



# REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

**FOR**

**The Provision of  
Quality Assurance and Accessibility Management Solution  
for CMHC Web Sites**

**Date issued:**  
May 21, 2020

**Solicitation File Number:**  
RFI - 000154

**Solicitation Closes:**  
2:00 PM EDT, June 5, 2020

**Inquiries:**  
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) is the Government of Canada's National Housing Agency, with a mandate to help Canadians gain access to a wide choice of quality, affordable homes. It is a Crown Corporation, with a Board of Directors, reporting to Parliament through the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, and Minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the Honourable Ahmed Hussen.

CMHC has 2,000 employees located at its National Office in Ottawa, and at various Business Centres throughout Canada. The Business Centre areas are divided into five regions: Atlantic; Quebec; Ontario; British Columbia; and Prairies & Territories.

*A comprehensive Company profile of CMHC can be found at [www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca)*

## 2. DEFINITIONS SUMMARY

CMHC	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
NPP	Notice of Planned Procurement
RFI	Request for Information
RFP	Request for Proposal
Respondents	Potential vendors submitting a response to the RFI
Proponents	Potential vendors submitting a proposal to the RFP
Industry	Potential vendors and/or companies with expertise in providing quality assurance and accessibility management solutions for public web sites.
SaaS	Software as a Service

## 3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Request for Information (RFI) is to seek information from the Industry on their ability to provide to CMHC, a quality assurance and accessibility management Software as a Service (SaaS) solution, for use with CMHC's public web sites.

CMHC is specifically looking for a solution that meets its requirements and technical evaluation criteria as listed in **Annex A**. In addition, CMHC is also looking for the following information:

### • Costing

- Initial and recurrent costs (as applicable) to implement this solution as a Software as a Service (SaaS).
- Initial and recurrent license costs (as applicable).
- Solution technical and operational support cost after the initial implementation (as applicable).
- Other cost(s) as applicable.

### • Licensing

- Describe the licensing requirements for CMHC to use this solution (Access to the solution is either manual or programmatically via Application Programming Interfaces (API))

- **Implementation**

- Example and suggested implementation strategies for the solution which CMHC can adopt.

CMHC requires a solution to help increase accessibility compliance to meet the Accessible Canada Act and the AODA. Furthermore, the solution will enhance the quality of CMHC's website content, optimize content for search, and improve the end user experience.

This solution should be able to scan CMHC's public web sites (in production and UAT environments) for errors, be able to identify where those errors exist and direct CMHC on how to fix them. Support with using the solution is also required. CMHC is looking to focus their efforts on improving approximately 2,500 of the site's most visited pages over the next year. Therefore, the solution will need to crawl up to 2,500 unique URLs and roughly 3,000 PDF files.

CMHC may request Respondents to conduct a technical demonstration to explain how the solution meets its requirements and/or respond to any questions CMHC may have.

#### 4. **BACKGROUND**

The Accessible Canada Act was presented as Bill C-81 for its final reading on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019 where it received Royal Assent. This is a Canada-wide accessibility act that applies to the federal public sector, Crown Corporations as well as all federally regulated organizations.

Additionally, as per the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)**, all public websites and web content posted after January 1, 2012 must meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA as of January 1, 2021.

Currently, all quality assurance checks for links, adherence to policy and accessibility are done through slow manual human testing. There is no current tool for reporting these issues within the current Content Management System (CMS). This lack of technical support may cause CMHC to miss errors and reduces the website content quality, usability and accessibility compliance.

#### 5. **REQUIREMENTS**

CMHC is looking for a solution capable of meeting the requirements and technical evaluation criteria as listed in **Annex A**.

- Requirements categorized as Critical are requirements the solution must meet.
- The remaining requirements categorized as either High, Medium, or Low are requested as part of the solution, although are not critical to the function.

CMHC will use **Annex A** to review and evaluate responses to this RFI.

## 6. ACQUISITION STRATEGY

CMHC intends to conduct a four (4)-stage procurement process under Solicitation Number 000154

Stage 1	Seek capable companies	→	Request for Information (RFI)
Stage 2	Synopsis of technical and mandatory requirements	→	Notice of Planned Procurement (NPP)
Stage 3	Select company(ies)	→	Request for Proposals (RFP)
Stage 4	Contracting	→	Agreement negotiation and ratification

### Stage 1: RFI

Responses submitted under this RFI are non-binding. The issuance of the RFI is not to be considered in any way as a commitment by CMHC or as authority to undertake any work described under Section 5 above.

The main purpose of this RFI is to obtain feedback from Respondents regarding requirements, solutions, technologies and trends etc. as outlined in Section 3 above.

### Stage 2: NPP

A synopsis of technical and/or mandatory requirements will be published under the NPP and Respondents are invited to submit their interest in responding to a subsequent RFP.

Written submissions, which meet all mandatory requirements, will be considered qualified and will proceed to Stage 3: RFP. Responses submitted under the NPP are non-binding. The issuance of the NPP is not to be considered in any way a commitment by CMHC or as authority to undertake any work.

### Stage 3: RFP

Respondents with qualified responses from the NPP may be requested to submit full proposals. Full proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria identified in the RFP. Shortlisted proponents may enter negotiations with the CMHC.

### Stage 4: Contracting

The selected proponent(s) from the RFP may enter into negotiations with CMHC and sign an agreement.

## 7. REVIEW OF THE RFI

CMHC reserves the right to request additional information for clarification during the review of the responses to this RFI, and/or to consider a subsequent modification of the response put forward by a Respondent.

CMHC will perform a review of responses submitted and incorporate it as it deems appropriate in the development of the NPP and/or RFP.

No payment will be made by CMHC for any costs incurred and associated with the preparation and submission by the Respondent of responses to this RFI. All costs are the sole responsibility of the Respondent.

## **8. NO OBLIGATION**

The issuance of this RFI does not create an obligation for CMHC to issue a subsequent competitive procurement process and does not bind CMHC legally or otherwise, to enter into any agreement or to accept any suggestions from Respondents.

This RFI process is not a bid solicitation and a contract will not result from this request.

## **9. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Information provided by Respondents through their RFI response is subject to the Access to Information Act. Respondents should identify any submitted information that is to be considered as either company confidential or proprietary. CMHC will not reveal any designated confidential or proprietary information.

## **10. INFORMATION WILL NOT BE RETURNED**

The RFI response and any accompanying information or documentation provided by a Respondent will not be returned.

## **11. INFORMATION IN RFI ONLY AN ESTIMATE**

CMHC makes no representation, warranty or guarantee as to the accuracy of the information contained in the RFI or issued by way of addenda. Any quantities shown or data contained in this RFI, or provided by way of addenda, are estimates provided only as general background information.

## **12. LANGUAGE**

RFI responses are to be provided in one of the two official languages of Canada (English or French).

## **13. GOVERNING LAW**

This RFI process will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the province of Ontario and the federal laws of Canada applicable therein.

## **14. RFI RESPONSE OBJECTIVES**

This RFI is being posted on [buyandsell.com](http://buyandsell.com) to allow for the public and private sectors to review the RFI and provide feedback. The responses received will be used to assist CMHC in finalizing the requirements and in developing achievable objectives and deliverables.

CMHC will analyze and summarize all input in technical and/or mandatory requirements and post a NPP with a synopsis on [buyandsell.com](http://buyandsell.com)

## 15. TERMS OF REFERENCE

- If there are any questions relating to the requirements as provided, Respondents should direct their inquiries to CMHC, Ryan Lemay, at the following address:
  - [rlemay@cmhc-schl.gc.ca](mailto:rlemay@cmhc-schl.gc.ca)
  - **By 2:00 pm EDT on May 27, 2020.** Answers to questions will be posted by **June 1, 2020** unless they are of proprietary or confidential in nature;
- CMHC requests that the RFI responses, including all supporting documentation, are to be sent electronically to the following e-mail address:
  - [ebid@cmhc-schl.gc.ca](mailto:ebid@cmhc-schl.gc.ca)
  - The subject line of the transmission must state: RFI 000154, Accessibility Management SaaS Solution. Please also indicate the number of emails submitted e.g. 1/1 or 1/3, 2/3 and 3/3 as applicable.
  - RFI responses sent to any other e-mail address will not be considered.
  - Your RFI response must be **received** at the exact location specified above, on or before the submission deadline set as:
    - **2:00 pm EDT on June 5, 2020**
  - RFI responses arriving late will be automatically rejected, and the sender will be so notified by email.
- CMHC reserves the right to request supporting details and validate any information, qualifications and capabilities provided by the Respondent(s);
- CMHC reserves the right to cancel this RFI at any point and/or refrain from issuing a NPP and/or RFP;
- Neither this RFI nor any subsequent selection process will in any way impose an obligation or responsibility on CMHC (i) to execute any contract with any Respondent and (ii) for any costs incurred by a Respondent to respond to this RFI. By submitting a response to this RFI, Respondents waive any right to seek costs or damages or any other remedy against CMHC with respect to this RFI or any subsequent RFP or other selection process.

## 16. RFI RESPONSE

The Respondent's RFI response should include the following items:

- A statement outlining the Respondent's feedback for each item as described in Section 3 above, with a maximum page limit of twenty (20) single-sided pages; and
- The Respondent's company name, address, contact person and email address.

## Annex A

CMHC has developed the following initial solution requirements and evaluation criteria:

ID	Priority (High, Medium, Low)	Solution Requirements
1.1	Critical	Compatible with Sitecore 8.2 and newer versions.
1.2	Critical	Reports on the website against most up to date version of web accessibility standards (currently <u>WCAG 2.1 AA</u> ) for both French and English content. Must include scans of web and PDF content.
1.3	Critical	Has a strategy to ensure it is evergreen with future changes to standards and regulations for accessibility.
1.4	Critical	Provides easy access to instructions on how to meet accessibility standards directly related to each accessibility error found. Ex.: Links to WCAG guideline and/or link to example of how to meet guideline.
1.5	High	Detects and reports on content errors such as misspellings, poor readability levels, and broken links.
1.6	High	Supplies a direct link to the exact place in the Sitecore CMS to correct each accessibility, misspelling or compliance error found.
1.7	Medium	Allows CMHC to set custom website parameters to ensure consistency in content. Ex.: Specifying use of word “Homebuying” instead of “Home Buying” to meet CMHC linguistics guidelines.
1.8	High	The CMHC end-user of the tool has the ability to configure customized reports to detail any accessibility related technical and content issues, especially those affecting search engine rankings and traffic to the website.
1.9	Critical	Provides bilingual (English and French) training and technical support which should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An initial thorough walk through of the solution to ensure use and functionality is clearly understood.</li> <li>• Additional follow up user training sessions with CMHC as necessary.</li> <li>• Unlimited training and ongoing user support available upon request by CMHC.</li> </ul>
1.10	Critical	Solution services must be provided as Software as a Service (SaaS).
1.11	Critical	Must provide specific control to CMHC to determine which CMHC webpages and/or files are scanned for accessibility compliance.

1.12	Critical	Must ensure that personal or behavioral type data (ie. Cookies) are not captured during any function of the accessibility compliance scanning.
1.13	Low	Can automatically scan or scan on a pre-set frequency. Describe the solution's features with regards to its ability to do so.

<b>ID</b>	<b>Priority (High, Medium, Low)</b>	<b>Technical Evaluation Criteria</b>
2.1	Critical	Describe the support model to implement the solution at CMHC.
2.2	Critical	Describe what substantially differentiates the solution from its competitors.
2.3	Critical	Describe the average time to implement the solution for a project similar to CMHC's requirements.
2.4	Critical	Describe what accessibility related technical and content issues the solution is able to report on. Describe the format and customization opportunities of those reports.
2.5	Critical	Describe the online help interface and support model offered by the solution.