

Question 1

How many Macro/ Micro Solution Labs does CMHC anticipate requiring over the term of the contract?

Answer 1

CMHC is currently considering at least 10 this year with between 10 to 15 in subsequent years. This is subject to change but our best estimation at present.

Question 2

What will trigger the initiation of a Solutions Lab?

Answer 2

CMHC has a number of activities that are currently being developed which would require lab services. Once these are publicly announced further information can be provided.

Question 3

Would the Solution Lab provider and/ or any Solutions Lab participants be prevented from further assisting CMHC in the execution or implementation of recommendations/ prototypes resulting from the Solutions Lab?

Answer 3

Given the nature of the proposed solution (policy, program, technology, practice, etc.) CMHC will likely not be in a position to implement – hence the need for a solid road map to ensure authorities having jurisdiction understand what is needed to implement or execute recommendations or prototypes.

Question 4

Has CMHC been working with any incumbents in the development of this RFP?

Answer 4

CMHC hired a firm from an existing standing offer for research services to undertake a survey of Canadian agencies offering lab type services in the academic, government and private sector. This firm is not considered an incumbent. CMHC also worked with ESDC in the development of this RFSO.

Question 5

How many vendors does CMHC anticipate qualifying under this RFSO?

Answer 5

CMHC anticipates qualifying between 10-15 vendors. However, this is our first time undertaking an RFSO in this field and the quality and volume of respondents will ultimately determine the actual number.

Question 6

Given the complexity of the response, the desire to provide a high quality proposal to CMHC and the statutory holidays which are immediately preceding the proposed submission date, we respectfully request an extension of one week

Answer 6

See amendment 1.

Question 7

Which department or business unit in CMHC will be responsible for overseeing the Solutions Labs?

Answer 7

The Housing Needs Research division will be responsible for overseeing the Solutions Labs standing offer. However, Standing Offers are open to all departments within CMHC; therefore, other departments may choose to use the Standing Offer as needed.

Question 8

In the event that data modeling or visualization, collaborative technologies and/or other supporting technical tools are required to enable and support the execution of a Solutions Lab, is the Proponent expected to provide these tools at their own expense or will supporting technologies be provisioned through CMHC?

Answer 8

The Proponent is expected to provide these tools at their own expense.

Question 9

Please clarify: Is the proponent to provide ONE resource to meet 3.4.1, at least one resource to meet 3.4.2 (consultant team members) and one resource to meet 3.4.3 (subject matter experts – this appears to be mis-numbered as 3.4.2 again)?

Answer 9

Yes, the proponent must provide one resource to meet 3.4.1 (Principal Lab Consultant), at least one resource to meet 3.4.2 (consultant team members) and one resource to meet 3.4.3 (subject matter experts).

Please see amendments 2 and 3.

Question 10

Section 3.3 states: *To be eligible for Solutions Lab Consulting Services, Offerors must meet the minimum eligibility requirements (section 3.4 below), and demonstrate at least three core competency areas and one specialized knowledge area(s) (as described in section 3.5) in the Solutions Lab Consulting Services stream they are applying to.* Section 3.5 describes the two types of labs as opposed to competency or knowledge areas. Can CMHC please clarify what is required under section 3.3?

Answer 10

CMHC wishes to know if the Proponent has specific expertise in only certain activities as listed in section 3.2.2 – which would allow them to bid on the micro lab stream as defined in Section 3.5; or if the Proponent has specific expertise in all activities listed in section 3.2.2 – which would allow them to bid on the macro lab stream as defined in Section 3.5

Question 11

Section 4.5 subsection 1 (Personnel/ Project Experience) refers to section 3.4.2. Please clarify – does CMHC mean 3.4.1 only?

Answer 11

This should be 3.4.1. Principle Lab Consultant, 3.4.2 Consultant Team Members, and 3.4.3 Subject Matter Experts (where identified).

Question 12

Section 4.5, subsection 1 requests client names and contract values. Respecting the privacy of our clients – much as CMHC would also expect – we respectfully request that the obligation to provide contract value and client names for each of the Personnel's project experience be removed.

Answer 12

The contract value is no longer required. Please see amendment 3.

Question 13

Section 4.8 – does CMHC have a pricing table or preferred layout for the submission of pricing information? Should pricing be submitted in a separate envelope?

Answer 13

The proponent is asked to develop a pricing table.
Pricing does not need to be submitted in a separate envelope

Question 14

Could you please provide more information about the contracts available, and particularly priorities for working with First Nations communities?

Answer 14

CMHC's potential activities and priorities for working with First Nations communities are currently being developed. However, Solutions Labs – which very much focus on the concept of reframing issues from a first person view, and co-developing solutions – offers a potential engagement strategy for identifying and collaborating on specific housing issues for both First Nations and non-First Nations audiences.

Question 15

RFSO Section 4.7.2 Financial Capacity states:

“CMHC requires the provision of the financial statements for the analysis of financial capacity. You must provide a complete set of signed, detailed, audited financial statements for each of the last three (3) years of your firm. You must agree to provide any other financial information that CMHC may subsequently request. The auditor's report must be signed by an appropriate officer of the audit firm. In the case that your financial statements are not audited, CMHC will only accept them if they are accompanied by a signed review engagement report for each year.”

We request that in lieu of an audit report or a review engagement report, that the requirements for Financial Capacity under the Government of Canada Standard Acquisition Clauses and Conditions (SACC) Manual clause ID M9033T for Standing Offers be used. SACC ID M9033T allows for the submission of unaudited financial statements and does not require a review engagement report. There is a cost associated with obtaining audited financial statements and a cost also associated with obtaining a review engagement report in lieu of audited financial statements and not all companies obtain these reports, particularly small businesses. Consequently, a number of potential Offerors, who are otherwise fully qualified, will not be able to respond to the RFSO.

Given that CMHC is a Federal Crown Corporation, we respectfully request that the same standard as applied to Federal Government Departments be applied by CMHC for Solicitation No. PW-18-00818926 as specified in SACC ID M9033T with respect to the assessment of financial capacity.

Key requirements under SACC ID M9033T include:

- a. Audited financial statements, if available, or the unaudited financial statements (prepared by the Offeror's outside accounting firm, if available, or prepared in-house if no external statements have been prepared) for the Offeror's last three fiscal years, or for the years that the Offeror has been in business if this is less than three years (including, as a minimum, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Retained Earnings, the Income Statement and any notes to the statements).
- d. A certification from the Chief Financial Officer or an authorized signing officer of the Offeror that the financial information provided is complete and accurate.

The full text of SACC ID can be found at:

<https://buyandsell.gc.ca/policy-and-guidelines/standard-acquisition-clauses-and-conditions-manual/5/M/M9033T/3>

Answer 15

The documents described in the paragraphs a. and d. above are sufficient.

Question 16

What is the nature of the relationship between CMHC and the Offeror?

Answer 16

The Offeror is the proponent submitting a proposal in response to CMHC RFSO.

Question 17

Will Offerors be able to sub-contract any work? This may be of interest, such as to sub-contract our trusted local partners if we were to work outside of Ontario.

Answer 17

Offerors can sub-contract (or develop teams) but sub-contractors must be identified within the Proposal and their information as per section 4.5 provided

Question 18

In Section 1.3 it is indicated that the duration of micro- and macro-lab Standing Offers will be for a three (3) year term. However, in 3.2 it is indicated that macro-lab services are up to one year. Once in progress, can macro-lab services be extended for beyond one year?

Answer 18

Yes macro-lab serviced can be extended beyond one year. The one year term was to provide context between micro and macro labs and it was anticipated that most labs would be completed within a one year period; however, longer labs may be required depending on the nature of the issue being addressed.

Question 19

Appendix B uses the term “Bidder Profile”, whereas this word “Bidder” is not defined and does not appear anywhere else in the RFSO document. Please advise if the word “Bidder” should read “Offeror”.

Answer 19

Yes, Bidder should read Offeror.

Question 20

Section 1.1 defines the term “Offeror” as “The proponent/supplier submitting a proposal to this RFSO”. Section 1.8 states “Offerors are defined as an individual or firm that could provide, or has provided, goods or services or construction under contract.” Section 4.2 states “A covering letter, of no more than 3 pages, on the Offeror’s letterhead shall be submitted and include the following Offeror profile information: (b) A brief description of the company or joint venture/consortium.” We would like to submit a proposal as a “Consortium” whereby one of the members of the Consortium would be identified in the proposal as the “Offeror” in accordance with the definitions of “Offeror” in the RFSO. Upon the issuing of any resulting call-up, resources identified in the proposal as part of the consortium who are not employees of the Offeror would be engaged under subcontract arrangements. Our understanding is that the experience and qualifications of all members of the Consortium and their resources will be considered in the evaluation for the purposes of scoring against the evaluation criteria and for meeting the mandatory qualification criteria. For example, Section 4.4. states “The Offeror’s offer MUST include information about the Offeror’s qualifications as follows: (c) References: A list of five (5) contracts or projects of a similar size and scope which the Offeror currently holds or has held over the past 5 years ...”. While one member of the Consortium will be identified as the “Offeror” in the proposal, reference contracts or projects of a similar size and scope from all members of the Consortium may be used to meet the mandatory requirement of providing a list of five (5) contracts or projects. Please confirm if this understanding is correct.

Answer 20

Yes, these may be used; however, it is important that reference contracts etc, are clearly linked to identified members of the Consortium. Also please note that members not identified as employees will be required to provide information as per section 4.5 Qualifications
