



SHARED SERVICES CANADA Challenge-Based Solicitation (CBS)

For

Robotic Process Automation Accessibility and Official Languages Survey

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| Solicitation No. | 2BS-1-91027 | Date | 2021-10-04 |
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What We Heard Report

Under Agile Procurement Process 3.0 (APP3.0), Shared Services Canada (SSC) is piloting an improved model of engagement with the private sector. The goal is to collect supplier feedback throughout the procurement process and to quickly refine procurement elements, as necessary. SSC is committed to listening to suggestions from vendors with an open mind and reporting back to them in a transparent way.

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| What We Heard No. | 02 |
| Where We Heard | Accessibility and Official Languages Survey for RPA Solutions |
| When We Heard | August – September 2021 |

Key Findings

[Thank-you for your feedback and responses on your ability and capacity to meet Official Languages and Accessibility requirements.](#)

We received 14 survey responses (2 through email); however, not all respondents responded to all questions.

- Canada observed throughout the Solution Presentations and Professional Services (PS) Presentations during the Invitation-to-Refine (ITR), a high degree of compliance towards Accessibility. In the Accessibility and Official Languages survey, the responses or feedback was mixed. The responses indicated partially meeting accessibility requirements and that accessibility requirements are part of many organization’s product roadmap - this was a welcomed finding. Canada recognizes that a detailed analysis is required to detail each solution component and evaluate it against Accessibility standards. We recognized the survey design for this topic was not optimal for the participants, we appreciate your effort and we will try to improve next time.



- Responses indicate that the 4 out of 7 functionalities of setting one’s official language, using French accents and diacritical marks, receipt of error details and exceptions, and training are available in both English and French.
- There were no responses by all participants to the question about whether respondents would agree to a contractual commitment to the proposed dates in their roadmap for accessibility compliance. Conducting a survey helps inform Canada about the market and industry. We will take note of this response as we continue to progress through the procurement for RPA. The [Accessible Canada Act](#) is law, and it is our responsibility to promote Accessibility standards and to use the best standard available for Canada and Canadians. Fortunately, through our survey, 13 respondents acknowledged that Canada is seeking a completed Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR) for the chosen solution.

Before selecting a solution and at a later date, the Technical Authority intends to consult and leverage the expertise available within the organization for Accessibility testing and evaluation as it relates to the solution’s components. The evaluation of solution components will be actioned at a later date, in coordination with the subject matter experts from our internal accessibility team.

Theme: Survey Highlights - Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Accessibility Requirements/Responses

What We Heard – 1

Thank-you for your detailed feedback to help Canada understand the current state of Accessibility in the robotic process automation industry.

Anonymous survey responses allow us to gather and share information.

Before jumping into our remarks for ICT products and Accessibility, the most encouraging feedback we received, was that some organizations have a dedicated accessibility division conducting bi-annual or quarterly evaluations for improvement of their solution for accessibility standards. As Canada conducts many procurements for technology solutions, this was encouraging feedback for us to read. We look forward to learning more details.

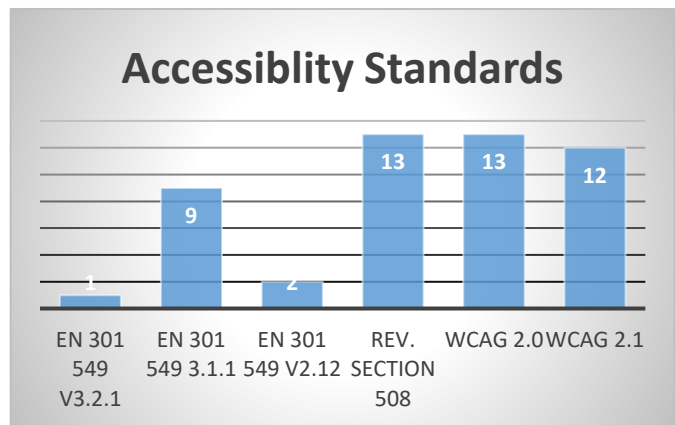


SSC's Remarks – 1

With regards to Accessibility standards, Canada is seeking and trying to use the best international standards available for Canada and Canadians for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) products and its components. There are multiple versions of the European standard, EN 301 549, and the most recent standard is the most comprehensive. In contrast to the WCAG standard and its requirements and versions; our preference is to measure the solution against the EN 301 549 standard. Organizations and products that subscribe to the more recent standard (EN 301 549 V3.2.1) will likely be assessed more favorably at the time of Accessibility Conformance Report analysis.

The survey listed six versions of accessibility standards, some being more recent than others and some having more comprehensive requirements than others. Directly from the survey, we have found:

- 93% (13 respondents) indicated they meet WCAG 2.0 standard or higher
- 86% (12 respondents) indicated they meet the minimum EN 301 549 standard or higher
- 64% (9 respondents) indicated they meet the second highest accessibility standard available (EN 301 549 3.1.1 (2019-11) Harmonized European Standard)
- 93% (13 respondents) indicated they will continue efforts to improve their compliance rating including
- 86% (12 respondents) who partially met the criteria) towards higher accessibility standards.



- Many respondents anticipate improvements for their solution with their next ACR. Completion of product improvement varied from January – December 2022; however, 71% (10 responses) declared that improvement would be made by Q1 of the calendar year 2022 and the other three responses were for a longer time horizon.
- 71% (10 respondents) indicated that their company has a dedicated division for testing accessibility standards.
- The two most common ways for clients to report accessibility improvements are through Product Improvement Request and Service Desk Ticket request.
 - Fourteen percent (2 respondents), indicated that an engineering development change request could be requested. Seven percent (1 respondent) indicated an alternate process was available and lastly, 7% (1 respondent) indicated that there was no method for improvement.

Theme: Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR)

What We Heard - 2

Would partial compliance to accessibility requirements be acceptable and meet evaluation criteria?



SSC's Remarks - 2

To help clarify the inquiry about whether or not, Canada will accept partial accessibility requirements will depend on the analysis using the Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR). Historically, Canada's demand for Accessibility requirements increases when the solution will be used by many employees (or all employees of the organization), like launching a bot or digital work from the system's tray. In contrast, the demand for accessibility conformance may decrease with fewer employees using the solution, like a development environment studio. Whether the solution and the solution's components are used by few or many employees, Canada will always try to use the best accessibility standard irrespective of the scenario.

Canada recognizes the cost and time required for industry to adapt to the newer and more stringent standards, so some accommodation may be extended to vendors who have a forward-looking, detailed roadmap for accessibility standard improvement. We have considered the information provided to us through the survey and have ascertained the following:

- Canada supports continuous improvement in meeting the needs of users;
- Canada expects a strategy and roadmap reflecting continuous improvement;
- Canada expects reports on progress, on a regular basis, and when significant updates have been made from both the Technical Account Manager and other relevant sources (e.g. notification alert system) as required.

Therefore, partially meeting EN 301 549, with the aim of adopting and continuous improvement towards the most recent accessibility standard requirements, will likely be evaluated more favorably; however, if that commitment is not demonstrated, then there will likely be an avenue to remove those solutions from the Standing Offer.

Please remember that interested vendors will still need to submit an Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR) based on the Voluntary Product Assessment Template (VPAT) at a later stage. Please prepare and action your evaluations as the Technical Authority will need the ACRs for consultation with our Accessibility subject matter experts (SME).



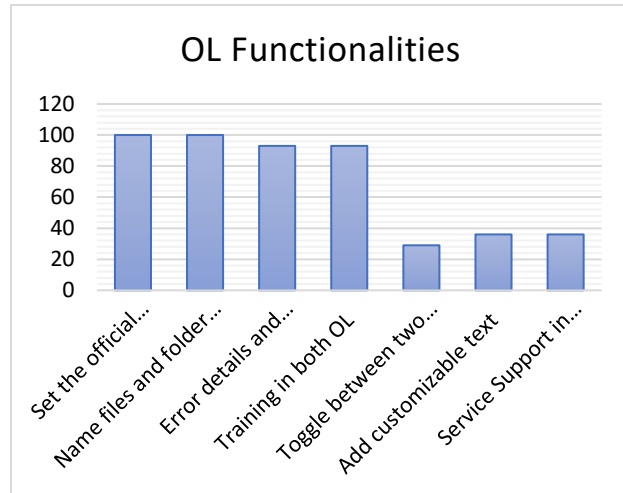
Theme: Survey Highlights - Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Official Languages Requirements

What We Heard – 3

The responses regarding official languages, English and French, demonstrate evidence that the market supports languages features.

Functionalities that are present include:

- 100% (14 respondents) indicated that 'yes' users can set an official language of their choice;
- 100% (14 respondents) indicated that 'yes' folder and file names can include French accents and diacritical marks;
- 93% (13 respondents) indicated that 'yes' error details and exceptions are received in users language preference; and
- 93% (13 respondents) indicated that they can provide training in both official languages.



Functionalities that are not currently present include:

- 71% (10 respondents) indicated that users cannot toggle between the two languages while working;
- 64% (9 respondents) indicated that one cannot add customizable text;
- 64% (9 respondents) indicated that service support is only available in one official language.

SSC's Remarks – 3

The key takeaway from the Official Languages Act is that employees and officers have the right to work in the language of their choice and our intention is to ensure solutions and professional services can meet this requirement for Canada. We appreciate your questions of clarification and are pleased with the number of functionalities indicated by the responses.

Although Canada's Official Languages Act indicates English and French, there is an example of Canadian government terminology in a resource titled *Terminium*. It is used for translation and is a database of terms and vocabulary, an ideal source for Canadian style writing and is available in the Public Domain: https://www.btb.termiumplus.gc.ca/tpv2alpha/alpha-eng.html?lang=eng&i=1&index=alt&codom2nd_wet=1.



Theme: ICT Official Language Requirements – Definition of “Canadian” English and French

What We Heard – 4

A request for clarity on the definition of “Canadian” English and French and how that definition fits with Canada’s Official Languages Act.

SSC’s Remarks – 4

We heard comments concerning the definition of ‘Canadian’ English or French as it relates to Canada’s Official Languages Act. After releasing the Accessibility and Official Languages survey to industry, we received some questions through the point of contact regarding ‘Canadian’ English/French. As previously mentioned in Q&A #1, “Canadian” English/French is about language localization, differences of dialect and vocabulary. You are correct in that Canada’s Official Languages Act refers to English and French.

However, to ensure that the content is of equal quality in both official languages, we felt it was important to obtain feedback from industry through our survey. Our intention is to promote content with a Canadian style of terminology or elements found within the user-interface or training material. Our intention was not to confuse or mislead the vendors, but to understand whether or not the proposed solutions included a form of Canadian localization.

Therefore, Canada will not specify “Canadian English and Canadian French” for the various functionalities. The requirement will simply state English and French. However, if needed, we will ask for permission to translate or adapt content to ensure that material is of equal quality in both official languages.

Theme: ICT Official Language Requirements – Toggling functionality

What We Heard – 5

Is the toggling functionality required?

SSC’s Remarks – 5

Canada understands that a user can choose their language of preference at the outset; however, toggling is not available.

We have validated with the official languages team that since users can select their language of choice at the outset (English and French) and because this is not a static web page, toggling can remain as a desirable functionality, but is not required as a mandatory functionality.



Theme: ICT Official Language Requirements – Customizable text functionality

What We Heard – 6 Is customizable text required?

SSC's Remarks – 6 Canada understands that most vendors currently do not have the feature for customizable text for dashboards and reports.

Given that the language may not reflect the nuances of dialect or business need, then Canada will expect customizable text to be part of a vendor's official languages roadmap. However, it will not be required at the time of bid evaluation.

Theme: ICT Official Language Requirements – Support Services

What We Heard – 7 Are bilingual support services required?

SSC's Remarks – 7 Canada wanted to understand the current ability of industry to provide bilingual service support. To ensure usage of this novel tool by several people across the country (as per the role-based personas) service support will be required.

Canada will work with the vendor to ensure that English and French user profiles can receive service support. Bilingual service support based in Canada is a favourable requirement.