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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

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Terrasses de la Chaudière 5e étage
10 Wellington Street
10, rue Wellington
Gatineau
Québec
K1A 0S5

Title - Sujet NMSO for GBA+ Consultancy Services	
Solicitation No. - N° de l'invitation E60ZG-212007/A	Amendment No. - N° modif. 003
Client Reference No. - N° de référence du client 20212007	Date 2021-03-02
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File No. - N° de dossier 411zg.E60ZG-212007	CCC No./N° CCC - FMS No./N° VME
Solicitation Closes - L'invitation prend fin at - à 02:00 PM Eastern Standard Time EST on - le 2021-03-08 Heure Normale de l'Est HNE	
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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)	
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Amendment #003

Request for Information (RFI) National Master Standing Offer for Gender-Based Analysis+ (GBA+) Consultancy Services

The purpose of this amendment is to provide the following Questions and Answers from the Industry Session as follows.

INDUSTRY SESSION SUMMARY

1. Aim

On February 16, 2021, Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), the Department of Women and Gender Equity (WAGE) and the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises (OSME) held a virtual industry Session to allow potential bidders an opportunity to better understand the requirements.

2. Summary of the Industry Session

Format: PSP, WAGE and OSME engaged a virtual Industry session on MS Teams with presentations to allow potential bidders to understand the current requirement and ask questions

Audience: Representatives from various organization attended the Industry session.

3. Questions asked during Industry Session:

Q1: In terms of help you're looking for, can you explain whether or not you're looking for small single proprietors or help from every organizations? There seem to be quite of diversity in potential, organizations and individuals who will respond. So, if you could include that, that would be very helpful.

A1: The diversity is exactly what we were hoping for. We're trying to meet a range of needs and those are further described in streams such as having a need for someone with scholar who knows the domain of intersectionality and can provide analytical support. But it could also be for bigger project that would require a bigger team, more capacity, which is why we tried to keep this kind of flexible, because there are a range of needs.

Q2: In consideration of being mutually exclusive, collectively exhaustive, have you thought of change management, value and logic modelling, outcomes management?

The whole future of work force transformation and then things like psychological safety an employee experience. Therefore, are you seeking for small groups of organizations that maybe have 2 or 3 people in a partnership who maybe two out of 3 are women, perhaps one is indigenous, maybe all are visible, how an organization like that appears to you in the response to this would be quite different. We will need more instruction on how we're going to respond to this.

A2: Around change management and innovation and future of work, those are very interesting. We can assume that they can easily be sort of unpacked within the streams that are there. The change management piece, in particular, with the context, the COVID context and the new normal will be a demand for it for people who are looking to build back better, whether it be within their own back to the workplace kind of policies. In terms of innovation, greater equality and inclusion and that innovation itself not be for a certain group that can happen at all levels and future work as well as displacement. In terms of the organization, like whether they are smaller or larger like really the diversity is critical because the needs are so different. Sometimes it really is the need of one person to come in and facilitate something.

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Other times, we are about to look at employment insurance and we want to embed GBA+. There could be tiny little requests, but also something that would require much bigger team with diverse expertise.

The self-identification form is relatively new practice that WAGE and PSPC are working on. We're trying to be innovative and not who is getting bids. So this would not be attached to a consultant's bid solicitation profile as a consultant. Government departments can't come and choose somebody based on their identity. It's really more about how are we, as WAGE and PSPC, are we reaching a diversity of people to make sure that we are pulling in people from more rural regions or northern regions. We are getting that diverse voices within the standing offer, and if we're not, how do we reach those people? How do we reach those groups? How do we reach those organizations? So it's something new, and we're really trying to gauge your feedback on whether or not this is something as organizations, you would be willing to fill out. Again it would be far statistical purposes only, and really to make sure we're getting a diverse group of voices to stand on that standing offer.

To answer the question about large organizations versus small organizations, in the evaluation criteria we're looking for as many groups of people as possible. GBA+ is everywhere in the government right now. We need a lot of people. We need a lot of experiences, and we need a diverse range of experiences. About change management, it can also bring in that GBA+ intersectionality lens and it's something that maybe we need to bring in more fluidly into the evaluation criteria.

Q3: Is there a qualitative focus for the Research Stream? It seems very focused on quantitative data. Is there a need for a social development stream which may fit into your policy development stream, but just the need for the work to be done as across different federal departments there is a need for really focusing on sort of local community development work, a prioritizing local-based knowledge. This could require a separate stream or is something that you're considering within the policy development stream?

A3: In terms of the question around the research stream, the qualitative expertise is absolutely relevant. If that's not coming out, we will certainly do some work. There's increasingly, we're finding interest in qualitative expertise. So absolutely. In terms of your social development stream, it will be looked at it to see if you could be embedded in the policy.

The idea about local community development and local community knowledge is very interesting, and there's some departments and agencies like maybe the regional development agencies or the like, who would be particularly interested in that.

Q4: About the voluntary self-identification form: Is this for the candidates or the organizations, and by organizations, in terms maybe populations that they serve that they focus on, for example? And their networks. So for example, if our work, if we have a number of networks in the Indigenous or racialized communities, is it that? Or is it individual candidate? The consultant within an organization? Also, there might be important to include migrant status whether or not groups have a focus on refugees, immigrants separately, temporary migrant workers.

A4: The self-identification, is such an interesting thing we're trying to do here, and we are trying to roll this out at a similar time that PSPC is trying to launch a new policy on self-identification. So right now, it would be about organizations, not about specific people, because we are not attaching it to a specific consultant's bid. So that does definitely make it kind of a different collection process.

Again, it's not related to whether or not you're getting chosen by the government. It's related to the communities that we are trying to serve. So, it's not necessarily who you are serving but within your organization, is it a diverse group? Where are you from? Are you from northern region? Are you from Ottawa? Those are things we want to know to make sure that we're reaching out everywhere. It's something that we're still really working on. It's why we brought it out here. We want to get this feedback

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from you and want to know if this is something that we could collect, and if it's something that industry says no way, we don't want that at all. Then that's something we would have to re-evaluate too.

At present, PSPC does not have the authority to collect self-identification information. It is expected to acquire this authority through the Social Procurement Policy which has not yet approved. It is expected to be approved by summer 2021. While we are attempting to gather this data, for statistical purposes only, to inform where we need to further engage groups and organizations we will continue seeking information about consultants identity on a voluntary basis, for statistical purposes only, along with exploring other opportunities to inform our engagement and procurement of GBA+ expertise.

You can collect information separate from the supplier identification - for statistical purposes only.

Q5: If I understand correctly, the primary goal of this tool is to see whether we're getting a diversity of folks who are able to participate and be part of the standing offer. That's your primary goal. It's not something that's going to be used to identify who any given department will hire. They won't say I want somebody who is living with a disability? It's not going to be used like that? It's going to be used to assess whether this standing offer was an inclusive process?

A5: This is correct. It's not something that's going to be used to identify who any given department will hire. It's going to be used to assess whether this standing offer was an inclusive process only.

Q6: I do not understand why this is not compliant with the commitments of the government to supporting women and diversity in procurement and the 50-30 challenge. A lot of work is being put into establishing standards for defining women owned, women led, women serving organizations for example, and similarly for Indigenous organizations, Black organizations etc. The RDAs and others are implementing this standards, and it seems to me the policy needs to reflect this work and the commitments especially in this area. There are different requirements for Tier 1 and Tier 2 depending on the size of the engagements.

A6: That's exactly the feedback we're looking for right now. We don't have answers to this question but we will address it and obtain answers in this regards. We are looking into the Government of Canada's commitment to the 50-30 challenge and have reached out to Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED), the Department leading the challenge, to learn more. We will consider this challenge as we review our documents upon RFI close.

Q7: When you say: Has completed a minimum of three projects and a maximum of five projects, are you referring to a sole proprietor or is organizations will submit consultants? And this isn't really meant for large firms, then, if that's the case. This is more meant for single individuals? Because if this is about evaluating what an individual has done, it's not about bringing global expertise, expertise in working around the world with all kinds of organizations? You are evaluating based on the individual person and what they bring.

A7: We're seeking for individuals but also for companies to apply to this NMSO. We'll be evaluating resources. We will not evaluate a company, it's only the resources. Given feedback from suppliers about the evaluation criteria we will review the documents to clarify who this standing offer is for and how we expect large firms to apply versus a small proprietor or organization able to submit individual consultants.

Q8: If an organization would want to bid, could they not identify the team that's going to work on the project and provide information about the team?

A8: Given feedback from suppliers about the evaluation criteria we will review the documents to clarify who this standing offer is for and how we expect large firms to apply versus a small proprietor or

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organization able to submit individual consultants. We will use the information, and questions, received during the industry day and from the RFI responses to ensure clarity on the matter of small versus large firms. Bidders are to identify if the Offeror is a Joint Venture.

Q9: The Federal Government has made such explicit commitments around diversity in procurement. If you're not prepared to collect information around self-identification, then I don't see how those commitments can possibly be implemented. And there is a lot of discussion around the difference between, for example, a woman-owned firm, which is majority owned by a woman versus women-led where they're in the leadership role. And the same thing is true with Indigenous organizations. There's some that are majority owned by Indigenous people, others, where Indigenous people are in leadership roles and others which serve Indigenous people. I think all of those issues from my perspective are critically important, and with a 50-30 challenge, I said they're going to give preferential treatment to organizations that sign up. So that's one whole set of issues that it seems to me need to be grappled with. The other piece that comes with that is verification. So if I say that I am a Black disabled woman, and that's how I self-identify, how is that going to be validated? There are a number of organizations that have a business that's around certification. Our view is that that's problematic in and of itself. So just from a policy perspective, especially in this area, why there would not be explicit commitments around hiring women-led and diverse organizations? At least for a percentage of the money that's going to be spent.

A9: The policies that we understand from PSPC at present are around collecting information about groups but not specific people, which is what we were looking for with the consultants. But we will specifically about the 50-30. We will go back and look into that more and will take that into consideration. The point of what we were doing with this exercise was to ensure that at a minimum the procurement process didn't have barriers or we removed as many barriers as possible, and that we're able to see there is a diverse group -- diverse folks who are bidding and part of this process.

We are looking into the Government of Canada's commitment to the 50-30 challenge and have reached out to from Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISAID), the Department leading the challenge, to learn more. We will consider this challenge as we review our documents upon RFI close.

Q10: My question is based on MTA1, the mandatory criteria one, if I read this, it seems that the minimum requirement is that somebody has already done work in the field of intersectional approaches and examined gender and identity. Now, from the perspective of a supplier who does instructional design and e-learning development, an instructional design takes content and develops training based on it with the assistance of a subject-matter expert. I don't have to be the subject-matter expert to create the training much my skill is in design, not the subject. So by reading MTA1, it would seem that even though what I'm providing would be a technical service, I still would be ineligible to supply if I didn't already develop a course with an intersectional approach that examined genders and identity and social factors. So what I'm asking is for a technical type of service, like eLearning design development, would we have to have had a course developed for this topic already in order to be considered?

A10: WAGE and PSPC have noted this concern down. We are learning from all of you, and this is great. And this is the feedback we want, because we want to be able to take this back and incorporate everything into our evaluation and our statement of work to make it very clear. If the technical expertise, those folks wouldn't be able to apply, that's valuable to know.

WAGE is looking to hire GBA+ consultants, those who have expertise specifically in areas related to gender and identity and social factors and how these intersect, across race, sexuality, disability, indigeneity, ethnicity, age, social status, and more, in either the private, academic, not-for-profit, volunteering, or public service sectors. Thus, we are looking for consultants with these specific expertise to complement the work they will do under each stream (i.e. policy development, research, project

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management etc.)

Q11: We understand how much effort there is that goes into actually developing the RFP for evaluating and agreeing to standing offers and for larger firms as the development of the spectrum is growing, we're adding to our team. If it is individual based, then each time we add a new junior, intermediate, or senior person, we'll be coming to you asking you to reopen the standing offer. It doesn't make any sense to do that. That's the reason for the "you" in the case of the larger firms being projects and maybe it's not just three projects. Maybe it's more than three projects to make it more fair. The other thing I wanted to say is on the large firms, my question to you was going to be where did you advertise this? Because I've participated in a lot of work or a lot of events from the anti-racism secretariat through Canadian heritage, and there's a very large group of people who attend those events who might be quite interested in this standing offer. So here's a large firm saying are you being inclusive enough of the smaller firms who, you know, it's none of my business how you advertise this.

A11: We will not be allowed to reopen the standing offer once the Request for Standing Offer (RFSO) will be closed. This method of supply doesn't allow this. We will determine the way to do it before the RFSO stage but it could be as simple as allowing new resources to join individual standing offer at specific time of the year (as an example, quarterly, bi-annual, etc.) based on the same criteria of the RFSO.

The RFI was posted on the Buy and Sell website but we also sent an email to more than 500 organizations/consultants to let them know about the RFI.

Q12: When you expect the RFP to actually come out to be released. And then another question around and perhaps I missed it in the document, what's the kind of expected annual spend you're kind of anticipating on this vehicle?

A12: The RFSO should be out probably mid fiscal year 21-22. However, it's hard to say, because we have to work on the documents and refresh everything and take into account all your questions and comments. But we would like to launch the request for standing offer (RFSO), if we decide to go this route by summer 2021 but there is no commitment at the moment. And as for the second part of your question, we don't know yet. It's a fairly new requirement, so it's hard to answer that question at this moment.

Q13: I noticed that the supply agreement that this project is under is the E60ZG. Now, we are already a supplier in E60ZH. So I was wondering if you would consider putting the training tools and facilitation stream under that supply arrangement versus E60ZG only because E60ZH has a specific stream for development of training. So it seems your stream about development and training might work better in that area of E60ZH instead of E60ZG.

A13: PSPC have different supply tools. There is indeed a training standing offer or supply arrangement in the ZH division but what we want to do is a brand new requirement. The technicality is specific to GBA+ consultancy services so it would not fit under any other available tool.