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Québec

K1A 0S5

Bid Fax: (819) 997-9776

**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

THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS A SECURITY
REQUIREMENT

Vendor/Firm Name and Address

Raison sociale et adresse du
fournisseur/de l'entrepreneur

Issuing Office - Bureau de distribution

Informatics Professional Services Division / Division
des services professionnels en informatique

Les Terrasses de la Chaudière

10, rue Wellington, 4ième

étage/Floor

Gatineau

Québec

K1A 0S5

Title - Sujet TBIPS Tier 2 - ESDC	
Solicitation No. - N° de l'invitation G9292-226504/A	Amendment No. - N° modif. 004
Client Reference No. - N° de référence du client PREQ 100016504	Date 2021-08-31
GETS Reference No. - N° de référence de SEAG PW-\$\$ZM-625-39844	
File No. - N° de dossier 625zm.G9292-226504	CCC No./N° CCC - FMS No./N° VME
Solicitation Closes - L'invitation prend fin at - à 02:00 PM Eastern Daylight Saving Time EDT on - le 2021-09-21 Heure Avancée de l'Est HAE	
F.O.B. - F.A.B.	
Plant-Usine: <input type="checkbox"/> Destination: <input type="checkbox"/> Other-Autre: <input type="checkbox"/>	
Address Enquiries to: - Adresser toutes questions à: Haroutounian, Rosanna	Buyer Id - Id de l'acheteur 625zm
Telephone No. - N° de téléphone (873) 354-5346 ()	FAX No. - N° de FAX () -
Destination - of Goods, Services, and Construction: Destination - des biens, services et construction:	

Instructions: See Herein

Instructions: Voir aux présentes

Delivery Required - Livraison exigée	Delivery Offered - Livraison proposée
Vendor/Firm Name and Address Raison sociale et adresse du fournisseur/de l'entrepreneur	
Telephone No. - N° de téléphone Facsimile No. - N° de télécopieur	
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)	
Signature	Date

AMENDMENT NO. 004

This amendment is raised to revise the solicitation and to answer bidders' questions.

SOLICITATION REVISIONS:

2. At ATTACHMENT 4.1, MTC5:

Delete: a) Provide fully qualified resources to ESDC within two days of receipt of a Task Authorization request;

Insert: a) Provide fully qualified resources to ESDC within five days of receipt of a Task Authorization request;

3. At ATTACHMENT 4.1, Table 1:

Delete: **4. SOW Tasks including Deliverables for the Resource Category from this solicitation**

Insert: **4. SOW Tasks for the Resource Category from this solicitation**

4. At ATTACHMENT 4.1, Table 1:

Delete: **Number of tasks and deliverables mapped:**

Insert: **Number of tasks mapped:**

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question 9: Do you know if there will be an aboriginal set aside also?

Answer 9: ESDC does not have plans at this time for an Aboriginal set-aside for this requirement.

Question 10: Could the client confirm if any firm/individual is currently performing this or similar work or has done so in the last 12 months. If yes, have they been invited? If there is an incumbent, would you please provide the name of the supplier(s), contract(s) date and total amount paid for the services?

Answer 10: As indicated in the Notice of Proposed Procurement on the Buy and Sell website, there is no incumbent for this requirement.

Question 11: Could the Crown please indicate if there is or has been an incumbent company supplying these same or similar services in the last 12 months? If so, could you please provide the name of the supplier as well as the duration and value of the contract?

Answer 11: As indicated in the Notice of Proposed Procurement on the Buy and Sell website, there is no incumbent for this requirement.

Question 12: Regarding Criterion RTC6: Would the Crown accept proof of an ISO certification for the Bidder's organization which is no longer current?

Answer 12: Your request was considered but the criterion remains unchanged.

Question 13: Excellence Canada is an independent, not-for-profit organization that in partnership with Industry Canada is committed to advancing organizational excellence across Canada. To be certified, organizations must demonstrate best-practices in the following areas: Leadership, Planning, Customers, People and Processes. Companies that receive certification are among the best run organizations in Canada. This Standard also leads to the Canada Awards for Excellence, of which the Governor General of Canada is the Patron. Excellence Canada has a preferred quality program that many industry leaders in Canada have determined is a better fit and meet and even exceed ISO standards as it pertains to Professional Services organizations. Excellence Canada has also been embraced by Public Organizations such as: Treasury Board Secretariat, Government of Ontario, The Regional Municipality of Durham, Toronto East General Hospital, North York General Hospital, Workplace Safety North, Mental Health Association of Canada, among others. Based on the qualifications and recognition throughout many areas of government, would Canada please confirm that Excellence Canada is an acceptable standard to satisfy the demonstration of compliance with the standards listed in RTC6?

Answer 13: Your request was considered but the criterion remains unchanged.

Question 14: Limiting Bidders to four (4) reference contracts to demonstrate a minimum of 37,750 billable days is highly restrictive. Would ESDC allow Bidders to provide four (4) Customer Reference Contracts per Workstream to demonstrate they meet the minimum billed days for MTC2?

Answer 14: Your request was considered but the criterion remains unchanged.

Question 15: Attachment 4.2 Point Rated Technical Criteria and Forms, Page 10 - RTC6 requests that bidders hold a current ISO Quality Management Certification to score points. Many bidders experienced in supporting Government of Canada staffing requirements have developed specialized, in-house quality management processes which would provide greater value to ESDC than the ISO Certification. To promote fairness and transparency, and to avoid unnecessarily restricting capable bidders from scoring full points, we respectfully request the removal of RTC6.

Answer 15: Your request was considered but the criterion remains unchanged.

Question 16: Mandatory Technical Criterion MTC2 requires bidders to provide four contracts which have billed a minimum of \$5m within the last five years. Given the often times slow ramp-up of large contracts, and the reduction in workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic MTC2 leaves an exceedingly narrow timeframe from which contracts may meet this requirement. In order to accommodate a diverse array of competitive vendors who can provide great value to the Crown would you please amend MTC2 to accept contracts which have billed a minimum of \$5m and been active within the last five years.

Answer 16: Your request was considered but the criterion remains unchanged.

Question 17: Mandatory Technical Criterion MTC2 requires bidders to cite a large number of billed days, would the Crown please confirm that resources that were placed under alternative job titles but performed at least 50% of the tasks associated with a specific TBIPS category may be cited against that category.

Answer 17: Confirmed.

Question 18: MTC2 - Please confirm that the requirement of 4 contracts is per Workstream and not 4 contracts for all workstreams. It would be unattainable to provide 750000+ billable days on a maximum of 4 contracts for all 4 workstreams.

Answer 18: No. This solicitation is intended to result in the award of up to four contracts for the provision of services in all four workstreams on "an as-and-when-requested" basis, as described in the solicitation document.

Question 19: RTC6 awards 25 points for an ISO 9001:2015 certification. The mandatory and rated criteria specifically MTC3, MTC4 and MTC5 include details for a client manager, risk management strategy and a contract management plan including managing processes for onboard/offboard of resources as well as quality assurance and contingency plans. RTC2, RTC3 and RTC4 further evaluate the company for their depth in these areas.

We ask that RTC6 be removed in order for the bidders to be evaluated only on their experience. RTC6 is heavily-weighted on top of the extensive mandatory and rated requirements set out in this RFP that will provide the bidders capabilities of delivering and managing services.

Answer 19: Your request was considered but the criterion remains unchanged.

Question 20: Considering there are four (4) distinct workstreams and that Canada will be awarding up to four (4) separate contracts, will Canada consider splitting the evaluation by workstream to allow a higher number of qualified vendors to submit responses to this RFP? Requiring vendors to demonstrate a minimum of 26,450 days billed across 20 specific resource categories, on four (4) distinct contract references is extremely limiting. By allowing vendors to respond to one, or any number or combination of workstreams, it will allow the client to receive a higher number of competitive bids, which in turn will ensure that Canada receives the best possible value from industry.

Answer 20: Your request was considered but the requirement remains unchanged.

Question 21: Regarding MTC2, can Canada please confirm if each of the four (4) referenced contracts must meet the billable days requirement for every category within each workstream, or if the billable days requirement for each category can be demonstrated collectively across the four (4) reference contracts?

Answer 21: The billable days requirement for each category can be demonstrated collectively across the four (4) reference contracts.

Question 22: MTC1 requires vendors to reference a contract where they supported a large IM/IT transformation project within the last 7 years. Considering the magnitude of the references that are called for in this response, we kindly ask that the Crown amends the time periods in MTC2 and RTC1 to match the 7 year time frame from MTC1, in order to be able to include billable days from the reference used in MTC1, considering there would be a significant amount of category overlap with the references called for in MTC2.

Answer 22: Your request was considered but the requirement remains unchanged.

Question 23: Will the client kindly confirm that Bidders may respond to one (1) or more workstreams of their choosing and are not required to respond to all four (4) workstreams.

Answer 23: No. The Bidder must submit a bid that demonstrates its ability to provide services under all four workstreams of this requirement, as described in the solicitation document.

Question 24: Will the client kindly confirm that task mapping is required only for the Level 3 resource level, as opposed to all resource levels.

Answer 24: The Bidder must demonstrate similar resource categories by mapping at least 50% of the resource category's Statement of Work (SOW) – Annex A tasks of this requirement to the tasks completed by the resource within the similar resource category identified in the referenced contract. Where there are multiple levels for a single resource category required in the SOW – Annex A of this requirement, mapping is required to at least 50% of the Level 3 resource category's tasks of this requirement.

Question 25: Are Bidders required to submit their responses in one technical document, or would the client prefer to receive a separate submission per workstream?

Answer 25: Please see Question and Answer 23. The Bidder must submit a bid that demonstrates its ability to provide services under all four workstreams of this requirement, as described in the solicitation document.

Question 26: Attachment 4.1 Mandatory Technical Criteria and Forms, Page 2, MTC2 – Will the client please confirm if Bidders are permitted to cite up to four (4) contracts PER workstream to demonstrate billable days? If so, will four (4) unique and separate contracts per workstream be accepted, or must the same four (4) contracts be referenced throughout all workstreams responded to?

Answer 26: No. The minimum number of billed days for all of the resource categories in all workstreams must be met among the same four contracts.

Question 27: Attachment 4.2 Point Rated Technical Criteria and Forms, Page 10 - RTC6 requests that Bidders hold a current ISO Quality Management Certification to score points. Many Bidders experienced in supporting Government of Canada staffing requirements have developed specialized, in-house quality management processes which would provide greater value to ESDC than the ISO Certification. To promote fairness and transparency, and to avoid unnecessarily restricting capable Bidders from scoring full points, we respectfully request the removal of RTC6.

Answer 27: Your request was considered but the criterion remains unchanged.

Question 28: In RTC6 Canada requests that Bidders hold ISO Quality Management Certification (ISO 9001:2015). It is our understanding that Canada is looking to confirm that Bidder's follow appropriate Quality management measures in order to deliver the work successfully. However having such a certification does not necessarily guarantee that these best practices are applied in projects. Additionally, throughout the solicitation Canada requests to see strategies and substantiation on how these

approaches were applied rather than certifications in these areas. In order to ensure that Bidders apply their Quality Management processes and are following best practices, would Canada consider changing this requirement to “The Bidder should provide in its bid, the Quality Management Strategy it proposes to implement in the resulting Contract.”

Answer 28: Your request was considered but the criterion remains unchanged.

Question 29: The Crown is requiring Bidders to demonstrate their capability to deliver 75,500 Billable Days (maximum rated points), comprising 20 unique TBIPS Resource Categories over four(4) TBIPS Service Streams by referencing just four (4) Customer Contracts.

Any Firm that has delivered this composition and volume of Professional Services over a five-year period from Bid Publication should be allowed to respond to this Solicitation, regardless of the number of solicitation-defined Contracts.

We believe that the Crown’s ability to contract with Firms of sufficient size and experience to meet ESDC’s requirements will not be jeopardized by an increase in the allowable number of Customer Reference Contracts.

We request that the Crown update MTC2 to read: “The Bidder must provide a minimum of four (4), but no more than five (5) Customer Reference Contracts ...”.

With respect to RTC3-B and RTC4-B, we propose that the Crown simply change: “... utilized for each of the four (4) reference Contracts provided in MTC2.” to “... utilized for four (4) of the reference Contracts provided in MTC2.”, thereby not affecting the current Rated Points allocation.

Answer 29: Your request was considered but the criteria remain unchanged.

Question 30: We wish to confirm the scope and intended use of this vehicle, particularly with respect to ongoing major transformation initiatives within the department where technology partners are already engaged (such as Benefits Delivery Modernization – BDM).

Could the Crown please confirm that the scope of Task Authorizations to be completed under this vehicle will be contained to supporting maintenance activities for legacy Canada Pension Plan (CPP) technology systems?

Answer 30: Confirmed.

Question 31: Regarding MTC2 – item 3)g)v)...

The requirement asks Bidders to map “...at least 50% of the resource category’s Statement of Work (SOW) – Annex A tasks of this requirement to the tasks completed by the resource...”. However, the template given to Bidders in Form M2, Table 1 reads: “4. SOW Tasks including Deliverables for the Resource Category from this solicitation” and requests a cell to be completed showing “Number of tasks and deliverables mapped:”

Can Canada confirm that the request for mapping similar resource categories only refers to SOW tasks, not including deliverables?

a) Can Canada amend Table 1 in Form M2 accordingly?

Answer 31: Yes, Canada confirms that the request for mapping similar resource categories only refers to SOW tasks. Table 1 has been revised. Please see Solicitation Revision 3 and Solicitation Revision 4.

Question 32: With regards to the corporate mandatory and rated evaluation criteria, would the Crown consider awarding multiple contract(s) on a per Workstream basis?

Answer 32: Your request was considered but the requirement remains unchanged.

Question 33: With regards to: MTC2/RTC1- A,B,C,D – As currently written, this requirement is for bidders to demonstrate 20 categories under 4 different TBIPS Streams using only 4 contracts each with \$5Million+ billing, and going back only 5 years; and requires a very large number of days just to meet MTC2. This is unreasonable especially given the fact that these types of large contracts often end up going on for more than 5 years and are often specific to 1 TBIPS Stream resulting in a large contract being only relevant to a few of the categories listed in the RFP. **We ask that: (A) the time frame for demonstration of days billed be extended to contracts that were active within the past 7 years which is consistent with MTC1 and RTC5; (B) that 6 contracts be permitted to be used to cover all 20 categories; (C) and that 4 of the 6 contracts remain as per currently stated with an overall billing value of \$5Million+HST, but that the additional 2 contracts be allowed to have an overall billing value of \$2Million+ incl HST.** This will result in the RFP being truly competitive; it will ensure that ESDC gets enough compliant bids from experienced GoC suppliers, while also ensuring extensive experience from all bidders.

Answer 33: Your request was considered but the criteria remain unchanged.

Question 34: With regards to: MTC4/RTC3 A and B and MTC5/RTC4- A and B: Can you please confirm that an email from the client will also be accepted, as actual letters maybe difficult to obtain at this time when everyone is working from their home and many GC managers are away on vacation. Email is easier to provide from remote locations and will not be putting undue pressure on the client given the current work situation and vacation season.

Answer 34: No, an e-mail from the client will not be accepted. ESDC will accept electronic signature of the form and/or scanned copies of the form with the client's signature.

Question 35: With regards to RTC5: Can you please amend the value of contracts that can be used for demonstration of experience with new technologies from the current \$2 Million to \$1 Million incl. HST. The reason for this request is that many clients requesting services in emerging technology are "other than" Federal Government clients. However, private sector organizations as well as municipal organizations tend to award smaller value contracts in the form of Purchase Orders with limited time period for each PO and therefore limited value. Can you please amend this criterion so that all valid experience providing services with emerging technologies can be recognized and demonstrated?

Answer 35: Your request was considered but the criterion remains unchanged.

Question 36: With regards to RTC6: Point Rated Technical Criteria RTC6 requires companies to hold a current ISO certification in order to score 25 points, which is a large portion of the total points. This is very unfair, restricting the list of potential bidders who can score well to a small group of mostly very large organizations and eliminating local companies that have been focusing on providing these kinds of

professional services to the Government of Canada. Can you please consider removing this criterion entirely? Or can you please consider asking for either an ISO certification **OR** the bidder's "Corporate Quality Assurance Program" in order to score the full 25 points?

Answer 36: Your request was considered but the criterion remains unchanged.

Question 37: With regard to Solicitation# G9292-226504/A, could you please confirm whether being awarded this contract would be a conflict of interest to participating in awards under the Benefits Delivery Modernization requirement?

Answer 37: Being awarded a contract under Solicitation# G9292-226504/A presents no conflict of interest to participating in awards under the Benefits Delivery Modernization requirement.

Question 38: Are the firms and consortiums who have been pre-qualified as delivery partners for the Benefit Delivery Modernization Program precluded from bidding on this solicitation?

Answer 38: Firms and consortiums pre-qualified in the Benefit Delivery Modernization Program are not precluded from participating in this solicitation, provided they hold a Tier 2 TBIPS SA in the National Capital Region (NCR) with the required security clearance and required resource categories.

Question 39: Is the Transformation program referenced in Annex A - Statement of Work the Benefit Delivery Modernization Program or is this solicitation to support a separate and different program which will modernize and transform ESDC's Pensions programs (Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security)?

Answer 39: This requirement is a solicitation separate from the Benefit Delivery Modernization Program.

Question 40: Regarding Page 34 of 95, PART 7 - RESULTING CONTRACT CLAUSES, 7.2 Task Authorization, Item e) states that contractors will have two working days after receiving the draft Task Authorization to confirm acceptance of the request, as well as confirmation that within an additional three working days, the resource's documentation will be submitted.

However, in requirement MTC5, item a) requests that Bidders provide fully qualified resources to ESDC within two days of receipt of a Task Authorization request.

Could Canada clarify whether the requirement is to respond to Task Authorizations within two days or within five days?

Answer 40: The requirement is to respond to Task Authorizations within five days. MTC5 has been revised. Please see Solicitation Revision 2.

ALL OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS REMAIN THE SAME.