received after the RFI closing date.

b) **Review Team:** A review team composed of representatives of the Department of Canadian Heritage and Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) will review the responses. Canada reserves the right to hire any independent consultant, or use any Government resources that it considers necessary to review any response. Not all members of the review team will necessarily review all responses.

c) **Confidentiality:** Respondents should mark any portions of their response that they consider proprietary or confidential. Canada will handle the responses in accordance with the Access to Information Act.

d) **Follow-up Activity:** Canada will meet in person, by telephone or via videoconference with respondents who indicate in their responses that they wish to participate in a follow-up meeting. Canada currently anticipates holding any such meetings **from December 2016 to February 2017**. In order to allow PSPC to establish the schedule for such meetings, respondents are requested to include in their responses an indication of whether they wish to meet with Canada, together with a list of the individuals from their organization who would be attending the meeting, and their three preferred meeting times (see the grid below). PSPC cannot guarantee that any respondent will be allocated any of its preferred meeting times. The Contracting Authority will advise respondents in due course of the time slot that is available for their meeting.

	Date (during week of _____)	Time (between the hours of ___ and ____)
Preferred Time Slot #1		
Preferred Time Slot #2		
Preferred Time Slot #3		

6) Contents of this RFI

a) This RFI describes the basic characteristics of the mobile application for learning and retaining English and French as second languages for all Canadians. This document remains a work in progress and respondents should not assume that new clauses or requirements will not be added to any bid solicitation that is ultimately published by Canada. Nor should respondents assume that none of the clauses or requirements will be deleted or revised. Comments regarding any aspect of the draft document are welcome.

b) This RFI also contains specific questions addressed to the industry (see section 4 of the Annex A).

7) Volumetric Data

Data related to the knowledge of Canada's two official languages are being provided to respondents purely for information purposes. They come from the 2011 Census.

8) Format of Responses

a) **Cover Page:** If the response includes multiple volumes, respondents are requested to indicate on the front cover page of each volume the title of the response, the solicitation number, the volume number and the full legal name of the respondent.

b) **Title Page**: The first page of each volume of the response, after the cover page, should be the title page, which should contain:

   i) the title of the respondent's response and the volume number;

   ii) the name and address of the respondent;

   iii) the name, address and telephone number of the respondent's contact;

   iv) the date; and

   v) the RFI number.

c) **Numbering System**: Respondents are requested to prepare their response using a numbering system corresponding to the one in this RFI. All references to descriptive material, technical manuals and brochures included as part of the response should be referenced accordingly.

d) **Responses:** Canada requests that respondents submit their responses by email to the Contracting Authority named below at the date and time indicated on the first page of the RFI. Each respondent should ensure that the company name, number and the RFI closing date appear in the email subject line.

9) Enquiries

Because this is not a bid solicitation, Canada will not necessarily respond to enquiries in writing or by circulating answers to all potential suppliers. However, respondents with questions regarding this RFI may direct their enquiries to the Contracting Authority mentioned below.

10) Contracting Authority

The Contracting Authority for this RFI is:
Name: Ngoma Nkiama
Direction: Software Methods of Supply Division
               Science and Software Systems Procurement
               Public Services and Procurement Canada
Address: 11 Laurier St. /11, rue Laurier, Place du Portage,
               Phase III, 4C1, Gatineau, Québec, K1A 0S5
Telephone: 873-469-3368
Fax: 819-953-3703
Email: ngoma.nkiama@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca

11) Projet Authority

Yvan Dery
Director
Policy and Research

Official Languages Branch
Canadian Heritage
15, Eddy St, 7th Flour
Gatineau (Quebec) K1A 0M5

Telephone: 819-994-2224
Fax : 819-934-9199

Email : yvan.dery@canada.ca

Annex A

Description of the project

1. Goal and objectives of the Initiative

The Government of Canada (GoC) is committed to setting up a free mobile service for learning and retaining English and French as second languages.

To date, the support provided by the GoC for learning a second language has primarily targeted young people in school settings (through bilateral education agreements with the provinces and territories), and language training for immigrants. The new commitment applies more directly to all Canadians and more specifically targets adults outside the academic setting. However, it may be adapted for use by Allophone newcomers or by students wishing to develop their language skills.

It is hoped that Canadians who use the mobile application will develop an appreciation of Canada's two official languages, will communicate with Canadians who speak the other official language, will take advantage of cultural activities and events, will have access to more job opportunities, and will be able to more effectively integrate economically, socially and culturally into Canadian society.

The English and French languages are deeply rooted in Canada's history. According to 2011 Census data, 98.2% of Canadians speak one of the two official languages. On 33.1 million Canadians, there are 7.4 million French-speaking Canadians and 24.8 million English-speaking Canadians. About 1 million French-speaking Canadians live in official-language minority communities outside Quebec and about 1 million English-speaking Canadians live in official-language minority communities in Quebec.

The percentage of bilingual Canadians is 17.5%, but their distribution across the country varies. The percentage of bilingual Francophones in Quebec is 38.6%, compared to 83.3% of Francophones outside Quebec. The percentage of bilingual Anglophones in Quebec is 69%, but only 7.2% outside Quebec.

In addition to the social and political issues underlying Canada's bilingualism policies, the research shows that bilingualism provides economic, cognitive and social benefits for both individuals and groups. Many studies demonstrate that bilingualism directly benefits individuals by increasing their earnings relative to their peers. In a context of globalization and a growing number of international trade agreements, it is clear that bilingual people have more job opportunities and labour mobility, as well as more chances for promotion to higher levels. Through its policy of official bilingualism, Canada can increase its competitive edge by achieving a higher level of bilingualism.

The *Official Languages Act* (promotion of linguistic duality)

The Department of Canadian Heritage coordinates GoC activities promoting official languages in Canadian society and administers support programs for official languages. Under the *Official Languages Act*, the Government of Canada is committed to enhancing the vitality of the French and English linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting and assisting their development, and fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society (section 41). More specifically, "the Minister of Canadian Heritage shall take such measures as the Minister considers appropriate to advance the equality of status and use of English and French in Canadian society" (section 43) and may take measures to enhance the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and foster an acceptance and appreciation of both English and French by members of the public.

To help Canadians develop a greater appreciation of Canada's two official languages, the GoC is committed to developing a free mobile application for all Canadians. Following consultations with various players in the language training and language technology field, parameters were established for a second language learning and retention application for Canadians. This Request for Information summarizes these parameters, specifies the objectives and technical criteria for the required application, and provides detailed information on the criteria for assessing presentations.

2. Required services

2.1 Mobile application performance

To implement this project, basic parameters must be drawn up to serve as a guide in the design and deployment of a second language learning and retention mobile application for Canadians.

There are several mobile and online educational tools available that provide good language learning results. Some of them are free, while others are not, and a number of private firms are developing them. As a service intended for all Canadians, this mobile application will be tailored to the Canadian context and provided for Canadian citizens at no charge.

The mobile and Web English and French learning and retaining application must comply with the following parameters:

- ***Proficiency level***
    - The mobile application must enable learners to progress from a beginner to an intermediate or advanced level. For example, the intermediate level (B1 and B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) would make it possible for learners to consume cultural products in the second language and have access to some jobs where bilingualism is required.
    - The mobile application could also enable users who do not know English or French to acquire basic language skills that will help them continue learning and progress to a more advanced level.

- ***Types of language skills***
    - The mobile application will foster the acquisition of four language skills: writing, reading, comprehension and speaking.

- ***Type of learning***
    - <u>Autonomous</u>: The mobile application must be able to facilitate autonomous learning where

learners get involved in learning activities and exercises at their own pace and in accordance with their schedules and preferences.

- o <u>Motivating</u>: It is essential that the mobile application be designed in such a way as to motivate and engage adult learners, most of whom will be working autonomously. For example, it must be interactive and incorporate gamification principles.

- o <u>Customized</u>: The mobile application must also take into consideration and incorporate learners' interests and include learning scenarios and exercises based on everyday situations that are most likely to occur. It may include verbal interaction with other learners and/or informal tutors in order to create opportunities to practise English and French. For example, it could provide access to learner communities or be used to set up matching opportunities between learners.

  The mobile application could also make use of artificial dialog boxes or other technological advances promoting the necessary verbal interaction to achieve oral proficiency.

- **Classification test, level of proficiency and certification**

  - o After the registration, the mobile application will prompt users to participate in a classification test to assess their level of language proficiency. The classification test will provide learners with feedback based on the principal standards for measuring language skills used in Canada and a matrix approach that will set out equivalencies between the various measurements. The classification test will provide an assessment of the learner's language proficiency level and equivalencies determined on the basis of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the frameworks used in Canada to determine language proficiency levels (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks).

  - o At the end of each key learning stage, learners will take a new classification test to monitor the progress they have made.

  - o The mobile application could allow learners to obtain an official document certifying the level of language proficiency they have achieved (at an affordable cost, where possible).

- **Adaptation to the Canadian context**

  - o The mobile application must be adapted overall to the Canadian context, particularly with respect to the types of French and English provided, and use vocabulary and diverse accents associated with English and French spoken in Canada.

  - o Learning scenarios and exercises will present Canadian culture or current events.

  - o Learning scenarios and exercises will adhere to Canadian values and demonstrate Canada's diversity (e.g. equality for all, gender equality, non-discrimination and a representative profile).

2.2 Technical specifications for the mobile application

- **Reporting and accountability**

  The selected mobile application must be able to provide the government with a full range of data and statistics, including the number of users, frequency of use, basic demographic data (age, gender, province of residence, etc.), user proficiency levels, learning progress data and satisfaction measurements. These data and statistics will be generated <u>in real time</u> and will allow:

- o The GoC: to measure the effectiveness of the application for different types of users, identify emerging opportunities from statistics, or adjust priorities based on the needs of Canadian learners;

- o The Service provider: to account for the general user preferences, the overall performance of the mobile application, identify on an ongoing basis functionality or content to improve.

- o Every user: to view his personal progress in learning the target language and to make learning choices for subsequent stages.

- *Compliance with Internet standards*

    The selected mobile application must comply with GoC Internet standards, including accessibility standards. As a general rule, GoC websites must comply with internationally accepted guidelines for Internet accessibility and Web-based applications, and their compliance must be measured consistently.

    Online services provided by the GoC must comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) or WCAG 2.0. (For additional information, go to the websites for the Standard on Web Accessibility or the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines [WCAG 2.0]). In addition to the Web accessibility standards and the Web Experience Toolkit, the GoC recommends that its Internet service providers adopt the Standard on Web Usability, the Standard on Web Interoperability and the Standard on Optimizing Websites and Applications for Mobile Devices.

- *Collaborative participation* (crowdsourcing)

    The mobile application could provide users with collaborative participation opportunities with respect to the content and connecting learners to each other or in other arrangements.

- *Site hosting*

    The mobile application and all services provided will be hosted on a server located in Canada. Said server will be under Canadian jurisdiction without being a property of the GoC.

- *Security considerations*

    The mobile application will be designed to operate in a secure virtual environment in compliance with GoC standards. It will be designed to continuously incorporate high-performance cyber security devices.

- *Mobile application reserved for people living in Canada*

    The mobile application will be a Government of Canada public service provided for Canadian citizens. As such, it will be designed to provide access only to persons living in Canada.

- *Data protection considerations*

    The mobile application will be designed in such a way as to ensure the security of personal data and information (e.g. surnames, given names, postal codes and language proficiency levels) entered by Canadian citizens. The mobile application must provide every possible technical guarantee to ensure the confidentiality of personal data entered by users, and must provide a maximum of guarantees to ensure security of access, security of the server and security of the database hosted by the server.

2.3 Promoting the application and providing technical support to users

The supplier must ensure the continued promotion of the mobile application with Canadians, and must plan for budgets for this purpose. In addition, it will provide a permanent service of technical support to solve the problems encountered by the users.

3. Required information

The Department of Canadian Heritage (PCH) wishes to compile an inventory of the options that are currently available as a result of advances made not only in new information technologies and mobile applications, but also in applied linguistics and education science. At this stage, it is not necessary that the most detailed information be provided. However, respondents are asked to provide fairly complete descriptions identifying the teaching characteristics and capacities of the platform proposed.

For this component, the main objectives of this RFI are the following:

a) Determine the interest and capacity of suppliers and respondents to provide the services described in this document;

b) Provide the industry with an initial opportunity to enhance the GoC project, and to comment on the project and the technical criteria under consideration for the mobile application;

c) Request comments and suggestions with respect to any issue that would have an impact on the overall implementation of the project or the ability of potential bidders to meet the requirements of a Request for Proposals for the development of the mobile application;

d) Request the submission of information, expertise and best practices currently available in this sector with respect to the development of online learning services;

e) Maximize the likelihood of a positive outcome for this GoC commitment;

f) Obtain a preliminary indication of the projected cost of implementing this initiative.

The expected responses must be drafted in such a way as to facilitate the design of a mobile learning application, both in terms of their technical specifications and their teaching capacity and functionalities. Responses must include information on the following:

A. Infrastructure required for the operation of the mobile application;

B. Technical analysis of the system, particularly its compatibility (capacities and limitations) with operating systems and connection mobile applications currently offered in the market;

C. Incentive measures or possible technical devices for ensuring the engagement of learners and their continued participation in the process;

D. Anticipated cost (relatively detailed) for three different phases of the mobile application: design and development, launch and promotion, and maintenance and improvement;

E. Other issues/risks to plan for, along with mitigation options for the GoC, particularly with respect to this type of free mobile application available to the general public.

4. Questions to Industry

The GoC expects that each respondent provides detailed answers to each of the six questions below, with technical details and useful or necessary explanations and justifications.

- ***Business and operating model***

There are several types of collaboration with the private or semi-private sectors for the development and operation of the mobile application and for the promotion of the mobile application to Canadians. But first and foremost, since new information technologies appear to be the most dynamic and continually changing sector, it is critically important for projects in this field to be managed expeditiously and with flexibility.

Question 1: **In order to create optimum conditions to ensure the efficiency and popularity (public appreciation) of the mobile application, what are the best business and operating model options in the medium and long terms for this project in a public service context? The answer to this question may include three components:**

- ○ **What would be the most effective governance or management model (involving the contractor, the GoC and possibly third parties or sector experts) for the mobile application?**
- ○ **To protect the GoC's investment as well as ensure the sustainable effectiveness and continual updating of the mobile application, what would be the preferred contract types, terms and options? Give reasons.**
- ○ **To what extent additional funding sources such as advertising revenues could contribute to a greater efficiency of the project?**

- ***Mobile application functionalities***

During our preliminary consultations, we were frequently told that attractiveness and gamification were key factors in a mobile application's success with the public. In addition, some of the functionalities of websites and mobile applications are more effective than others in promoting autonomous learning.

Question 2: **What are the key, if not essential, functionalities or characteristics that this mobile application must have to be popular with the public, while maintaining as much teaching capacity as possible, i.e., by promoting actual progress in language learning for the greatest possible number of Canadians?**

- ***Learning content of the mobile application***

If the mobile application's attractiveness and user-friendliness are directly dependent on its design and functionalities, it appears that achievement of the final objective (actual progress made by users in the learned language) depends on the content and quality of the teaching material, as well as on the volume and dynamism (development and updating) of this material.

Question 3: **How can the GoC assess, and what might be the criteria for assessing, the educational quality of the proposed language learning mobile application?**

- *Exclusive use by Canadian citizens and residents*

    For the most part, the Internet is a network open to the world that is based on the principle of universal access. However, the GoC would like to reserve this service of mobile application exclusively for persons living in Canada.

    Question 4: **What are the existing technical methods and tools used to process incoming requests and identify and register applicants?**

- *Issues of platform security and confidentiality of user data*

    The development of new technologies is always accompanied by risks pertaining to data and infrastructure security and protection of Internet user privacy.

    Question 5: **Given the open and public access characteristics of the mobile application envisaged by the GoC, and considering Canada's standards and legislation for the protection of privacy, what are the best systems or devices currently available in this sector, and under what conditions would these devices operate to protect both the mobile application and the data of its users?**

- *Operating and maintenance costs*

    As a public institution, the GoC is committed to providing Canadian taxpayers with the best mobile application at the best possible cost.

    Question 6: **Given the various phases of implementing the project, ie, design, development and launch of the mobile application,**

    - ○ **What are the options available to minimize the cost of this mobile application for public use over the medium and long terms without having a negative effect on the effectiveness or the public's appreciation of the mobile application?**

    - ○ **What are the most costly expense items associated with the overall implementation of the project, costs to be monitored and best ways to reduce them?**

    - ○ **Compared with the number of users (which may vary considerably over time and by period), what is the best way to guarantee or control the cost of the project without regard for mobile application volume of use?**

Appendix B

Useful Links

- Official Languages Act (Justice Canada):
  http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/O-3.01/

- Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks
  http://www.language.ca/index.cfm?Repertoire_No=2137991327&Voir=corporatif

- Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (Justice Canada) :
  http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/PDF/P-8.6.pdf

- Access to Information and Privacy (Government of Canada):
  http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/hgw-cgf/oversight-surveillance/atip-aiprp/index-eng.asp

- Standard on Web Accessibility (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat):
  http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=23601

- Profile of Information Technology (IT) Services (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat):
  http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/hgw-cgf/oversight-surveillance/itpm-itgp/it-ti/profil/profil-eng.pdf

- Canada Labour Code (Justice Canada) :
  http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/PDF/L-2.pdf

- Government of Canada buying and selling legislation and regulations (Public Services and Procurement Canada):
  https://buyandsell.gc.ca/policy-and-guidelines/Policy-and-Legal-Framework/Statutes-and-Regulations

Appendix C

Links to the Government of Canada's Web Standard

- Standard on Web Accessibility:

  http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=23601

- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.

  http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/

- Web Experience Toolkit:

  http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/hgw-cgf/oversight-surveillance/communications/ws-nw/wet-boew-eng.asp

- Standard on Web Usability:

  https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=24227

- Standard on Web Interoperability :

  http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ws-nw/wi-iw/index-eng.asp

- Standard on Optimizing Websites and Applications for Mobile Devices:

  https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=27088