



Procurement and Contracting Services
30 Victoria Street, Gatineau QC K1A 0M6

Supplier@elections.ca

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer File No.:

ECCAD-RFI-20-0870

Title:

External Secured Drop Boxes

Date:

March 18, 2021

Closing Date and Time:

April 6, 2021 at 14:00 EDT

ENQUIRIES

Address enquiries to:

Supplier@elections.ca

Attention:

Charles Antoine Duquette

Tel No.

343-550-6527

RESPONSES

Option 1 - email:
Submit responses to:

Supplier@elections.ca

Charles Antoine Duquette
c/o Business Centre
30 Victoria Street
Gatineau QC K1A 0M6

This Request for Information (“RFI”) contains the following information:

- PART 1. Background and Purpose**
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Annexes

Annex A – Questions to Suppliers

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

External Secured Drop Boxes

PART 1. Background and Purpose

1.1. Purpose

In order to assist Elections Canada (EC) in refining its requirements, EC is seeking feedback from suppliers regarding its requirement for external secured drop boxes.

1.2. EC Mandate

EC, headed by the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), an agent of Parliament, is an independent, non-partisan agency with unique organizational features that reports directly to Parliament. EC exercises general direction and supervision over the conduct of election events such as general elections, by-elections and referendums at the federal level. Its mandate is to:

- a) be prepared to conduct a federal general election, by-election or referendum;
- b) administer the political financing provisions of the Canada Elections Act (CEA);
- c) monitor compliance with electoral legislation;
- d) conduct public information campaigns on voter registration, voting and becoming a candidate;
- e) conduct education programs for students on the electoral process;
- f) provide support to the independent commissions in charge of adjusting the boundaries of federal electoral districts following each decennial census;
- g) carry out studies on alternative voting methods and, with the approval of parliamentarians, test alternative voting processes for future use during electoral events; and
- h) provide assistance and cooperation in electoral matters to electoral agencies in other countries or to international organizations.

1.3. Impact of COVID-19

EC is closely monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic and its evolving impact. As part of its readiness activities, the agency has been developing a new operational plan to deliver an election in the context of a pandemic.

The health and safety of all participants in the electoral process is of paramount importance: this includes electors, thousands of election workers, and candidates and their workers. The external secured drop boxes are one of the added measures.

1.4. Project Description

EC is looking for **one or more service providers** to supply, deploy, install and decommission up to 525 **external secured drop boxes** (with an option to increase this number in future) across Canada at the beginning of a federal general election on a long-term basis. The service provider(s) would also be required to supply, deploy, install and decommission a small number of external secured drop boxes in instances of federal by-elections. Should Elections Canada purchase rather than rent the external secured drop boxes, the service provider(s) will also be required to store the drop boxes in between elections/by-elections.

Design:

- External secured drop boxes must hold a minimum of 500 mail-in ballot kits. The mail-in ballot kit dimensions are as follows: 8 ¼ inches X 4 1/8 inches (210mm X 105mm weighing 20 grams).
- External secured drop boxes may be installed in a variety of environments either outdoors or indoors (i.e. in extreme heat as well as extreme cold. They must prevent rain, snow and ice from entering the interior and damaging the mail-in ballot kits). They must be seamless, have weather stripping or a shroud, and be sloped with drain holes.
- External secured drop boxes must be installed on a variety of surfaces (i.e. sidewalks, cement floors, grassy area with addition of cement slab etc.).
- External secured drop boxes must be manufactured using rust-resistant steel or aluminum (airplane grade); any finishing must be rust proof.
- External secured drop boxes must not have any corner seams, and should use all weld construction (as opposed to spot welding) to avoid the possibility of prying at joints.
- External secured drop boxes must be equipped with a counter balanced self-closing chute.
- External secured drop boxes must be equipped with a lock located on the opening slot to prevent anyone from depositing a mail-in ballot kit after close of polls on polling day (specific date and time will vary by province and will be confirmed at the issue of the writs for the federal general election or by-election as the case may be).
- External secured drop boxes must be generic and neutral in colour. EC may choose to add its own branding (i.e. to be affixed temporarily) or request that the service provider(s) affix permanent branding. No other branding may appear on the external secured drop boxes unless approved by EC.

Accessibility Requirement:

- External secured drop boxes must be wheelchair accessible and as such, the deposit slot must not be higher than 48" from the ground.
- In some areas, the service provider(s) may be required to suggest an alternative installation protocol to meet accessibility guidelines given landscape (i.e. more so in remote or rural electoral districts where offices may be located in secluded areas).

Security Requirement:

- External secured drop boxes must be constructed to be damage-resistant. While all outdoor equipment may become scratched or dented, the external secured drop boxes must be constructed such that it is puncture-resistant, and cannot be opened easily with tools.
- External secured drop boxes must come equipped with an access door to retrieve deposited ballot kits. This door must be manufactured with two locks, with separate keys, such that both keys are required to open the access door.
- The opening for depositing mail-in ballot kits must only allow one kit at a time to be deposited, and prevent the deposit of trash or liquids.
- The external secured drop boxes must have the ability to be anchored to a concrete pad, or be of sufficient weight to prevent theft. In indoor environments such as shopping malls, service provider(s) must have the ability to install on a variety of stone floors or manmade materials.
- The external secured drop boxes must come included with a GPS chip as well as a fire suppression system. The GPS device must be linked to a 24/7 monitoring service.
- The external secured drop boxes must be sealed with one or more tamper evident seals after they are emptied.
- The Security Requirement is subject to change between this RFI and in any future procurement. It is anticipated that the service provider(s) must hold a valid Designated Organizational Screening (DOS) issued by the Canadian Industrial Security Directorate (CISD), of Public Works and Government Services Canada, it is further anticipated that employees deploying/installing the drop boxes must hold a valid personnel security screening at the level of reliability granted by CISD/PWGSC.

Deployment/Installation:

- In the context of a minority government, deployment and installation dates and/or locations may not be fully known ahead of time. However, once the writs are issued, returning officers are required to sign their leases and confirm the physical address of their local office to EC. As such, the service provider(s) must deploy and install the

external secured drop boxes to their locations within 14 days of formal written notice. Locations will be across Canada, minimum one per electoral district, as directed in written notice. See map of electoral districts:

<https://www.elections.ca/res/cir/maps2/map.asp?map=canada&lang=e>

- The service provider(s) must demonstrate that drop boxes conform to the specification, are in working order and are in acceptable shape before deploying them for installation.

Decommissioning:

- The service provider(s) must decommission and pick-up external secured drop boxes as soon as 5 days after polling day and no later than 15 days after polling day (exact dates will be confirmed at the issue of the writ).
- If EC purchases rather than rents the drop boxes, the service provider(s) must safely store the drop boxes in a covered, dry facility until next formal notice to deploy/install.

Repairs:

- Temporary installation of external secured drop boxes will require repairs to a variety of surfaces (i.e. sidewalks, indoor floor surfaces, constructed surfaces etc....) to bring surface back to its original state.
- EC will require service provider(s) to provide initial assessment of repairs (i.e. quote) prior to installation.
- EC will require the service provider(s) to document installation prior to its occurrence once installation address is known (i.e. pre-visit to the address once it is known, pictures of site prior to installation, pictures after decommissioning, before and after pictures of repairs).

1.5. Anticipated Procurement Timeline

EC is at the preliminary stage of the procurement process. The high-level procurement timeline will follow a multi-phase procurement process that will likely include the following key activities:

Procurement Phase	Estimated Timeline
Planning – RFI	March 2021
Planning – requirements definition, possible further supplier engagement etc.	April 2021
Solicitation	April 2021
Evaluation	April/May 2021
Contract Award	May/June 2021

PART 2. Nature of Request for Information

This is not a solicitation of bids or proposals. This RFI may not lead to the launching of a procurement process, the award of any contract or the creation of a source list. As a result, suppliers of any goods or services described in this RFI should not reserve stock or facilities, nor allocate resources, as a result of any information contained in this RFI. Therefore, whether or not any supplier responds to this RFI, it will not preclude that supplier from participating in any future procurement. Also, the decision to whether or not to launch a procurement process for any of the goods or services described in this RFI is entirely at the sole discretion of EC. EC reserves the right to cancel or modify any of the preliminary requirements described herein. This RFI is simply intended to solicit feedback from suppliers with respect to the matters described herein and should not be considered as an authorization to undertake any work that would result in costs being charged to EC. EC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all comments received. Further respondent engagement may be conducted by EC which may include supplier engagement days, one-on-one meetings, product demonstrations, requesting additional information from respondents, etc.

PART 3. Nature and Format of Responses Requested

Respondents are invited to provide their comments, concerns and, where applicable, alternative recommendations regarding how the requirements or objectives described in this RFI could be satisfied. Respondents are also invited to provide comments regarding the content, format and/or organization of any draft documents included in this RFI. Respondents should explain any assumptions they make in their responses.

PART 4. Response Costs

EC will not reimburse any respondent for any expenses or costs incurred in responding to this RFI.

PART 5. Treatment of Responses

5.1. Use of Responses

Responses will not be formally evaluated. However, the responses received may be used by EC to develop or modify procurement strategies or any draft documents contained in this RFI. EC will review all responses received by the RFI closing date. EC may, in its discretion, review responses received after the RFI closing date.

5.2. Review Team

A review team composed of representatives from EC will review the responses. EC reserves the right to hire any independent consultant, or use any government resources that it considers necessary to review any response. Not all members of the review team will necessarily review all

responses.

5.3. Confidentiality

Respondents are solely responsible for marking any portions of their response that they consider proprietary or confidential. EC will handle the responses in accordance with the *Access to Information Act* and the *Privacy Act*

5.4. Follow-Up Activity

EC may, at its discretion, contact any respondents to follow up with additional questions or for clarification of any aspect of a response or for one-on-one meetings.

PART 6. Official Languages

Responses to this RFI may be submitted in either of the official languages of Canada, French or English.

PART 7. Information Requested by Elections Canada

7.1. Responses to Questions to Suppliers

EC requests responses to the questions found in Annex A – Questions to Suppliers.

PART 8. Format of Responses

8.1. Cover Page

If the response includes multiple volumes, respondents should indicate on the front cover page of the response the title of the response, the RFI number, and the number of volumes and the full legal name of the respondent.

8.2. Title Page

The first page of each volume of the response should be the title page, which should contain:

- a) the title of the respondent's response and the volume number;
- b) the name and address of the respondent;
- c) the name, address, telephone number and email address of the respondent's contact;
- d) the date; and
- e) the RFI number.

8.3. Numbering System

Respondents should prepare their response using a numbering system corresponding to the one

in this RFI. All references to descriptive material, technical manuals and brochures included as part of the response should be referenced accordingly.

PART 9. Enquiries

This is not a solicitation; therefore, EC will not necessarily respond to enquiries in writing or by circulating answers to all potential respondents. However, respondents with questions regarding this RFI may direct their enquiries to the Contracting Authority via the email address identified on the cover page of this document.

PART 10. Submission of Responses

10.1. Time and Place for Submission of Responses

Respondents interested in providing a response should submit it by email to the Contracting Authority via the email address and by the closing date and time identified on the cover page of this document.

10.2. Responsibility for Timely Delivery

Each respondent is solely responsible for ensuring its response is delivered on time to the correct location.

10.3. Identification of Response

Each respondent should ensure that its name, contact person and email address, the RFI number and the closing date are included in their response in a prominent location.