



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Title:	Request for Standing Offers (RFSO) Research Analysis, Research Services and Document Management.
Solicitation Number:	1000212488
QUESTION 1:	
<p>We would like to request an extension to at least October 26, 2020 at 2 pm Eastern (30 days from tomorrow) for the Research Analysis, Research Analysis, Document Management RFSO No. 1000212488 posted on Buy and Sell this morning.</p> <p>The typical period for bid preparation for such a request for standing offer is 45 days. 10 business days will not allow for the preparation of the extensive documentation required for this bid, including the requested references.</p>	
ANSWER 1:	
<p>The closing date for this RFSO has been extended to November 4, 2020 at 2:00PM Eastern Standard Time (EST). Refer to the RFSO solicitation document amendment 1.</p> <p>For your information, on July 1, 2020, the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) came into force, replacing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The Government Procurement Chapter 13 of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) only applies to Mexico and the United States, not Canada.</p> <p>For procurements of commercial goods and services subject to one or more international trade agreements where the Notice of Proposed Procurement and the Tender Documentation are published at the same time by electronic means, the minimum solicitation period is 15 calendar days. SOURCE: Supply Manual - Annex 4.10: Summary of guidance on minimum solicitation periods</p>	
QUESTION 2:	
<p>We would like make a request that the original document images provided for 3.2 Scenario Analysis: Database Tasks (pages 58-70 of 122), be posted on Buy and Sell, as these have been compressed / resized when integrated into the RFSO PDF, making them somewhat illegible (particularly Document 10 on page 70 of 122).</p>	
ANSWER 2:	
<p>A clearer image of Document 10 on page 70 of the English RFSO (1000212488) has been provided, please consult document entitled 'Document 10 of page 70_RFSO English' under the Attachments section. The other images for Section 3.2 Scenario Analysis: Database Tasks will not be provided separately.</p>	



QUESTION 3:

We've downloaded the RFSO that was published today and note that the closing date is two weeks away, which is substantially less time than the standard 40 days that an RFSO of this nature permits bidders to respond. As companies are challenged responding to COVID-19, it would be helpful to see the closing date revised to at least October 31, 2020. Can an extension beyond October 9, 2020 be granted?

ANSWER 3:

The closing date for this RFSO has been extended to November 4, 2020 at 2:00PM Eastern Standard Time (EST). Refer to the RFSO solicitation document amendment 1.

For your information, on July 1, 2020, the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) came into force, replacing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The Government Procurement Chapter 13 of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) only applies to Mexico and the United States, not Canada.

For procurements of commercial goods and services subject to one or more international trade agreements where the Notice of Proposed Procurement and the Tender Documentation are published at the same time by electronic means, the minimum solicitation period is 15 calendar days. SOURCE: [Supply Manual - Annex 4.10: Summary of guidance on minimum solicitation periods](#)

QUESTION 4:

RFSO Page 31 of 122, Offeror Proposal Submission Templates – Table Form M1 – Firm-Level Project We are seeking confirmation that Table Form M1 – Firm Level Project Summaries only needs to be provided for the resources supplied in response to M2/R2 as opposed to resources proposed to meet Additional Capacity under R3.

ANSWER 4:

“Table Form M1 – Firm-Level Project Summaries” is required for evaluation of criteria for M1 and R1. The Offeror must use “Table Form M1 – Firm-Level Project Summaries” for each proposed resource involved in the three submitted Firm-Level project summaries.

“Table Form M2 – Proposed Resources” is required for evaluation of criteria for M2, R2 and R3. “Table Form M2 – Proposed Resources” should be submitted for all proposed resources.

QUESTION 5:

RFSO Page 91 of 122, Minimum Resource Qualifications, Research Analysis (Principal)
One of the mandatory tasks listed is RA-16. The Scope of Work for Research Analysis (page 88 of 122) defines RA-16 as follows: “Provide affidavit(s) and potentially testify in relation to conducted research.” As long-time researchers working for CIRNAC/ISC, we are not commonly called on to sign an affidavit or provide testimony, so we are seeking a broader definition of what would be included. Would liaising with legal counsel to supply the basis for an affidavit be considered in scope (e.g. a final list of documents produced by Canada, working with the Crown Deponent and DOJ to finalize answers signed by the Crown Deponent, etc.)

ANSWER 5:

No.



QUESTION 6:

If awarded an SOA in response to this RFSO, can additional resources beyond those proposed, be added?

ANSWER 6:

Resources additional to those named in the Contractor's Proposal will be evaluated and qualified by CIRNAC after Award, at CIRNAC's discretion, on the basis of the minimum qualifications and resource requirements outlined in the SoW under section 8.0 Resource Requirements.

QUESTION 7:

M1 1.3 (p. 11) states that: "Research Analysis (Principal), MUST be included in at least one (1) of the three (3) project summaries submitted." However M1 1.4 (p. 11) states: "Each proposed Resource, as described in M2 below, must have completed at least forty (40) billable days in at least two (2) of the Firm-Level Projects as set out in the Firm-Level Project Summary form(s)." The second statement suggests that the Research Analysis (Principal) resource must also have completed at least 40 billable days in at least two of the project summaries. Please clarify the requirement regarding the number of firm-level projects that MUST include the Research Analysis (Principal) resource.

ANSWER 7:

One (1) resource may qualify in more than one (1) Category; however, the Offeror must include a minimum of six (6) separate resources, located in the NCR, to provide services.

Therefore, resources may meet the forty (40) billable day requirement for M1-1.4 through one or more categories (Research Analysis (Principal), Research Analysis, Research Services, or Document Management).

QUESTION 8:

The Table Form M2 templates (pp. 33-35) provide space for the client organization and the description of services, but there is no space for the project name. Is that information not required, or should it be included in the description of services?

ANSWER 8:

Project titles are not specifically required for the Table Form M2 templates (pp. 33-35), but may be useful for providing a detailed description of the services provided. Inclusion of project titles for this section is at the bidder's discretion.

QUESTION 9:

On p. 11 of the RFSO, at 1.4, it is stated that: "Each proposed Resource, as described in M2 below, must have completed at least forty (40) billable days in at least two (2) of the Firm-Level Projects as set out in the Firm-Level Project Summary form(s)."

Is it necessary for the 40 billable days to be in a specific category of service, or can a proposed resource have provided a combination of services amounting to a total of 40 days on the project?

For example, would a proposed Research and Analysis (RA) resource who performed both RA services and Research Services (RS) days on a project (say 30 days RA + 20 days RS) meet the 40 day requirement? Said proposed RA resource has demonstrated more than the minimum of 660 billable days of RA experience in their M2 table, however, they have not provided as much as 40 days of RA on one project.



ANSWER 9:

One (1) resource may qualify in more than one (1) Category; however, the Offeror must include a minimum of six (6) separate resources, located in the NCR, to provide services.

Therefore, resources may meet the forty (40) billable day requirement for M1-1.4 through one or more categories (Research Analysis (Principal), Research Analysis, Research Services, or Document Management).

QUESTION 10:

Could you please provide a sponsorship for the required security clearance process?

ANSWER 10:

Only successful Offeror(s) will be sponsored by the Department. Please refer to page 41 and 43 of the English RFSO. Offeror(s) must complete and submit the certification with their bid.

QUESTION 11:

Language requirements:

To fulfill the requirement for bilingual services (M2, 2.4), is it required that there be a **single** resource who can provide services with **all** of advanced comprehension, *and* advanced written communication, *and* intermediate oral communication? Can the proficiency requirements be met with a combination of resources at various service levels, for example, can the requirement be satisfied with one RS resource who is bilingual with advanced written and oral communication, and an RA(P) resource who is bilingual only with advanced comprehension?

ANSWER 11:

The Offeror **MUST** provide at least one (1) resource in either Research Analysis (Principal) or Research Analysis who is capable of providing bilingual services at the advanced level for Comprehension **and** Written Communication **and** intermediate level for Oral Communication. All remaining resources qualified and located in the NCR must be capable of providing English services at the advanced level for Oral Communication, Comprehension and Written Communication.

QUESTION 12:

Language requirements:

On the language proficiency grid, the requirements for "advanced knowledge" of written communication involve less proficiency than the "intermediate knowledge" requirements. As written, the requirement is limited to being able to "write texts" of unspecified length or type, about ideas of unspecified complexity. Par exemple, cette première phrase démontre que je peux écrire du texte en français. Cette deuxième phrase démontre que je peux écrire deux phrases cohérentes mais que je ne suis pas bilingue. The simplicity of the requirement is inconsistent with the language certification at Annex "E" which requires capability of "providing bilingual services". Is the "advanced knowledge" level of proficiency the ability to write complex text in written work product such as document summaries, reports, memos in English or bilingually?

ANSWER 12:

Advanced knowledge for written communication requires the ability to write texts where ideas are developed and presented in a coherent manner. Products may include documents summaries, reports, or memos.

A person at this level will use vocabulary, grammar and spelling that are generally appropriate and



require few corrections. A person at this level can also modify or correct texts to improve meaning, tone, clarity and conciseness.

QUESTION 13:

Language requirements:

In terms of the Statement of Work, especially at the Research Analysis (RA) level specified for M2, 2.4, which tasks involve the supplier working *on behalf of* the SACCB to *deliver services to the public*?

ANSWER 13:

All resulting products and related materials may be publicly released or filed with the courts.

QUESTION 14:

Language requirements:

Given that the services described will be delivered by the contractor, on the contractor's own behalf, to the SACCB and not to the public, the mandatory requirement that contractors provide the highest level of expertise with some of the highest levels of bilingual proficiency unnecessarily and arbitrarily excludes otherwise qualified suppliers. Since the "language levels are not assessed" (Annex "E"), can the mandatory requirement at M2, 2.4 be broadened to require only that the contractor have at least one qualified resource who can provide some extent of bilingual services, with the level of proficiency in each official language subject to point-rating or left only to unassessed certification?

ANSWER 14:

No. The Offeror MUST provide at least one (1) resource in either Research Analysis (Principal) or Research Analysis who is capable of providing bilingual services at the advanced level for Comprehension and Written Communication and intermediate level for Oral Communication. All remaining resources qualified and located in the NCR must be capable of providing English services at the advanced level for Oral Communication, Comprehension and Written Communication.

Language levels are not assessed, however the Offeror must sign and submit with their bid or prior to SOA award, the Language Certification.

The Offeror must certify that, should it be authorized to provide services under any Standing Offer Agreement for Work, a minimum of one resource in either resource category Research Analysis (Principal) or Research Analysis must be capable of providing bilingual services at the advanced level for Comprehension and Written Communication and intermediate level for Oral Communication.

QUESTION 15:

Electronic signatures:

Are electronic signatures acceptable for components of the proposal that must be signed? We have concerns that it may be difficult to obtain original signatures for the M4 Reference letters.

ANSWER 15:

Yes. Electronic signatures are acceptable.



QUESTION 16:

R2 Offeror Resource Experience:

We understand that for the M2 Proposed Resources, there are a minimum of 6 resources for the NCR:

One (1) Resource as Research Analysis (Principal) [RA-P]

Two (2) Resources as Research Analysis [RA]

Two (2) Resources as Research Services [RS]

One (1) Resource as Document Management [DM]

For R2, should the resources for evaluation be placed in order to be assessed e.g. RA-P 1, RA 1, RA 2, RS 1, RS 2?

ANSWER 16:

Order of proposed resources is at the bidders' discretion.

QUESTION 17:

M2 Education Requirements – Offeror Proposal Submission Templates – Table Form M2 – Proposed Resources:

The M2 Table Forms for Research Analysis (Principal), Research Analysis, and Research Services all state the following education requirement:

“An Undergraduate degree in a relevant discipline including but not limited to history, Indigenous studies or law”

Is an undergraduate degree in English (language or literature), French (language or literature), political science, anthropology or sociology acceptable to meet the M2 education criterion?

ANSWER 17:

Undergraduate degrees in English (language or literature), French (language or literature), political science, anthropology or sociology is acceptable under this criterion. Form M2 includes a description of associated education column which can be used to outline relevance to the requirements set out in the Statement of Work.

QUESTION 18:

Database tasks:

Should we confine our database to the standard fields provided in the Tombstoning Protocol (p. 72 of RFSO), or can we provide additional fields if we feel they will add value to our dataset (e.g. source, coder comments)?

ANSWER 18:

Offerors are asked to read and process the document set provided according to the Tombstone Coding Protocol Guide at Appendix B. Additional fields will not be evaluated.



QUESTION 19:

Question 4: RFSO Page 31 of 122, Offeror Proposal Submission Templates – Table Form M1 – Firm-Level Project We are seeking confirmation that Table Form M1 – Firm Level Project Summaries only needs to be provided for the resources supplied in response to M2/R2 as opposed to resources proposed to meet Additional Capacity under R3.

Answer 4: “Table Form M1 – Firm-Level Project Summaries” is required for evaluation of criteria for M1 and R1. The Offeror must use “Table Form M1 – Firm-Level Project Summaries” ***for each proposed resource*** involved in the three submitted Firm-Level project summaries. “Table Form M2 – Proposed Resources” is required for evaluation of criteria for M2, R2 and R3. “Table Form M2 – Proposed Resources” should be submitted for all proposed resources.

Regarding the bold, italicized, underlined text, can you confirm whether this should instead read: “for each NCR resource proposed to meet Mandatory Technical Criteria M2.”

We were seeking confirmation that it was not required that we include a Table Form M1 – Firm Level Project Summaries for the Additional Resources proposed to meet Point Rated Technical Criteria R3. The answer did not provide this confirmation.

ANSWER 19:

No.

Table Form M1 – Firm-Level Project Summaries” is not required in response to Point Rated Technical Criteria R3 Additional Resource Capacity.

For clarity, “Table Form M2 – Proposed Resources” should be submitted for all proposed resources – in addition to R3, it is required in response to M2, R2.