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SHARED SERVICES CANADA

Request for Robotic Process Automation Enterprise Solution for Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)

Solicitation No.	2BS-1-78150/A	Date	2021-07-13
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Closing Date and Time	July 20, 2021 at 14:00	
Time Zone	Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)	
Destination of Goods/Services	22 Eddy, Gatineau QC, K1A 0J9	
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This Solicitation Amendment 006 is raised to:

1. To answer questions from Industry.
2. This amendment is makes changes to the resulting contract.

Question 63:

Reference: Annex B – Basis of Payment, “125 unattended robots”

Would Canada please clarify if this quantity is just for Production state runtimes or does this include quantity for development/test/contingency/failover?

Our solution requires robots in every environment so we’d like to understand the split (if there is any). This will allow us to effectively scope and cost out the proposed infrastructure For example:

- 10 development unattended runtimes
- 5 Test unattended runtimes
- 115 Production unattended runtimes

Answer 63: Annex B refers to Production state. If your solution requires cost associated to non-Prod unattended robots, please list the price. 10 unattended robots for DEV and 5 in TESTING is a good presentation.

Question 64:

Reference: Annex B – Basis of Payment, “50 developer license”

Would Canada please clarify if “50 developer license” is to cover 50 developers or are we expected to cost out 50 VMs?

Answer 64: When the Crown mention “50 developer license” in Annex B, we are talking about the licence that an *RPA developer* needs to develop an automation (script). The expectation is that each developer that will engage in the product will require their own licence and that each of these will have their own development suite installed on their computers. If your solution do not require any specific licence for a developer, please indicate zero.

Question 65:

Reference: Annex B – Basis of Payment, “5 x Process Mining Solution”

Would Canada please elaborate “5 x Process Mining Solution”?

Answer 65: The process mining solution that is specified is a toolset that would allow ESDC the ability to perform analytics and mapping functions against existing application processes and determine if there are any efficiencies that can be found in the process.

Question 66:

“ESDC to operating 3,000 to 6,000 attended robots with a variety of attended automations. The RPA solution must allow ESDC to operate 100 to 300 unattended robots with a variety of unattended automations. The solution must have an interface that allow authorized users to modify robots schedule and change the automated scripts used by a robot or a group of robots.”

For the 3,000 to 6,000 attended robots, we would like to clarity on the following:

- Are the 3,000 to 6,000 all call center agents
 - If not, what is the distribution between dedicated call centres and other attended users
 - What are the “Other attended users” roles and expected use for attended automation
- What are the typical use cases expected for the attended automation solution
- Will the processes be interactive and “fire and forget” processes or a combination of the two
 - If a combination, is there a view of the percentages of each

Answer 66: The large majority (90%) for the 3,000 to 6,000 attended robots will be dedicated to call center agents serving Canadians. Other attended robots will be used by *Finance*, *Human Resources* and other ESDC business lines to execute ESDC internal business processes.

There’s no typical use case expected for automation. Each ESDC business owner will decide what the best use case to automate is. As an example, we can use attended automation to update the same information (ex: client’s address) in many of our business applications or we can retrieve information from our business applications by simply entering client’s Insurance Number, last name and first name.

As for the interaction, we expect all type of scenario. An attended script will run from A to Z without user intervention and other will interact with end-users and, depending of the end-user’s selection, the execution of the attended script will follow different paths.

Question 67:

In Annex B, there is a note that states “...ESDC may choose to exercise the option year for the status quo version or the unlimited version of the RPA Software Solution at time of renewal depending on price and need...”, which suggests that ESDC will select only one of two options for each of the renewal optional years. However, Table E – Total Evaluated Price in Annex B includes both the “status quo” and the “unlimited” versions as part of the Total Evaluation Price, which effectively double counts these two separate options as part of the Total Evaluated Price. Can the Crown provide a rationale for why it has not separated the two discrete pricing options when considering Total Evaluation Price, or reconsider the restructuring of the pricing tables in Annex B to more accurately reflect ESDC’s evaluation of bidders’ Total Evaluation Price based on a selection of either “status quo” or “unlimited” versions?

Answer 67: The Crown asks bidders to price both options as ask in Annex B but may decide to exercise one option or the other, depending on our requirement.

Question 68:

Table C- Training of Annex B requires Proponents to price training according to the following: “Administrator & Developer Online Training Courses as per the SOW and must align with the technical requirements specified in section 2.6 (e and f).” In addition, at bottom of Table C, there is a statement which reads “*anticipated 30 initial users for training”. Are Proponents to interpret, when providing pricing for training, that they should input a quantity of 30 in Column C (i.e. “Est. #”) of Table C to accommodate “30 initial users”, or input a quantity of 1 in Column C (i.e. Est.#), which will assumes that a “single unit” of training for the contract will

include a mix of 30 Developer and Administrator users that can be extended (i.e. as single “blocks” of 30 users) as the RPA program and training needs scale?

Answer 68: Column C should contain value ‘1’ and the corresponding cost should represent the cost for an Online training that can accommodate a first group of 30 people. The Crown may have more than 30 users to train.

Question 69:

Table C- Training of Annex B requires Proponents to price training according to the following: “Administrator & Developer Online Training Courses as per the SOW and must align with the technical requirements specified in section 2.6 (e and f).” Given that training curriculum (and costs) for Developers and Administrators can vary, will the Crown provide Proponents with the anticipated breakdown of the mix of Developers and Administrators to be trained under this deliverable?

Answer 69: The Crown anticipate 24 developers and 6 administrators. These number can vary plus or minus 25%.

Question 70:

Section 4.7.8 (Basis of Recommendation for Award of Resulting Contract) of the main RFP document states that “Canada reserves the right to not conduct a PoC” and that “In this case, the responsive bid with the highest combined rating of technical merit and price will be recommended for award of a contract”, which appears to indicate that the Crown has already made the decision not to conduct a PoC. However, in Section 4.7.7, the RFP states that the “... responsive bid with the highest combined rating of technical merit and price may be subject to testing under a Proof of Concept (PoC)” and that “If it the bid meets all the mandatory criteria of the PoC, it will be recommended for award of a contract.” Will the Crown please clarify if it has already made the decision (for this contract) that it intends to conduct a PoC with the Bidder with the highest combined rating of technical and price and, if so, under what conditions will the Crown decide whether it will require a PoC from the highest scoring bidder?

Answer 70: See question 42 b) The Crown will not exercise the right not to conduct a PoC if they judge that their trust in the proposed technology is strong enough. Remember that ESDC is already using an RPA solution.

Question 71:

Section 5.1 a) (iv) of the Main RFP document (Resulting Contract Clauses – Requirement) states that the Contractor “...agrees to supply the goods described in the Contract to the Client in accordance with, and at the prices set out in, the Contract..”, which will include “Installation and configuration services and Training Services”. However, there does not appear to be, in any of the RFP and Annex documents, complete descriptions of what the Client expects as the scope of these “installation and configuration services”, nor does Annex B contain the listing nor description of these services in any of the pricing tables. Is it the Crown’s intent to have Proponents responding to the RFP include the pricing of their “installation and configuration services” associated with the provision of RPA platform software licenses and, if so, can the Crown provide complete descriptions of scope for these services and confirmation that these costs should be part of the “Base Price Initial Package” and “Additional Growth Bundle” offerings Estimated Prices in Annex B?

Answer 71: The Crown is not seeking to use the awarded contractors professional services group in this RFP. The implementation plan that ESDC is seeking is to determine how best to implement the purchased services. Note that the Crown requires an implementation plan as a deliverable of the proof of concept (PoC).

Question 72:

In Annex B – Basis of Payment, Proponents are asked to include “5 x process mining solution” and “1 x process mining solution” and “unlimited process mining solution” as part of “Base Price Initial Package”, “Additional Growth Bundle” and “Unlimited Growth Bundle” pricing, with Bidders directed to Annex A – Statement of Work to find definitions of the software package/bundle components. The only reference to “process mining” in Annex A can be found in Section 2.1.1.c.ix, where it states that “The RPA solution must... include a design suite that will allow ESDC to... leverage software capabilities such as process mining and process analysis to allow ESDC to capture and streamline existing processes to evaluate candidate for automation.” However, this sentence does not provide Bidders with a definition of a “unit” of process mining. Given that there are varying frames of reference (including sizing variables and licensing practices) within the RPA industry for what would be considered a “unit” (e.g. per user, per project, per amount of data, etc.) of “process mining solution”, will the Crown provide all Bidders a complete definition for unit of “process mining solution”, as well as the assumptions behind the sizing for each package and bundle, in order to ensure the appropriate quantities are applied for each level of pricing requested?

Answer 72: See also questions 18 and 65. The process mining solution that is specified is a toolset that would allow ESDC the ability to perform analytics and mapping functions against existing application processes and determine if there are any efficiencies that can be found in the process. Bidders must present their solution to fit the generic Annex B.

Question 73:

Will the answer to question #8 become a mandatory requirement in Annex C - evaluation criteria?

Answer 73: The Crown do not set GIT as a mandatory criteria as our code repository.

Question 74:

Will the Crown please confirm if the SAP versions referenced in the answer to question 12 are mandatory requirements?

Answer 74: The SAP versions mentioned in response of question 12 are not a mandatory criteria.

Question 75:

Please confirm that Annex A is provided to give clarity to technical requirements, and that Annex C is the only one of the two that bidders must complete when responding to technical requirements

Answer 75: Bidder’s must meet the requirements described in Annex A. Annex C contains all mandatory and rated criteria that the bidders are invited to answer and will be evaluated on.

Question 76:

Reference: R1.8, R1.9 and R1.10

It seems Canada is requesting duplicated information (i.e. “business continuity”, “contingency planning” and “Strategy to ramp up”). Would Canada please confirm?

Answer 76: See also Q47. R1.8 and R1.9 have been updated to respectively focussed on:

- R1.8: bot governance
- R1.9: business continuity

Question 77:

Reference: R1.8 and R1.9

It seems both requirements are identical. Would Canada please confirm?

Answer 77: R1.8 and R1.9 respectively focus on:

- R1.8: bot governance
- R1.9: business continuity

Question 78:

Reference: R1.10

The requirement and Rating criteria seem incomplete. Would Canada please confirm?

Answer 78: R1.10 is completed and the Crown invite bidders to describe how a contingency plan can be apply at an enterprise with their solution to allow ESDC to return as fast as possible at their normal RPA operation after a major issue.

Question 79:

It is an industry standard to license enterprise RPA software under an annual subscription model that is paid annually in full and in advance. Is this acceptable to the Crown for the enterprise RPA solicitation?

Answer 79: The Crown will accept an annual subscription.

Question 80:

The Column Headings in the first 2 tables (Table A and B) are Estimated Quantity and Estimated Price. In Table C Training, the Column headings are Estimated #, Firm Unit Price and Extended Price which raises the following questions:

- Why are bidders providing an estimated price for the software and a firm fixed price for training - should respondents be providing a firm fixed price for everything?
- Are the estimated prices for the software monthly costs or annual costs based on the estimated quantity being 12 months?
- Why are bidders only providing HST in Table A and not Tables B & C? Is GST/HST to be reflected in all tables?
- The totals in Table E are comprised of the total from Table A which includes HST and those from Tables B & C which don't include HST. Please clarify.

Answer 80:

- a) The bidders should provide a price for each elements stated in Annex B.
- b) Annual cost
- c) Please provide the costs and do not consider GST/HST
- d) Please provide total costs and do not consider GST/HST

Question 81:

RE: Question 27: As part of the Evaluation Criteria in Annex C, the Crown is requesting that vendors provide a detailed "written RPA strategic enterprise implementation plan" to satisfy a Mandatory criterion (M26) while the elements of the same plan are to be provided in specific detail to satisfy several Rated Criteria (R1.1 to R1.11) for the vendor's proposed RPA Solution. However, in the Statement of Work (Annex A), the only references to "implementation" appear to be in relation to the Proof of Concept in Section 2.6. Can the Crown confirm that the scope of the written "RPA strategic enterprise implementation plan" responses required in Annex C (mandatory and rated criteria) should only cover the delivery of the Proof of Concept described in Annex A and Annex E of the RFP? **Answer 27:** M25 and its point rated evaluated criteria will be removed from the initial submission and will not be required for this closing. In the revised and amended evaluation criterion, removed was M25 referring to the Implementation Plan. However, R1.1-R1.11 has not been removed. Could you kindly clarify if these rated requirements should also be removed and if not, why?

Answer 81: M25 has been removed from but R1.1 to R1.11 remains as rated criteria.

Question 82:

RE: Question 37: R8 Contractor Experience - The Government of Canada is endeavoring to create contract vehicles for RPA while acknowledging that there is limited experience in the federal government. The experience with RPA technologies is largely found in the OEM companies given that RPA is an emerging technology. As such, would Canada consider expanding the definition of Contractor to include the OEM with whom a bidder is partnered and thus allow the bidder to use the track record of the OEM to meet the mandatory and rated requirements? **Answer 37:** Yes, the Crown accept the bidder to demonstrate any previous implementation of their solution (R8) with the participations of any other partners. Does this mean we can use our partners references?

Answer 82: Yes the Crown will accept bidders to use their partners references.

Question 83:

We respectfully request an extension of 14 days (i.e. July 28 2021), so that all potential bidders can receive responses from ESDC/SSC and have sufficient time to incorporate the information into our proposals before the closing date.

Answer 83: The Crown will extend the closing date to July 20th.

Question 84:

In the above solicitation, respondents are able to suggest terms or clauses for the Crown to consider. Such a clause that is commercially challenging for many software vendors is "termination for convenience". The Crown should anticipate respondents to recommend alternative wording in their responses yet if they're not accepted, it can be problematic for the Crown and the respondent.

It's important for industry to know in advance if the Crown would accept "annual subscription licenses will be paid in full, in advance without no refund" would be acceptable so respondents can manage contractual risk. If the Government of Canada has the right to cancel and require a pro-rated rebate, accounting rules prevent industry from recognizing the annual booking revenue of the contract. Industry can work with a 3rd party to assume this risk which is ultimately paid for by the Crown. Can the Crown please clarify?

Answer 84:

Clause 5.14 Termination for Convenience, will be removed from the resulting contract clause as per the below amendment.

Question 85:

A Substantiation of Technical Compliance Form is referenced in the solicitation (Pages 9 and 10). Is there a specific document or template that is required to be filled for this? Or can we provide our response in a table form that addresses each specific item provided in Annex C?

Also, is The Crown okay with us providing a formal cover letter and executive summary as a separate attachment to the email submission?

Answer 85:

There is no specific template. A Table form that addresses each specific item provided in Annex C would be acceptable.

A formal cover letter and executive summary as a separate attachment to the email submission would be acceptable.

Modification 006:

At Resulting Contract, DELETE Clause 5.14 Termination for Convenience in its entirety.

ALL OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS REMAIN UNCHANGED.