



SHARED SERVICES CANADA (SSC)

Invitation to Qualify (ITQ) for Government of Canada Network Services (GCNS) Procurement Process

ITQ No.	R000076631	Date	January 29, 2021
Amendment No.	005	GETS Reference No.	PW-20-00939000

Issuing Office	Shared Services Canada 180 Kent Street, 13 th Floor Ottawa, Ontario K1P 0B6		
Contracting Authority (The Contracting Authority is SSC's representative for all questions and comments about this document.)	Name	Daniel Ellsworth	
	Telephone No.	613-324-6422	
	Email Address	ssc.gc-network-services-gc-services-reseautiques.spc@canada.ca	
	Postal Address	180 Kent Street, 13 th Floor Ottawa, Ontario K1P 0B5	
Closing Date and Time	February 19, 2021 @ 02:00 PM		
Time Zone	Eastern Standard Time (EST)		

INVITATION TO QUALIFY AMENDMENT NO. 005

ITQ Amendment No. 005 is raised:

- 1) To identify key dates; and
 - 2) To answer questions posed by the potential respondents.
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Milestone	Original Date	Revised Date
ITQ release date	December 21, 2020	completed
ITQ Briefing Session	January 8, 2021	completed
Pre-bid submission date	January 22, 2021 @ 11:59 PM (EST)	January 29, 2021 @ 11:59 PM (EST) (AMD#1) February 5, 2021 @ 11:59 PM (EST) (AMD#2)
Last day for Questions and Comments	January 26, 2021 @ 2:00 PM (EST)	February 2, 2021 @ 2:00 PM (EST) (AMD#2)
ITQ closing date and time	February 12, 2021 @ 2:00 PM (EST)	February 19, 2021 @ 2:00 PM (EST) (AMD#1)

Question 11:

“Appreciate if Canada could answer the question posed below.

The proposed Government of Canada Network Services (GCNS) strategy represents a significant departure from past procurement approaches for connectivity services in support of the Government of Canada. We recognize and appreciate the need to adapt and innovate to enable changing program and workstyle trends, particularly in the unique context of serving Canadians coast-to-coast-to-coast. It is apparent from the initial ITQ documents that Canada has invested significant time and effort in establishing a service framework and strategy to position Canada for success in this regard.

To ensure that Canada realizes best value from this solicitation, it is critical for Canada to provide Industry with more detailed insight into the envisioned service framework and strategy prior to close of the ITQ phase. The timing of this executive briefing is key to allow for Industry to better understand Canada’s vision for connectivity and to confirm the overall approach in advance of committing to the ITQ requirements of confirming the composition of the “Respondent”. This transparency will better inform individual organizations on the opportunities for possible partnering approaches that will best leverage industry capability and provide optimal value to Canada.

While we recognize that the intent of the three stage procurement is to clarify and harden requirements within the RRR phase with Qualified Respondents within each of the Five Streams prior to the issuance of final RFPs, this upfront briefing is essential to better understand the envisioned scope, timing, interdependencies, business case context and Governance/Management/Security structure prior to further engagement. This need is further reinforced with the lack of clarity surrounding the expected outcome of the procurement process (establish individual or combined solicitations to establish Contracts, Standing Offers (SOs) and/or Supply Arrangements (SAs)).

Due to the magnitude and importance of this solicitation and its impact on Canadian business, we respectfully request that Canada provides an Industry Day hosted by Canada’s executive leadership as soon as possible, allowing time following for industry to react and respond to the ITQ requirements as documented.”



Answer 11:

Thank you for your request for an Industry Day. Please note that a Vendor Briefing Session was held on January 8th . You can find the presentation deck on Buy & Sell, as Amendment 003. There will be no additional GCNS-specific industry day. The information currently available to the potential respondents for GCNS is sufficient to complete the response submission requirements of the ITQ. Additional details with respect to the next stages of the procurement process and the eventual plans for the contracting vehicles will be discussed collaboratively with our Qualified Respondents during the RRR phase under GCNS as a result of the ITQ.

We are also pleased to announce that on a more global scale, a full Network Strategy discussion will be held by SSC in the near future. The target will be to engage the full network vendor community. This will not be limited to the current GCNS requirement but will certainly cover the scope of that requirement in the presentation. If any respondent has specific questions around information required to complete their ITQ response, please send those in to the contracting authority immediately. Further, we invite all respondents to take advantage of the Pre-Bid Compliance Check Process (section 4.8) in order to have SSC review an initial version of your bid submission and provide you with feedback.

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Question 12:

“Will there be a bidders conference for the GCSN ITQ?”

Answer 12:

Please refer to answer 11 above.

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Question 13:

“In Annex B R3, Annex C R3, Annex D R3 and Annex E R3 there is a requirement for the prime contractor to put forward as many as 10 reference “customers” . This question is meant to get underneath the definition of “customers” in this instance. Under a shared service model there may be situations similar to SSC where specific network services are designed to meet the unique requirements of different government agencies, under separate procurement vehicles. In the case of SSC these government agencies are the end-users and consume the service as designed, but the contract is signed by the central agency. Over five years, technology has changed and these procurement vehicles, remain valid and reflect the technology, operation models and services appropriate at that instance in time.

To meet the R3 requirement in Annex B, C, D and E will Canada permit a “customer” (like SSC) to be used more than once as long as separate contracts, with separate end-users (gov’t agencies) are referenced and described in the detail required?”

Answer 13:

Canada confirms that the same customer can be used for a project reference where separate contracts are indicated.

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Question 14:

“Can Canada confirm that the same customer reference can be used within a stream to meet different requirements? For instance, please confirm that Customer A with Contract Z can be put forward four times to meet Annex C R1/R2/R3 and R4?”

Answer 14:

Canada confirms that the same customers can be used to meet different mandatory experiences within a Stream.

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Question 15:

“GC has engaged into a modernization and digital transformation journey with the objective to (i) effectively deliver services to Canadians through fast, secure and reliable networks with the ability to access services from anywhere, at any time, regardless of the demand and circumstances; (ii) support modern services such as cloud, video and voice services and (iii) improve connectivity between departmental and enterprise networks to enterprise data centres, the cloud and the Internet.

Respondent believes some of the specific requirements as written include limitative criteria for demonstrating experience that are not relevant in the context of the new technologies that GC would want to consider in its modernization. Such criteria might, furthermore, diminish or limit SSC’s ability to achieve the above objectives.

For Requirement #3 of Annex E, will GC accept the following amendment:

“The Respondent must have provided, as the Prime Contractor, LDF to a minimum of 10 customers.”
In lieu of the currently drafted requirement below in blue

“The Respondent must have provided, as the Prime Contractor, LDF to a minimum of 10 customers where the customers must be both in both Ontario and Quebec (for example 6 customers in Ontario and 4 customers in Quebec).”

Answer 15:

Canada will not make the requested change.

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Question 16:

“GC has engaged into a modernization and digital transformation journey with the objective to (i) effectively deliver services to Canadians through fast, secure and reliable networks with the ability to access services from anywhere, at any time, regardless of the demand and circumstances; (ii) support modern services such as cloud, video and voice services and (iii) improve connectivity between departmental and enterprise networks to enterprise data centres, the cloud and the Internet.

Respondent believes some of the specific requirements as written include limitative criteria for demonstrating experience that are not relevant in the context of the new technologies that GC would want to consider in its modernization. Such criteria might, furthermore, diminish or limit SSC’s ability to achieve the above objectives.



For requirement #4 of Annex F, will GC accept the following amendment:

“The Respondent must have provided, as the Prime Contractor LDF to a minimum of 50 Customer Sites for one customer”

In lieu of current drafted requirement below in blue

“The Respondent must have provided, as the Prime Contractor LDF to a minimum of 100 Customer Sites in Ontario and/or Quebec for one customer.””

Answer 16:

Canada will not make the requested change.

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Question 17:

“GC has engaged into a modernization and digital transformation journey with the objective to (i) effectively deliver services to Canadians through fast, secure and reliable networks with the ability to access services from anywhere, at any time, regardless of the demand and circumstances; (ii) support modern services such as cloud, video and voice services and (iii) improve connectivity between departmental and enterprise networks to enterprise data centres, the cloud and the Internet.

Respondent believes some of the specific requirements as written include limitative criteria for demonstrating experience that are not relevant in the context of the new technologies that GC would want to consider in its modernization. Such criteria might, furthermore, diminish or limit SSC’s ability to achieve the above objectives.

Is IP/MPLS referenced below a layer 3 MPLS based service where a vendor is expected to provide Layer 3 dynamic or static routing? What dynamic routing protocols are being used in the Layer 3 routing? Is SSC’s definition of IP/MPLS one where you require a vendor to allocate IP subnets for LAN networks located behind the IP/MPLS ? Would VRF’s , ACL’s, NAT’s, also be required to be setup by provider for IP/MPLS?”

Answer 17:

Please refer to MPLS Architecture RFC 3031.

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Question 18:

SSC is updating the definitions table for SD-WAN in the French version of the ITQ (Definition Table 1.8.3).

Answer 18:

Please delete the following:

<p>Réseau étendu défini par logiciel (SD-WAN)</p>	<p>Application particulière de la technologie de réseau appliquée aux réseaux étendus qui peut être contrôlée de façon dynamique et centrale au moyen d’applications logicielles pour établir des politiques centralisées qui sont utilisées pour diriger les flux de trafic du réseau et des applications. Un réseau étendu défini par logiciel est créé par des superpositions de réseaux de transport logiques agnostiques qui assurent un contrôle et une sécurité centralisés du réseau et une optimisation du trafic en</p>
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	temps réel sur tous les liens de réseau disponibles. Le réseau étendu défini par logiciel comprend, sans toutefois s'y limiter : les appareils, les contrôleurs, et l'orchestrateur de réseau étendu défini par logiciel.
Service de réseau étendu défini par logiciel (SD-WAN)	Un service géré pour un réseau étendu défini par logiciel.
Fournisseur de service de réseau étendu défini par logiciel (SD-WAN)	Un entrepreneur principal qui fournit un service de réseau étendu défini par logiciel.

And replace with the following:

Réseau étendu défini par logiciel (SD-WAN)	Application particulière de la technologie de réseau appliquée aux réseaux étendus qui peut être contrôlée de façon dynamique et centrale au moyen d'applications logicielles pour établir des politiques centralisées qui sont utilisées pour diriger les flux de trafic du réseau et des applications. Un réseau étendu défini par logiciel est créé par des superpositions de réseaux de transport logiques agnostiques qui assurent un contrôle et une sécurité centralisés du réseau et une optimisation du trafic en temps réel sur tous les liens de réseau disponibles. Le réseau étendu défini par logiciel comprend, sans toutefois s'y limiter : les appareils, les contrôleurs, et l'orchestrateur de réseau étendu défini par logiciel.
Service de réseau étendu défini par logiciel (S-SD-WAN)	Un service géré pour un réseau étendu défini par logiciel.
Fournisseur de service de réseau étendu défini par logiciel (FS-SD-WAN)	Un entrepreneur principal qui fournit un service de réseau étendu défini par logiciel.

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Question 19:

"For Stream 3.

Will the GC please consider modifying Requirement #3 from 3 customers to 2 customers with 30 or more sites for a period of at least 12 continuous months, as the Canadian marketplace has been slower in adopting this technology."

Answer 19:

Canada will not make the requested changes.

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Question 20:

“For Stream 3.

Will the CG please consider modifying Requirement #4 to have either one customer with SD-WAN Service in 6 or more provinces/territories in Canada, or a Global customer with at least one Canadian location and 3 global locations. The Canadian marketplace has been slower to adopt this technology and may be reflected in the widespread implementation across the nation.”

Answer 20:

Canada will not make the requested changes.

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Question 21:

“Would SSC allow potential bidders to provide reference accounts outside of Canada to meet the requirements of the ITQ?”

Answer 21:

Depending on the specific Annex and requirement, the mandatory experience requirement for a reference project may stipulate what geographic region the service(s) provided for a customer must have been delivered in. Where it is stipulated that the service must have been delivered in Canada, no substitutions will be permitted. The primary and backup customer organization references however do not have to be located in Canada as they will be accessible via email or telephone.

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ALL OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS REMAIN THE SAME.

