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Ingrid Harrington:  
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**LETTER OF INTEREST**  
**LETTRE D'INTÉRÊT**

Comments - Commentaires

<b>Title - Sujet</b> Temporary Help Services	
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<b>Address Enquiries to: - Adresser toutes questions à:</b> Harrington, Ingrid	<b>Buyer Id - Id de l'acheteur</b> 002zn
<b>Telephone No. - N° de téléphone</b> (819) 420-5869 ( )	<b>FAX No. - N° de FAX</b> ( ) -
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Instructions: See Herein

Instructions: Voir aux présentes

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

<b>Delivery Required - Livraison exigée</b> See Herein	<b>Delivery Offered - Livraison proposée</b>
<b>Vendor/Firm Name and Address</b> <b>Raison sociale et adresse du fournisseur/de l'entrepreneur</b>	
<b>Telephone No. - N° de téléphone</b> <b>Facsimile No. - N° de télécopieur</b>	
<b>Name and title of person authorized to sign on behalf of Vendor/Firm</b> <b>(type or print)</b> <b>Nom et titre de la personne autorisée à signer au nom du fournisseur/</b> <b>de l'entrepreneur ( taper ou écrire en caractères d'imprimerie)</b>	
<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>

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## Request for Information (RFI) Temporary Help Services in the National Capital Region

Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) is seeking Industry feedback regarding the development of a new method of supply for Temporary Help Services (THS) in the national capital region (NCR) which will replace the current THS method of supply.

PSPC has conducted broad consultations with Industry and the government users of THS, through the 2015 THS National Strategy consultation, the Temporary Help Services Advisory Committee (THSAC) as well as continuous feedback through daily interactions with client departments and suppliers. As a result, PSPC is proposing new and innovative ways of contracting Temporary Help Services.

PSPC intends to implement a social procurement approach to leverage the government's buying power through procurement to support socio-economic objectives and to generate positive societal impacts. Specifically, PSPC is undertaking:

- A simpler and more efficient process for all THS stakeholders, including an "express" process for simple requirements;
- Social Procurement measures to increase the number and diversity of bidders on government contracts; and
- Enhanced vendor performance measures that encourage good behavior from suppliers.

### 1. Background

There are currently 100 resource classifications spanning 5 Streams of services as follows:

1. Office Support;
2. Administrative Services;
3. Operational Services;
4. Technical Services; and
5. Professional Services.

These 5 streams, related generic tasks and minimum mandatory criteria are detailed at the following link: <http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/app-acq/sat-ths/classifications-eng.html>

Temporary Help Services (THS) has been designated by the Treasury Board Secretariat as a mandatory procurement commodity and should be used only in the following three situations:

- 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, in which there is an insufficient number of public servants available to meet the requirement
- A position is vacant and staffing action is being completed

Current method of supply:

- The financial limitation is capped at \$400,000.00 or 48 weeks contract duration, whichever comes first.
- Designated Users\* can use either the Standing Offer (SO) or the Supply Arrangement (SA):
  - In the case of the SO, Designated Users must select the Qualified bidder\* based on the First-right of refusal, which means the one offering the lowest hourly rate in the specific resource classification
  - In the case of the SA, Designated Users must prepare a Statement of Work and Evaluation Criteria and compete the requirement amongst a randomly generated list of qualified bidders. The successful bidder is chosen based on the basis of selection identified by the Designated User.

\*Designated Users = federal department users who have been trained and authorized to use the THS method of supply

\*\*Qualified suppliers = suppliers that hold a Supply Arrangement (SA) or Standing Offer (SO).

## **2. Proposed changes:**

### **2.1 Replacement of the existing standing offer and supply arrangement**

The THS method of supply will be modernized by creating a new SA that will be more user-friendly, efficient and flexible.

PSPC proposes to replace the existing standing offer and supply arrangement with a single, two-method supply arrangement for temporary help services. The Standing Offer will not be renewed and there will be no more “First Right of Refusal”.

- Method 1 would be a simple, express process which would be streamlined and straight-forward enough to be used by non-procurement Designated Users.
- Method 2 would be a standard Request for Proposal (RFP) process which would provide more flexibility for Designated Users to add mandatory and rated evaluation criteria, and would offer more options to determine the successful bidder. Method 2 would have longer lead times and would likely be processed through the Department or Agency’s materiel management or procurement unit.

This new method of supply will allow Designated Users to compete each requirement and allow suppliers to quote appropriate rates specific to the level of experience and qualifications required. An improved process for the Designated Users will enable them to issue better RFP’s. Suppliers will benefit from a process that is more reflective of the operating conditions that prevailed within the industry. It should also allow for a greater variety of suppliers to have a chance to compete for THS requirements.

**Method 1** would have the following characteristics:



1. Requirements would be limited to \$400,000 and 48 weeks, with the possibility of extending an additional 24 weeks. Requirements could only cover 1 resource at a time.
2. The generic tasks identified in the SA (similar to the list of tasks identified in the current THS method of supply <http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/app-acq/sat-ths/classifications-eng.html>) for the relevant THS category would be used to develop the statement of work for the requirement.
3. The Minimum Mandatory Criteria identified in the SA (similar to the link above) for the relevant THS category would be used. Designated Users would not have to develop any other evaluation criteria. Rated evaluation criteria would not be used for Method 1.
4. The THS system will create a randomly generated list of pre-qualified suppliers for each specific requirement. Users will have to compete their requirement amongst this list of suppliers and will be able to add as many other qualified suppliers of their choice to this list.
5. In the majority of cases, the basis of selection would be lowest cost, but under certain conditions (yet to be determined), the designated user could use the “right fit” to select the winning supplier. The conditions for the use of the “Right Fit” will be determined through these consultations. The “Right Fit” would allow Designated Users to select the winning bidder amongst the bidders that meet the mandatory requirements and have similarly priced bids. If the prices are considered “similar”, the client would be able to choose the supplier based on criteria such as additional relevant experience, qualifications or informal interview results.
6. Due to the basic nature of the requirements, the minimum solicitation period would be 48 hours.
7. The bid validity period would be 21 calendar days.

**Method 2** would have the following characteristics:

1. Requirements would be limited to \$1M but this limit could be exceeded with approval from the THS authority (PSPC). The length of the contract could not exceed 48 weeks but may be extended by 24 weeks in exceptional circumstances. Requirements could cover multiple resources.
2. A full statement of work would be required to elaborate on the generic tasks identified in the relevant resource category(ies). The Designated User would be provided with a SOW-Builder to help them with this task.
3. The Minimum Mandatory Criteria identified in the SA for the relevant resource category(ies) would apply, though additional mandatory and rated criteria could be identified.
4. The THS system will create a randomly generated list of pre-qualified suppliers for each specific requirement. Users will have to compete their requirement amongst this list of suppliers and will be able to add as many other qualified suppliers of their choice to this list
5. The recommended minimum solicitation period would be 5 working days, however this period could be reduced to 48 hours in exceptional circumstances, or extended if necessary.



6. Multiple bases of selection would be acceptable including, but not limited to, lowest cost, lowest cost per point and highest combined points for technical and financial, etc.
7. Multiple resources and categories could be combined into one requirement. If more than 10 resources were required the RFP would need to be reviewed by the THS authority.

Designated Users will use a fillable PDF template for requirements under both Methods. Under Method 1, the template would be pre-populated with all the identified tasks and minimum mandatory criteria for each resource category. The Designated User would only be required to select and click on the resource category as well as each of the generic tasks that apply, and the template would automatically be populated with the chosen tasks and the mandatory criteria. The Designated User would use the form to create the RFP and resulting contract clauses, and the supplier would be able to use that same form to submit their bid.

A similar form would be used for Method 2 requirements, however, the Designated User would have the option of expanding on the required tasks and could also add mandatory and rated criteria.

The PDF templates will be tested with stakeholders before being implemented. The use of these fillable templates is expected to streamline the process to ensure the supply arrangement is easy to use and would allow for timely procurement of qualified resources.

## 2.2 Implementation of Social Procurement Pilot

As per the PSPC Minister's mandate letter, PSPC is expected to develop

*"initiatives to increase the diversity of bidders on government contracts, in particular businesses owned or led by Canadians from under-represented groups, such as women, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, and visible minorities, and take measures to increase the accessibility of the procurement system to such groups while working to increase the capacity of these groups to participate in the system".*

PSPC intends to implement a social procurement approach to leverage the government's buying power through procurement to support socio-economic objectives and to generate positive societal impacts. Social enterprises and diverse suppliers from four specific groups, would be identified during the SA qualification process.

### Social enterprise

A social enterprise is currently defined as an enterprise that seeks to achieve social, cultural or environmental aims through the sale of goods and services in which the majority of net profits must be directed to a social objective (e.g., reducing environmental impacts of its products or including local training in the community).

### Diverse supplier

A diverse supplier is currently defined as a business owned or led by Canadians from underrepresented groups, such as women, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities and visible minorities. Each business is usually defined as being owned, operated and controlled by 51% of a given group (e.g.,



women-owned business, Indigenous-owned business, persons with disabilities-owned business, or visible minority-owned business).

PSPC is considering various models to confirm that a supplier meets the definition of a diverse supplier. One option is that suppliers self-certify with an attestation, which would be verified by PSPC through audits throughout the life of the Supply Arrangement. A second option is to make use of third party organizations which verify that suppliers meet the diverse supplier definition and provide a certification for a fee.

- <https://www.buysocialcanada.com/suppliers>
- [Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supplier Council](#)
- [WBE Canada, Certified Women Business Enterprises](#)
- [Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business](#)
- [Inclusive Workplace Supply Council of Canada](#)
- [Social Purchasing Project \(for social purpose enterprises\)](#)

PSPC would like industry to provide recommended approaches for incorporating social procurement measures in the THS method of supply. For example, one approach could be to make it mandatory to invite a minimum number of diverse suppliers to bid on each THS requirement. Another could be to permit Designated Users to include a rated criterion in their THS RFP to award 5-15% of the total point value to diverse suppliers or to suppliers that have a diversity policy.

### **2.3 Implementation of a vendor performance regime**

PSPC is implementing a vendor performance regime to address concerns raised during the 2015 National Procurement Strategy consultation, as well as other feedback received from suppliers and Designated Users during the daily operations of the method of supply.

The proposed vendor performance regime would include, but not be limited to monitoring and evaluating the following key performance indicators:

- i. Frequency of resource replacements or terminations for default due to poor performance by resources. There would be a dispute mechanism in place to allow vendors to dispute claims.
- ii. Suppliers not compliant to certifications and other requirements such as: insurance; security; testing or interviewing resources; and being a diverse supplier. Monitoring will be done by client interviews with resources or PSPC audits.
- iii. Low participation on solicitations when invited. Supply Arrangement holders could be required to participate in a minimum of 25% of the solicitations to which they are invited over the course of one year.

When PSPC has evidence that a supplier has 3 infractions of any of the above performance indicators, the THS Authority may suspend their SA for a period of 3 months with the possibility of having their SA removed from the list of pre-qualified suppliers for subsequent infractions. Consultations will continue with suppliers and clients in order to develop a framework for verifying adherence to these performance indicators and requirements.

PSPC also intends to consult with suppliers and designated users about the potential use of rewarding positive performance. An initial measure that comes to mind will be the ability for designated users to



choose suppliers of their choice to be added to the randomly generated list of pre-qualified suppliers. If a supplier provides users with quality services, they will be increasing their chances of being invited to bid on requirements.

### 3. Engagement Activities and Procurement Timeline

	ACTIVITIES	TIMELINE
1	Publish RFI 001 including proposed method of supply on the Government Electronic Tendering Service (GETS)	December 2017
2	Industry Day during RFI Posting period	January 2018
3	Publish RFI 002 including draft RFSA on GETS	March 2018
4	Industry Day during RFI Posting period	March 2018
5	Publish Final RFSA on GETS (40 days)	May/June 2018
6	Issue SAs to successful bidders	August/September 2018

### 4. Industry Day:

PSPC intends to hold an Industry Day in January. This will allow interested suppliers to provide feedback, ask questions and gain a better understanding of the proposed THS Method of Supply.

Interested suppliers are requested to confirm to [Ingrid.harrington@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca](mailto:Ingrid.harrington@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca), no later than January 9, 2018, their intent to attend and their preference for the French or English session. The location, date and time of the meeting will be provided to confirmed participants during the week of January 9, 2018.

### 5. One-on-One Meetings

PSPC may decide to hold one-on-one meetings with specific stakeholders if PSPC believes it will add value to the outcome of the engagement process.

### 6. Nature of the Request for Information (RFI)

This RFI is neither a call for tender nor a Bid Solicitation. No agreement or contract will be entered into based on this RFI. The issuance of this RFI is not to be considered in any way a commitment by the Government of Canada, nor as authority to potential respondents to undertake any work that could be charged to Canada. This RFI is not to be considered as a commitment to issue a subsequent solicitation.

Although the information collected may be provided as commercial-in-confidence (and, if identified as such, will be treated accordingly by Canada), Canada may use the information to assist in refining the requirement (which is subject to change).

**7. Submission of Responses and Questions:**

Respondents may submit their responses and questions via email to:

Ingrid Harrington  
Supply Team Leader  
Public Services Procurement Canada  
Procurement Branch  
Provisional Labour Services Division  
Telephone: 819-420-5869  
[Ingrid.harrington@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca](mailto:Ingrid.harrington@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca)

**8. Format of Responses**

Respondents are requested to review the proposed method of supply procurement strategy and respond to the questions at Annex A, including any additional comments and concerns they may have.

Annex A is available in Microsoft Word upon request.

Responses may be provided in either English or French.

Respondents should submit only pertinent information in response to this request. The inclusion of general marketing or technical manuals is discouraged, unless they provide specific information that has been requested in this document. A point of contact for the Respondent should be included in the package.

Changes to this RFI may occur and will be advertised on the Government Electronic Tendering System. Canada asks Respondents to visit [Buyandsell.gc.ca](http://Buyandsell.gc.ca) regularly to check for changes, if any.

**9. Closing Date:**

Responses to this RFI will be accepted until 02:00 PM Eastern Standard Time (EST) on January 26, 2018. Canada may, at its discretion, review and consider responses received after the RFI closing date.

Participation in this RFI is encouraged, but is not mandatory. Participation in this RFI is not a condition or prerequisite for the participation in any potential subsequent solicitation. Respondents will not be reimbursed for any cost incurred by participating in this RFI.



## ANNEX A

### QUESTIONS

#	Question	Response
1	<p>What would you suggest the minimum mandatory criteria should be in order to qualify on the new method of supply?</p> <p>(e.g. Commercial office space, testing and interviews for various skills and aptitudes, experience (20 placements), previous contracts of similar nature etc.)</p> <p>The current THS mandatory requirements can be found at this link:</p> <p><a href="https://buyandsell.gc.ca/cds/public/2014/01/14/5f9559a6db8752995be4bab95a0db38c/ABES.PR.OD.PW_ZN.B004.E26794.EBSU000.PDF">https://buyandsell.gc.ca/cds/public/2014/01/14/5f9559a6db8752995be4bab95a0db38c/ABES.PR.OD.PW_ZN.B004.E26794.EBSU000.PDF</a></p> <p>The mandatory requirements are in Attachments 1 to Part 4 which starts on page 17.</p>	
2	<p>Currently the THS mandatory requirements for qualification on the Supply Arrangement require suppliers to implement a testing regime for the proposed candidates, as per Mandatory #3 in the link above.</p> <p>Should testing continue to be a mandatory requirement? If yes, what should be tested and how? Additionally, how should PSPC evaluate such tests?</p>	
3	<p>Do you think the proposed vendor performance regime, referenced in 4.3 of this RFI, is fair? Why or why not?</p>	



4	What other factors would you recommend be measured in terms of vendor performance?	
5	Do you think that the “Right Fit” selection methodology, described in 4.1 of the RFI, will be effective? What are the risks associated with this methodology and how could they be mitigated?	
6	For the “Right Fit” basis of selection what would be the ideal financial criteria that would define that prices are considered “similar”? i.e. prices must be within 10% of the lowest-priced bid, prices must fit within a given median rate band, etc.	
7	Are you aware of any other organizations, besides those listed in 4.2 of this RFI, that certify diverse suppliers or social enterprises?	
8	Based on the definition of a diverse supplier, do you meet the criteria to qualify as a diverse supplier?	
9	Certification bodies typically charge a fee to certify a business as a diverse supplier or social enterprise. Are you willing to pay an extra fee to be certified? Do you think it is fair or creates a barrier for your entry?	



10	Should PSPC use attestation (self-certification) followed by audits, or certification by established certification organizations to qualify diverse suppliers and social enterprises? What other methods would you propose we use to verify diverse suppliers?	
11	If one of the social procurement measures implemented was to ensure that a minimum percentage of suppliers in a bidders list was formed of diverse suppliers, what percentage of the bidders list should be dedicated to diverse suppliers? i.e. 2 out of a total of 7, 1 out of 5, etc...	
12	Are there any other social groups that should be included as diverse suppliers?	
13	Do you anticipate the government of Canada's commitment to increasing the diversity of businesses owned or led by Canadians from underrepresented groups will have an impact on your participation in the Supply Arrangement?	
14	What other measures could be incorporated into this method of supply to leverage the government's buying power to support the objectives of the Minister's mandate letter stated in 4.2 of the RFI?	
15	Are there any barriers that previously prevented you from becoming a THS supplier? How could these be overcome?	
16	Do you have any other comments or recommendations?	