



SHARED SERVICES CANADA

Request for Information for the Procurement Process for PSPC High Volume Print & Insertion Services

Request for Information No.	PW-18-00839115	Date	August 16, 2018
GCDocs File No.	N/A	GETS Reference No.	N/A

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Closing Date and Time	August 31, 2018 at 2:00 PM		
Time Zone	Eastern Standard Time (EST)		
Destination of Goods/Services	Not applicable – Request for Information Only		
Email Address for Submitting your Response by the Closing Date	Weny.Dang@canada.ca		

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1. General Information

1.1 Introduction

- a) **Phase 1 of Procurement Process:** This Request for Information (RFI) is the first phase of a procurement process by Shared Services Canada (SSC) for the Public Services and Procurement Canada High Volume Print Services Project "**Project**"). Suppliers are invited to submit responses to assist Canada in refining its requirements for the Project. Suppliers are not required to submit a response to this RFI in order to participate in any later phases of the procurement process for the Project.
- b) **RFI Phase is not a Bid Solicitation:** This RFI is not a solicitation of bids or tenders. No contract will be awarded as a result of the activities undertaken during this RFI. Canada reserves the right to cancel any of the preliminary requirements described as part of the Project at any time during the RFI or any other phase of the procurement process. Given that the RFI process and any related procurement activity may be partially or completely cancelled by Canada, it may not result in any subsequent procurement processes.
- c) **Response Costs:** SSC will not reimburse any supplier or any of its representatives for any overhead or expenses incurred in participating in or responding to any part of the RFI phase. Suppliers are also responsible for carrying out their own independent research, due diligence and investigations (including seeking independent advice) that they consider necessary or advisable in connection with their participation in the RFI process and any future procurement process.

1.2 Overview of the Project

- a) **Overview of Project:** Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) intends to implement an end-to-end solution for the information input, printing, sorting and distribution (including envelope insertion) of Canadian Government cheques and information circulars.

More detailed information can be found in Annex A.
- b) **Scope of Anticipated Procurement:**
 - i) **Potential Client Users:** This RFI is being issued by SSC. It is intended that the contracts resulting from any subsequent solicitation would be used by SSC to provide shared services to Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC). Any subsequent procurement process will not preclude SSC from using another method of supply for any of its clients with the same or similar needs, unless a subsequent solicitation for this Project expressly indicates otherwise.
 - ii) **Number of Contracts:** Canada is currently contemplating the award of one (1) contract.
 - iii) **Term of any Resulting contract:** Canada is currently contemplating a contract period of five (5) years, plus five (5) option periods of one (1) year each.

- c) **Applicable Trade Agreements:** The following trade agreements will apply to the procurement process:

On May 28, 2012, the Government of Canada announced on the Government Electronic Tendering Service that it had invoked the National Security Exception under the trade agreements in respect of procurements related to email, networks and data centres for Shared Services Canada. As a result, this requirement is subject to the National Security Exception.

- d) **Comprehensive Land Claims Agreements:** This requirement is for delivery in Quebec City, Quebec and Winnipeg, Manitoba. A small portion of this requirement may be delivered in areas subject to a Comprehensive Land Claims Agreement (CLCA).

1.3 Volumetric or Historical Data

The current and estimated future volumetric estimates have been provided to suppliers to assist them in understanding Canada's requirements. The inclusion of this data in this RFI does not represent a commitment by Canada that Canada's future usage or purchase of printing goods, services and/or supplies will be consistent with this data. It is provided purely for information purposes. Although it represents the best information currently available to SSC, Canada does not guarantee that the data is complete or free from error.

1.4 Submitting Questions

- a) Questions about this RFI can be submitted to the Contracting Authority at his or her email address identified on the cover page up until 3 working days before the closing date and time indicated on the cover page of this document. Canada may not answer questions received after that time.
- b) To ensure the consistency and quality of information provided to suppliers, significant questions received and the answers will be posted on the Government Electronic Tendering Service (GETS) as an amendment to this RFI.

2. Information Requested by Canada

2.1 Comments on Preliminary Documents

This RFI includes the following documents with respect to which Canada is seeking comments from suppliers:

- a) Annex A - Project Overview and RFI Vendor Information Requests.

All documents reflecting Canada's anticipated requirements for this Project that are provided to suppliers during the RFI process are preliminary or draft requirements only and are subject to change. These requirements, or parts of them, may be updated before or during any subsequent solicitation.

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

2.2 Questions for Industry

Canada requests responses to the questions identified in Annex A. They are as follows:

1. Section 4 – PSPC would also like to know in addition to AFP and PDF what other input formats are commonly available.
2. Section 5 – In addition to PSPC's stated main format requirements, PSPC would like to know if the suppliers offerings could also accommodate odd sized sheets such as 7 ¼" x 4" and 4 ¼" x 5 ½".
3. Section 5 – PSPC would like to know the differences, both pro and con, between printing cheques from roll feed on pre-printed, securitized paper with MICR ink already printed and printing cheques including MICR on securitized whitepaper using the solution.
4. Section 5 – PSPC is looking at ways to reduce and simplify the different sizes and formats currently used and would consider all potential supplier recommendations on how to do so.
5. Section 5 – PSPC would like to know if the suppliers can print colour and print white mail from roll feed standard white paper.
6. Section 5 – Currently printing is done at 300 dpi. PSPC would appreciate recommendations as to what dpi level(s) are considered best for this type of requirement.
7. Section 6 – PSPC would like to know what would be the reasonable amount for further increase to the capabilities of the initial solution.
8. Section 6 – PSPC would like receive a detailed plan and timelines to show how suppliers would provide these increases.
9. Section 7 - PSPC is looking for supplier input on suggested or standard service levels provided, along with the cost implications of each of them.
10. General question – PSPC would like to know the opinion of the suppliers on how the pricing schedule should be structured in a potential Request for Proposal (RFP), and what the basis of payment should look like.
11. Please provide your comments, insights and feedback with regards to this RFI.

3. Supplier Responses

3.1 Submitting a Response

- a) **Time and Place for Submission of Responses:** Suppliers interested in providing a response should submit it by email to the Contracting Authority at the email address for submitting a response identified on the cover page by the closing date and time identified on the cover page of this document.
- b) **Responsibility for Timely Delivery:** Each supplier is solely responsible for ensuring its response is delivered on time to the correct email address.
- c) **Identification of Response:** Each supplier should ensure that its name and return address, the solicitation number, and the closing date are included in the response in a prominent location. The supplier should also identify a representative whom Canada may contact about the response, including the person's name, title, address, telephone number and email address.

3.2 Confidentiality

If a supplier considers any portion of its response to be proprietary or confidential, the supplier should clearly mark those portions of the response as proprietary or confidential. Canada will treat the responses in accordance with the *Access to Information Act* and any other laws that apply.

4. Canada's Review of Responses

4.1 Review of Responses

Responses will not be formally evaluated. However, the responses received may be used by Canada to develop or modify any draft documents provided with this RFI and its procurement strategy. Canada will review all responses received by the RFI closing date and time. Canada may, in its discretion, review responses received after the RFI closing date and time.

4.2 Review Team

A review team composed of representatives of Canada will review and consider the responses. Canada may hire any independent consultant(s), or use any Government resource(s), to review any response. Not all members of the review team will necessarily participate in all aspects of the review process.

4.3 Follow-up Activity

Canada will meet with suppliers who indicate in their responses that they wish to participate in a follow-up meeting. After the closing date, the Contracting Authority will follow up with these suppliers to set up a meeting time. Canada may set a limit for the number of representatives of the supplier who may attend, but a minimum of four representatives will be permitted to attend.

ANNEX A – PROJECT OVERVIEW AND RFI VENDOR INFORMATION REQUESTS

1. PURPOSE AND NATURE OF THIS REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) is informing the suppliers of High Volume Print Services with respect to the Government of Canada's intention to proceed with a possible Request for Proposal (RFP) as part of PSPC's plan to implement an end-to-end solution for the information input, printing, sorting and distribution (including envelope insertion) of Canadian Government cheques and information circulars.

The objectives of this Request for Information (RFI) are the following:

- To inform the vendor community of the posting date scheduled for a potential RFP.
- To inform the vendor community of the Scope of Work proposed.
- To enable the vendor community to, provide feedback on and suggestions to improve the proposed Scope of Work.
- To enable PSPC to identify potential improvements to the proposed approach.
- To enable PSPC to identify information and factors to be included in a potential RFP.
- To enable PSPC to collect information regarding preliminary cost estimates.

2. INTRODUCTION

The printing and insertion equipment currently being used by the National Print Portfolio (NPP) are becoming obsolete and requires replacement. The P5 550 (9133 55a) AIX servers being used are coming to the end of their life cycle. The print servers will need to be replaced with current model servers and loaded with up to date print management software.

There are currently two print lines in each production center, each consisting of two IBM IP4000 roll-feed printers, required for duplex printing. Having been purchased and installed in the late 90's, the printers are rapidly approaching end of life.

Each production center also has six Bell+Howell BH3500 insertion stations to cut, fold and insert documents into envelopes. These insertion stations were installed in the early 2000's, are old technology.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THIS REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The purpose of this RFI is to determine if there are vendors that can provide an end-to-end solution for the information input, printing, sorting and distribution (including envelope insertion) of Canadian Government cheques and information circulars. PSPC is exploring the possibility of acquiring such a solution to improve service delivery and reduce costs.

PSPC wishes to have this solution provided on a cost per print image produced (or by printed foot) where the vendor would supply all:

- Hardware

- Software
- Implementation Services
- Required Operational Supplies (with the exception of paper which is to be provided by PSPC)
- Ongoing hardware and software maintenance and any other items required for the described end-to-end solution

In this scenario PSPC would be responsible for the provision of all facilities required for the operation of the hardware and software and for all related environmental and operating costs other than supplies, i.e. electricity, HVAC, etc.

Also PSPC will be responsible for all day to day operations, i.e. workload scheduling, paper loading, etc.

4. ENVISAGED SYSTEM AND WORKFLOW

The National Print Portfolio (NPP) currently receives print input from 3 separate clients, but will also be actively seeking additional clients to take advantage of the to be installed solution.

The supplied solution will be a complete end-to-end system including a print management system, printers, inserters and all peripheral equipment including unwinders, perforators and cutters, as required. The solution will accept the print input file from the client, process the file as required for printing, print from roll-feed paper, separate and fold the documents, insert them into envelopes, seal the envelopes and prepare them to be placed in lettertainers to be picked up by the postal service. Additionally there is currently a requirement to insert other items printed off-site into some of the envelopes.

A key requirement of the end-to-end solution will be the provision of a fully integrated workflow software application. As a minimum this software will have to provide:

1. Real time production control for load balancing, reprints, etc.
2. Piece and job level tracking and performance.
3. Resource optimizations.
4. Simultaneous job production and tracking.
5. Service Level Measurement.
6. Work flow and job performance reporting.
7. Multi-site integration.

The solution will be implemented at the print production centres in Quebec City and Winnipeg, each implementation being a mirror of the other. Print work sent to one centre must be available to be printed by the other, for volume balancing and Disaster Recovery purposes.

The solution will be compatible with the current print feeds, which are Advanced Function Print (AFP) format, but flexible enough to accept other input formats. PSPC has a known requirement for pdf files but would also like to know which other input formats are readily available.

5. IMAGE TYPES, PAPER TYPES, RESOLUTION REQUIREMENTS

Currently there are five different sizes/formats of cheques and four different sizes/formats of whitepaper printing. The whitepaper is on 11 inch or 14 inch paper, duplex or simplex. All cheques are duplex, with the formats being 7 inch, 11 inch, 14 inch, 11 inch – 2 sheets and 11 inch – 4 sheets. The main requirement is to meet all of these formats, however PSPC occasionally receives requests from their clients for other types of printing including working with very odd sized sheets, such as 7 ¼" x 4" and 4 ¼" x 5 ½" . PSPC would like to know if such work as this could also be accommodated in a solution that meets all of PSPC's main requirements.

The bulk of the printing will be cheques from roll feed on pre-printed, securitized paper. Portions of the cheque faces must be printed in Magnetic Ink Character Recognition (MICR) ink. PSPC is also investigating the possibility of printing cheques on securitized whitepaper, as opposed to using pre-printed cheques. Any potential supplier input on the pros and cons of doing so would be appreciated.

There is also a need for colour printing and a requirement to print white mail from roll feed standard white paper.

Current paper rolls start with a maximum diameter of 50 inches and are 18 inches wide including the tractor holes. The supplied solution must be able to handle paper to a maximum width of 19 inches and a minimum width of 12 inches.

PSPC is looking at ways to reduce and simplify the different sizes and formats currently used and would consider all potential supplier recommendations on how to do so.

Currently printing is done at 300 dpi. PSPC would appreciate recommendations as to what dpi level(s) are considered best for this type of requirement.

6. ANTICIPATED VOLUMES

Current annual volumes are roughly 34 million pieces of mail consisting of approximately 108 million impressions. This volume is divided between the two production centers and volumes are roughly equal over the 12 months of the year. While these numbers are dropping marginally each year, there is an expectation that there may be new requirements over the life of the contract that would actually increase the volumes.

Minimum guaranteed

PSPC is prepared to provide a minimum guaranteed volume of printing required, whether it be by image type or printed foot. The overall volumes will be stated on a yearly basis but a peak period, per 7 ½ hour shift minimum capability or a peak period per hour capability will also be identified.

Anticipated increases

It is estimated that the increased capabilities and potential volume increases provided by the supplied solution will trigger an increase in PSPC's printing requirements.

How to cost the increases

PSCP intends on requesting that the initial implemented solution, with no hardware or software changes required, be capable of producing at a minimum at least one hundred (100) percent more output than the stated minimum guaranteed volumes (both yearly and by shift).

PSPC also plans on asking for costed estimates for further increases to the capabilities of the initial solution. Required increases will be in reasonable amounts and PSPC is open for suggestions on what reasonable amounts may be.

Suppliers will have to provide detailed plans and timelines to show how they would provide these increases. Pricing information, space requirements and any negative effects on the then current production environment and space will be required.

7. SERVICE LEVELS

While PSPC is looking for supplier input on suggested or standard service levels provided, along with the cost implications of each of them, it is imperative that any service level agreement meet some basic PSPC requirements.

Currently PSPC is only planning on running one 7 ½ hour shift, Monday through Friday at each of the sites. PSPC service level requirements will focus heavily on ensuring that a site is never inoperable for more than 8 hours and that both sites could not be simultaneously inoperable for more than 4 hours.