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SOLICITATION AMENDMENT MODIFICATION DE L'INVITATION

The referenced document is hereby revised; unless otherwise indicated, all other terms and conditions of the Solicitation remain the same.

Ce document est par la présente révisé; sauf indication contraire, les modalités de l'invitation demeurent les mêmes.

Comments - Commentaires

THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS A SECURITY
REQUIREMENT/CE DOCUMENT CONTIENT
UNE EXIGENCE DE SÉCURITÉ

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Issuing Office - Bureau de distribution

Informatics Professional Services Division / Division
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Les Terrasses de la Chaudière
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Title - Sujet TBIPS - IT Services		
Solicitation No. - N° de l'invitation G9292-176717/B		Amendment No. - N° modif. 004
Client Reference No. - N° de référence du client G9292-176717		Date 2019-04-04
GETS Reference No. - N° de référence de SEAG PW-\$\$ZM-380-34738		
File No. - N° de dossier 380zm.G9292-176717	CCC No./N° CCC - FMS No./N° VME	
Solicitation Closes - L'invitation prend fin at - à 02:00 PM on - le 2019-04-30		Time Zone Fuseau horaire Eastern Daylight Saving Time EDT
F.O.B. - F.A.B. Plant-Usine: <input type="checkbox"/> Destination: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other-Autre: <input type="checkbox"/>		
Address Enquiries to: - Adresser toutes questions à: Cook, Gail		Buyer Id - Id de l'acheteur 380zm
Telephone No. - N° de téléphone (613) 858-9369 ()		FAX No. - N° de FAX (819) 956-2675
Destination - of Goods, Services, and Construction: Destination - des biens, services et construction: EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CANADA		

Instructions: See Herein

Instructions: Voir aux présentes

Delivery Required - Livraison exigée	Delivery Offered - Livraison proposée
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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

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AMENDMENT NO. 004

This amendment is raised to revise the RFP and to answer Bidders' questions.

RFP REVISIONS:

1. At Page 1 of the RFP, Solicitation Closes:

Delete: 2019-04-16

Insert: 2019-04-30

2. At Attachment 4.2, Point-Rated Technical Criteria, Workstream 1 – Business Services, RTC1, Bidder's Experience Providing Resources:

Delete:

- b) A signed certification from the resource that they had previously worked for the Bidder in a resource category the same as those listed in the Statement of Work of this requirement.

The Bidder must provide a signed certification from each resource claimed using Form R1 – Bidder Resource Certification found at the end of this Attachment.

If any of the information is not provided in Form R1, the Contracting Authority will inform the Bidder of a time frame within which to provide the information. Failure to provide the information listed above within the time frame provided will render the bid non-responsive.

3. At Attachment 4.2, Point-Rated Technical Criteria, Workstream 2 – Project Management Services, RTC1, Bidder's Experience Providing Resources:

Delete:

- b) A signed certification from the resource that they had previously worked for the Bidder in a resource category the same as those listed in the Statement of Work of this requirement.

The Bidder must provide a signed certification from each resource claimed using Form R1 – Bidder Resource Certification found at the end of this Attachment.

If any of the information is not provided in Form R1, the Contracting Authority will inform the Bidder of a time frame within which to provide the information. Failure to provide the information listed above within the time frame provided will render the bid non-responsive.

4. At Form R1, Bidder Resource Certification:

Delete: In its entirety.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

Question 4:

In Mandatory Requirement MTC4 for Workstream 1 and 2, bidders are asked to demonstrate experience with items a) through g), but the format of the requested response is unclear. Can ESDC please clarify how bidders should demonstrate the experience and what information should be provided? E.g. number of contract references, resource categories provided, etc.

Answer 4:

Provided that all items are clearly addressed, the format is at the discretion of the Bidder.

Question 5:

We are an Aboriginal firm that, with our JV partner, has provided informatics professional services on multiple large contracts (\$5M+) for government clients, including ESDC and DND. We have reviewed Solicitation No. G9292-176717/B, and find that the requirements are excessively restrictive. Based on the size and number of contracts required in the mandatory and rated criteria, as well as the breadth of categories required, it will be extremely unlikely that any Aboriginal company other than the present incumbent firm will be able to meet. Given that only one contract is being awarded, we believe that this is contrary to a fair and open procurement process.

Would the Crown consider re-issuing this solicitation (PSAB) after fielding suggestions for changes from industry?

Answer 5:

To address this matter the criteria have been revised as follows:

Workstream 1 – Business Services, the number of resources required for MTC1 c) has been reduced from 15 resources to 10 resources.

Workstream 2 – Project Management Services, the number of resources required for MTC1 c) has been reduced from 15 resources to 10 resources.

Question 6:

We respectfully request that the Crown amend MTC1 and RTC1 for both workstreams to allow contracts awarded within the past 10 years to be used to demonstrate the bidder's corporate experience. This amendment will allow otherwise compliant SA holders with extensive experience in the delivery of business services and project management services to participate in this solicitation. Given how some of the skillsets sought by the Crown under these requirements are very niche and difficult to locate (i.e.: Independent Information Technology Project Reviewers/Team Leaders, etc.), the requirement in its current form prevents bidders who have extensively supplied these skillsets outside of the past 7 years from participating. Additionally, over the last several years government departments procured Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery Specialty categories via contracts with a focus on security specialization (i.e. through the TBIPS Cyber Protection Services Stream). We respectfully request this amendment to allow otherwise compliant SA holders with extensive experience in the delivery of business services and project management services to participate in this solicitation as it enables vendors to leverage historical contracts that meet this requirement and not prevent bidders who have extensively supplied these skillsets outside of the past 7 years from participating.

Answer 6:

Canada will allow for contracts awarded prior to January 1, 2012, provided that the experience claimed is between January 1, 2012 and bid closing.

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Question 7:

Is there currently or has there been a company doing this work in the last 24 months?

Answer 7:

See Notice of Proposed Procurement (NPP) for incumbents.

Question 8:

Can the vender bid on only one stream, or must they submit a bid for both streams?

Answer 8:

See Part 1 of the bid solicitation, Section 1.2 (b) which states that "Bidders do not have to submit a bid for each Workstream."

Question 9:

Can you confirm that you are looking for pricing for each category for each contract period, plus the two option years?

Answer 9:

Confirmed.

Question 10:

Is the vender required to bid each category in the stream?

Answer 10:

See Part 4 of the bid solicitation, 4.2 (c) Number of Resources Evaluated which states, "Resources will only be assessed after contract award once specific tasks are requested of the Contractor." Therefore, bidders are not required to propose resources for any of the resource categories.

Question 11:

As part of the overall procurement modernization discussion at PSPC, there has been widespread agreement that the Crown must place more of an importance on the Validation of Corporate Mandatory Reference Checks by requesting bidders to submit Client References. With that said, **FORM R1 BIDDER RESOURCE CERTIFICATIONS** requires the resources themselves to certify that they had previously worked for the Bidder as a Consultant or Employee in the categories required for compliance. This wording does not allow the Crown to truly validate that the bidder has had these resources working for them under the requested categories as the Bidder does not need to provide Client References to validate.

It is our recommendation that the Crown look closely at this requirement and amend it such that the Bidder must provide client reference contact information to prove compliance for these Corporate Qualifications.

Answer 11:

The requirement for resource certification has been removed.

Question 12:

Reference: MTC1 and MTC2, "...Only Contracts awarded since January 1, 2012..."

Would the Crown please consider changing these requirements to Contracts active between January 1, 2012 and the submission date for a minimum of a one-year period?

Answer 12:

See Answer 6.

Question 13:

Reference: RTC1 b) and Form R1 – Bidder Resource Certification

Potential Bidders as Professional Services firms will have great difficulty locating and obtaining signatures from specific resources who have previously worked for them on completed contracts and have since realigned with other firms or have left the workforce. We respectfully request that the Crown delete this requirement.

Answer 13:

The requirement for resource certification has been removed.

Question 14:

For Workstream 1 and Workstream 2, Mandatory Technical Criteria, **MTC1**, Bidder's Corporate Experience, please confirm that cited contracts may be on-going.

Answer 14:

See Answer 6; cited contracts may be on going.

Question 15:

We would just want to ask if we need to respond to all roles or we can just submit 1 or 2 candidates?

Answer 15:

See Answer 10.

Question 16:

Regarding criteria MTC2 and RTC2: Would the Crown confirm that a proposed Client Demand Manager with a total of 9+ years of relevant experience will be awarded full points under RTC2 in addition to satisfying the mandatory minimum requirements under MTC2? That is, would the Crown confirm that RTC2 asks for an additional 4+ years of relevant experience in addition to the 5 years required under MTC2 (for a total of 9+ years) rather than an additional 9+ years (for a total of 14+ years)?

Answer 16:

The years over the mandatory 5 years of experience will be rated. To obtain full points the proposed Client Demand Manager must have an additional 9+ years of experience for a total of 14+ years.

Question 17:

Regarding criteria MTC1, MTC4, RTC1, and RTC3: In the interest of space and ease of evaluation, would the Crown confirm the acceptability of citing the same contract in support of multiple criteria (i.e. cross-referencing the same contracts to achieve full points under these criteria) rather than providing separate contracts in support of each individual criterion?

Answer 17:

For MTC1, two separate IM/IT contracts are required. One or both of those contracts can be used to demonstrate experience on the remaining evaluation criteria.

Question 18:

Regarding MTC1 for Workstream 1 – Business Services: The Crown is asking for the Bidder to demonstrate the requested experience using two separate IM/IT contracts **awarded** since January 1, 2012. There are several large contracts in existence which were awarded prior to January 2012 and are still ongoing that provide services very similar to what is requested in this solicitation. Also, the remaining Mandatory Technical Criteria is allowing for experience **claimed** between the specific date and bid closing date. Would the Crown please change this requirement to allow for contracts awarded prior to January 1, 2012 as long as the experience claimed is between January 1, 2012 and bid closing?

Answer 18:

Canada will allow for contracts awarded prior to January 1, 2012, provided that the experience claimed is between January 1, 2012 and bid closing.

Question 19:

Regarding RTC1 for both Workstream 1 and Workstream 2: The Crown is asking for Bidders to obtain signatures from each resource referenced in this requirement. If Bidders submit a response for each Workstream 1 and Workstream 2, the Bidder would need to obtain 70 individual signatures. This requirement very much favours the incumbent companies who are employee-based vendors and is not aligned with the GoC's mandate for an open and fair procurement process. As the services required under this contract will be for an as and when requested basis, many suppliers use an independent contractor based model rather than an employee based model. Requiring vendors to obtain signatures from resources who provided services 7 years ago is unnecessarily onerous. A client representative can confirm the same information requested and in most instances, multiple resources used to substantiate the requested experience will have billed on the same contract which results in Bidders requiring to obtain less signatures. Would the Crown please allow for a client representative to sign confirming the experience of the resources for RTC1?

Answer 19:

The requirement for resource certification has been removed.

Question 20:

Requirements **MTC1 – “Bidder’s Corporate Experience”** AND **RTC3 – “Bidder’s Contract Management Experience”** in both Stream 1 and Stream 2 reference language stating:

- “...Must have been for a minimum value of \$5M, (amendments and applicable taxes included);...”
- “...Each contract claimed should have had a minimum value of \$2M (amendments and applicable taxes included).”

It is understood that the Crown's intent is to evaluate a bidder's experience providing \$5M or more **(MTC1)** and \$2M or more **(RTC3)** worth of Professional Services. As it currently stands, a bidder's response referencing an awarded contract with a value of \$5M would still comply with requirements **MTC1** and **RTC3** even if there was no billing against the contract and no resources were placed on the contract. Can the Crown please confirm that "**had a minimum value of**" is to be interpreted as "**had a minimum billed value of**"?

Answer 20:

The phrase "had a minimum value of" is not to be interpreted as "had a minimum billed value of". MTC1 c) will demonstrate that the Bidder has billed against the referenced contracts. RTC3 will demonstrate that the Bidder has managed IM/IT contracts simultaneously.

Question 21:

MTC4 "Bidder must demonstrate that it has experience delivering and supporting business transformation services for an outside client's IM/IT project."

With respect to MCT4 for both Streams 1 and 2, please confirm that it is the Crown's expectation that bidders demonstrate this with one program, one contract.

Answer 21:

The project cited in MTC4 does not need to be the same project cited for MTC1. Bidders must cite one singular contract, per Workstream, that demonstrates experience a) to g).

Question 22:

With respect to MCT4, for both Streams 1 and 2, can the Crown also confirm that it is your intent that Bidders demonstrate this requirement for contracts in support of programs requiring a team of resources similar to the categories outlined in the SOW on a business transformation program as opposed to a single resource providing these services in order to demonstrate the capability and capacity of the Bidder to meet ESDC's business transformation needs.

Answer 22:

For MTC4, Canada will not be evaluating experience against resource categories, simply whether or not the Bidder can demonstrate the required experience.

Question 23:

With respect to MCT4, for both Streams 1 and 2, would the Crown consider adding a rated requirement to assess the Bidder's capability to provide business transformation services enabled by IM/IT similar in scope and scale to ESDC's transformation programs (e.g. greater than 10 resources, programs over \$10M, use of a global methodology) to assess the capability of each firm to meet this requirement?

Answer 23:

No additional rated criteria will be added.

Question 24:

With respect to Appendix C to Annex A, Resources Assessment Criteria and Response Table, Workstream 2 – Project Management Services, P.5 Project Executive L3. Both MTC2 and MTC5 ask for PMI certification. It would appear that these are the same criteria. Can the Crown please confirm if these are indeed duplicate requirements.

Answer 24:

With respect to Appendix C to Annex A, Resources Assessment Criteria and Response Table, Workstream 2 – Project Management Services, P.5 Project Executive L3, the Crown will remove MTC2.

Question 25:

With respect to RCT1, for both Streams 1 and 2, the current requirement is to identify a) the resource name and category and b) provide a signed form R1 for each resource identified. For Stream 1 this equates to up to 30 forms to be completed and under Stream 2 up to 40. Given the time that may have elapsed and the short timeframe available to complete this task, would the Crown consider amending requirement b) to "provide the TA or SOW reference number and agreement to provide evidence of the TA or SOW upon the sole discretion and request of the Crown prior to contract award."

Answer 25:

The requirement for resource certification has been removed.

Question 26:

With respect to MTC1 g) can the Crown confirm that the information requested under MTC1 g) for both Streams 1 and 2, relates to the 10 resources described under c) and outlined in form M1 and the Crown does not expect this information for every resource provided during the contract period which could exceed 100 resources and span seven years?

Answer 26:

Correct, MTC1 g) relates to the 10 resources described under c).

Question 27:

Section 4.2.c indicates that "Resources will only be assessed after contract award once specific tasks are requested of the Contractor." We're pretty sure that the Crown doesn't want resumes for any resources at this stage - that they will only be required at TA stage - is that correct?

Answer 27:

Correct.

Question 28:

For Workstream 1 and Workstream 2, Mandatory Technical Criteria, **MTC1**, Bidder's Corporate Experience, please confirm that cited placements (10 resources) may be on-going when using Form M1.

Answer 28:

For Workstream 1 and Workstream 2, Mandatory Technical Criteria, MTC1, Bidder's Corporate Experience, cited placements (10 resources) may be on going, provided that MTC1 (a), (b) and (c), are demonstrated prior to bid closing.

Question 29:

The SOW mentions for MTC3 "the proposed resource must demonstrate experience in each of the technologies, software and tools identified in the TA as essential", but there is no info on technologies, software, or tools. Do you have any idea what does this mean?

Answer 29:

Since the technology infrastructure changes with time, this criterion will allow new technologies, software, etc. to be evaluated at the Task Authorization stage of the contract.

Question 30:

At Part 4 of the bid solicitation, Financial Evaluation (i) Step 1: it is stated that the median band range is (-10% and +30% of the median) and bidders who propose a rate outside of this band will score 0.

We also noticed that at page 23 of 120, paragraph (e) substantiation of Professional Services Rates, there is a reference to Canada may request price support from all otherwise responsive bidders who have proposed a rate that is at least 20% lower than the median rate bid by all responsive bidders for the relevant resource category or categories. We assume that this statement was included in error as the lower band range is -10% and not -20%. And also bidders proposing rates outside the range will be scoring 0. Can you clarify this statement of page 23 item (e)?

Answer 30:

The Financial Evaluation and the Substantiation of Professional Services Rates are two separate processes. The percentages specified for these items are correct.

Question 31:

Refer to Attachment 4.1, Mandatory Technical Criteria, Workstream 1 (Business Services), and Workstream 2 (Project Management Services), MTC4 – Bidder's Experience Delivering and Supporting Business Transformation Services (in both Streams).

The response requirements for this criteria appear to be more in-line with the activities and responsibilities of a resource or consultant, rather than the activities and responsibilities of a company, as items a) through g) would apply to individual departmental needs as part of their business transformation requirements, and a Bidder cannot speak directly to such specific experience. Therefore, would the Crown please provide some clarity as to how Bidders are expected to respond to this criteria, i.e. the Bidder should reference their corporate experience delivering the above experience (Business Transformation Services) and should provide Client references for the Crown to verify.

Answer 31:

Bidders should reference their corporate experience delivering and supporting business transformation services for an outside client's IM/IT project.

Question 32:

With respect to RTC1, for both Streams 1 and 2, can the Crown confirm that the Bidder can demonstrate this experience by providing the information outlined under a) and b) requested by resource category under *all* valid contracts held by the Bidder (government or private sector). To be specific, can the Crown clarify that for the purposes of this rated criterion, if services billed under a previous JV, by a single bid member will be considered?

Answer 32:

See Part 3 – Bid Preparation Instructions, 3.1 Joint Venture Experience and RTC1 which states, “For the purposes of this rated criterion, where the Bidder is a Joint Venture, services billed by any Joint Venture member will be considered.”

Question 33:

For both Streams 1 and 2 the Crown has identified a mandatory requirements related to “technology, software (and) tool” that will be TA specific upon contract award. Given the fact that the availability of resources varies widely depending on requirement for experience with a specific “technology, software (and) tool” will the Crown remove this requirement or modify this requirement in both Streams and 1 to be a rated requirement at time of TA issuance?

Answer 33:

After consultation with our stakeholders, the evaluation criteria will remain as written.

Question 34:

In the event that a company wins a contract on the Capacity on Demand supply arrangement, would they be precluded from bidding on solutions-based contracts related to ongoing projects within ESDC (Benefits Delivery Modernization, Service Transformation Plan, etc.)

Answer 34:

We do not foresee a reason why winning bidders would be precluded from bidding on future ESDC requirements.

Question 35:

Reference: RTC2 in both Workstream 1 and Workstream 2

Rated Criteria RTC2 awards points for experience simultaneously managing resources containing categories similar to those listed in the Statement of Work for the workstream, with over 40 simultaneous resources required to score full points. If a company were to bid on both Workstream 1 and Workstream 2, this would mean that Bidders would be required to demonstrate experience managing over 40 resources simultaneously related to the Business Services stream and over 40 resources simultaneously related to the Project Management services team. Given that many companies would dedicate a single Client Demand Manager to manage the ESDC account, this creates a situation where Bidders must prove that the Client Demand Manager managed over 80 resources, which is further restricted by the requirement that Bidders can only cite resources placed in either Business Services or Project Management type roles. It is very improbable that a single Client Demand Manager would have managed 40 Project Management resources simultaneously while also meeting the requirement of managing 40 Business Services resources simultaneously.

We understand that ESDC requires that the Client Demand Manager have experience managing large numbers of resources simultaneously, however, we feel that the requirement for those resources to be only in roles related to the Statement of Work to be very limiting. Further, rated criteria RTC1 already requires Bidders to demonstrate their capability and experience providing resources in the relevant categories for each Workstream. Given this, we would like to respectfully request that bullet c) within Rated Criteria RTC2 for both Workstream 1 and Workstream 2 be amended to allow Bidders to demonstrate Client Account Manager experience managing resources on contract regardless of the resource category under which they worked.

Answer 35:

Canada will allow Bidders to demonstrate Client Demand Manager experience managing resources on contract regardless of the resource category under which they have worked.

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Question 36:

Reference: Attachment 4.1 MTC1

Would the Crown please consider lowering the two IM/IT contract references' minimum contract value from \$5 Million to \$3 Million? The number of varied requirements applicable to the two IM/IT reference contracts' limits the pool of contract references Bidders' can use. Lowering the value will enable more qualified Bidders to respond to this solicitation.

Answer 36:

After consultation with our stakeholders, the evaluation criteria will remain as written.

ALL OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS REMAIN THE SAME.