

Questions and Answers for SCC RFP 2021-11 - TS Digital Credentials

1. How does this RFP align with the active standards work on digital credential interoperability that is currently underway under the CIO Strategy Council?

SCC is aware that CIO Strategy Council is developing National Standards of Canada (NSCs) in the area of digital trust and identity. As one of twelve SCC accredited Standards Development Organizations (SDOs), CIOSC is required to notify Canadian stakeholders of their proposed projects via SCC's Corporate website, please follow the links provided to two such notifications:

- CAN-CIOSC 103-3 [Digital trust and identity – Part 3: Digital credentials](#) New Standard posted 2021-01-06
- CAN/CIOSC 103-4 [Digital trust and identity – Part 4: Digital wallets](#) New Standards posted 2021-01-06

This RFP is separate from the CIOSC work, and under the direct oversight of SCC. There is a network expectation for appropriate collaboration where it makes sense to do so. The RFP supports the development of a Technical Specification (TS), which is not a full consensus document but is intended for faster publication when it is identified the public is better served by receiving this information sooner, and when it will help to further the possibility of a future NSC. SCC has direct oversight of this project (through a contractual agreement) due to strategic considerations of the project, and SCC's neutral position to facilitate the development of a TS that will be used as part of a conformity assessment pilot with Canadian regulators, businesses and accredited conformity assessment bodies. The development of the conformity assessment pilot is not part of this RFP, which will be done under the auspices of SCC's Accreditation Services.

2. What is the role of the CIOSC in this RFP?

The CIOSC is an SCC accredited Standards Development Organization with experience in the established development process and has an equal opportunity to bid on the RFP. Should someone, other than the CIOSC, be selected as the TS developer, there is a network expectation for appropriate collaboration between developers to occur to make efficient use of available resources, prevent duplication and mitigate user confusion.

3. Is there a specific stakeholder group driving this subject development forward? I ask because I am trying preemptively substantiate the 'Need for the TS' as part of our decision making process. If so, does that group have a seed document? There are a number of ongoing standardization activities in this space internationally (ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 17 Cards and security devices for personal identification) so I am trying to establish if my organization does pursue this RFP, that we would be infact developing a meaningful solution that doesn't duplicate ongoing efforts.

Through the financial support of ISED, SCC is facilitating and providing director oversight for the development of a Technical Specification (TS) and an Accredited Conformity Assessment Program for public and private digital credentials and digital trust services that will ensure they meet minimum requirements that ensure broad interoperability and the safety, privacy, and well-being of Canadians. A standardization landscape has been developed to prevent duplication and build on existing work in this field, which will be shared with the winning Supplier to support the development of the TS in line with national and international practices.

4. In reviewing the requirements of the SCC RFP conducted on behalf of ISED, it's clear that the requirements have been developed to favour not for profit organizations. This is confirmed by the financial response template where respondents are required to identify the source and amount of any subsidy. How will the SCC ensure fairness in this competitive process where it's possible to have a potential supplier for this Federal Government procurement subsidized by funding that is provided by a large collective of individual Federal Government departments or agencies?

Requirements have not been developed to favour not for profit organizations. Source and amount of subsidy is asked to determine how an organization can support the development of the deliverable should funds other than those provided from SCC be used.

5. 3.5 Publication - Is there a requirement by SCC that the TS be sold to non-Canadian IP addresses?

No, there is not.

6. Requiring the project manager to have direct experience in working with digital trust services and credentials standardization type experience, in Canada, with Committee Chair, and primary liaison experience severely restricts access to resources qualified to achieve full points for this requirement. Credentials and digital trust services are cutting edge technology, and while there is a larger pool of candidates who do this work on the international landscape, those who do the work in Canada are limited. Is it necessary that the project manager have direct experience in Canada for the full award or can the project manager provide related experience in a global standard setting?

The project manager can provide related experience in a global standard setting but needs to demonstrate awareness of Canadian needs and objectives of the project.

7. The scope suggests that the TS will serve as a prototype for a conformity assessment program. A single occurrence of a sandbox is mentioned. Are the deliverables to include a sandbox and a conformity test plan? Or is it envisioned that this would be done in a later project?

The deliverables do not include a sandbox or a conformity test plan – this will be the next phase of the project, and under the auspices of the Standards Council of Canada and our Accreditation Services branch.

8. Can you provide examples of a normative-type document? We understand that normative means specified and that a normative conformance criteria document (for example) represents a normative-type document.

A normative document is a generic term that covers documents that provide rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results. Types of normative documents include legal acts, standards or other normative type documents.

**9. The national TS process document pdf 3.3.2 does not match the process in the RFP Phase of Project III.B Criterion. Is the process is to be defined by the SUPPLIER or by what is listed under Phase of Project III.B Criterion. (RFP page 22) or aligning to the SCC_National_TS_Process.pdf?
https://www.scc.ca/en/system/files/publications/SCC_National_TS_Process.pdf**

The process is not to be defined by the supplier. Yes, the process defined in III.B are to be followed.

10. The National TS Process document does not make clear if all or some of the four (a,b,c,d) circumstances must be defined. Must all (a,b,c,d) be defined?

For documentation purposes, it will be noted that the need for a TS has been pre-determined by ISED and SCC.

11. The RFP does not qualify the entity that would ratify the Technical Committee and Working Groups Terms of Reference. Does the SUPPLIER ratify the Terms of Reference? Or does the SCC ratify the Terms of Reference?

The Supplier, as the developer, has the responsibility to ratify the Terms of Reference.

12. Could the RFP provide clarity regarding how “directly” versus “indirectly” relevant experience will be measured in the rated evaluation criteria? If definitions cannot be provided can examples of indirect and direct be provided?

Directly would include experience in developing guidance or standards or similar type documents in digital credentials. Indirectly would include experiences developing documents in similar type sectors or areas (i.e., an area indirectly related to digital credentials, such as blockchain technology).

13. Is the RFP asking that the actual TS development project plan is completed in 6 months of development or is the challenge for the whole project (start to finish) to be completed in 6 months? There's a difference.

The development of the TS (Start to finish) is maximum 9 months from when the contract is signed.

14. Is maintenance of the TS included in the 6 month challenge window to complete? It would seem not feasible to complete the TS and deliver maintenance in 6 months.

No it is not.

15. What types of communications require prior approval by the SCC? Aside from press releases, would communications such as notices on the Supplier's website, social media posts, presentations, and messages to mail lists require approval?

Any press releases require approval by SCC; and any other relevant communications SCC needs to be informed of prior to the communications.

16. How will the financial response be used as a factor in selecting the winning supplier?

It is one of the components of the criteria that will be duly considered. The details of the technical and financial evaluation process are included in the first section of Appendix C.

17. How will subsidies impact the selection of the winning supplier – will the evaluation be based on the costs (R2) are on the cost less subsidies (R2-R1)?

Subsidies do not impact the selection of the winning supplier. The details of the technical and financial evaluation process are included in the first section of Appendix C.

18. It is highly likely that the answers provided to questions could generate supplemental questions. Will SCC extend the deadline for these types of questions to be asked to 3 days after these answers are published on buyandsell.gc.ca?

Yes, an extension of 3 days will be given, and communicated separately.

19. In the Financial template, suppliers are required to provide a firm fixed price for Maintenance. There is insufficient information provided in the RFP to provide a price for this activity. Can SCC provide additional details regarding the specific activities included, the duration, number of updates etc.

The duration will be determined by the Supplier (developer) as per suitable timeframe that addresses market needs. Within the identified suitable time cycle, if the need for an update, for example, health and safety related issues are identified, requiring an update, the expectation is for the developer to take appropriate action.

20. On page 9 of 59 “The TS is intended to be a method of test, which provides repeatable and reproducible procedures with consistent outcomes for the assessment of the product. This would deliver a small-scale set of conformity assessment criteria that are based directly on digital credential policy and regulatory objectives of Canadian governments.” Which specific “Canadian governments” policies is the RFP referring to? Are federal and provincial policies in scope? Please qualify or provide examples of the policies that are in scope for the RFP.

The TS will be used as the basis for a conformity assessment pilot that will be tested with Canadian regulators, businesses and conformity assessment bodies. References to “Canadian governments” are intended to cover the various Canadian government jurisdictions, including federal, provincial and territorial.

21. The RFP specified the requirements to include sample documents. Does SCC want only the English versions or should our package include those two documents in both English and French?

Either language is fine.

22. The RFP does not specify how the supplier will be selected. Will it be on a lowest cost, technically compliant basis or on a best value basis incorporating both price and technical score.?

The details of the technical and financial evaluation process are included in the first section of Appendix C.

23. Pages 9 and 10 discuss the Specification supporting a prototype conformity assessment program. Is this conformity assessment, or any related work, such as a trial or setting up processes, in scope for this RFP?

It is not in scope for this RFP, but the TS will be used for a conformity assessment pilot.

24. Will the Bidder be given an opportunity to red line Appendix E - Services Agreement at a later stage? If not, is there a way to submit legal questions that will not be published?

There will be an opportunity for the Bidder to request changes to the standard Terms and Conditions in the Service Agreement, but the acceptance of these changes will be at the discretion of SCC.

25. Section II of Appendix C states the requirements for providing the experience of the project team. For the Technical Committee Manager(s), is the requirement for 2 recent examples total or 2 recent examples per resource?

2 recent examples total.

26. From the RFP, we get the impression that the choice for a seed document will be taken prior to the selection of technical experts and the formation of the Technical Committee. Does this imply that this decision will need to be taken by the supplier, and probably to be approved by SCC, prior to the start of the development of the actual TS?

This will be determined by the Technical Committee as part of the TS Development, and in line with the TS development process outlined in the Canadian procedural documents Canadian Standards Development National Technical Specifications.

27. For some ongoing industry initiatives, in particular the VC Data Model of the W3C and the ISO/IEC 18013-5 standard, a test specification or test suite is already being worked on by the respective bodies. In that light, would it be conceivable that the outcome of Stage 3.2 (New Work Item Proposal) is that a new TS is not needed, since the international test specification or test suite already fulfills (or is going to fulfill) the purpose of the TS?

No. The use of a Technical Specification was chosen as it was determined there were no suitable standards or other normative type document that could be used in the coming months for a pilot conformity assessment program. The TS will help inform future national standard(s) and/or international standards as part of a national accreditation program. The TS will adopt and adapt existing requirements/products where it makes sense and develop new requirements where gaps remain.

28. In the absence of a rating guide/scale, how will SCC award points for the level of effort dedicated to the project component of the financial evaluation? Will having a higher level of effort compared to other bidders result in higher points or will more points be awarded for a lower level of effort?

Having a higher or lower level of effort compared to other bidders won't necessarily result in higher or lower points. There will not be a direct correlation between both. The scoring will be based on the quality and the reasonableness of the level of effort required to deliver on each of the milestones of the project. A comparison against the average effort submitted between all bidders may help performing this evaluation as well as the proportion of effort identified at each activity may also be considered.

29. Given that SCC is already awarding points for the bidder's proposed timeline (rated requirement V.B), what is the purpose on rating the level of effort?

The technical evaluation in section V.B evaluates if the bidder can accomplish the development of the TS within a certain time frame. The level of effort evaluation in the financial evaluation is a more qualitative and comparative evaluation and is independent of the deadlines suggested from section V in the technical evaluation.