

SHARED SERVICES CANADA

Request for Information for Data Centre Networking (DCN) Initiative

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Closing Date and Time	Date and Time April 08 , 2022 @ 3:00 PM / 1500 h (referred to in this RFI as "RFI Closing Period")		
Time Zone	Eastern Standard Time (EST)		
Destination of Goods/Services	Canada		
Email Address for Submitting your Response by the Closing Date	Oliver.Librada@ssc-spc.gc.ca		

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PART 1 – PURPOSE AND NATURE OF THE REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

1.1 Purpose of the Request for Information

Shared Services Canada (SSC) is launching this initial Request for Information (RFI) to engage industry, through consultation, on its interest, capacity and ability to supply and deliver the requirements of the SSC NSSB Data Centre Networking project.

The purpose of this document is to define the scope of the requirements for Data Centre Networking (DCN) goods and services that will allow Shared Service Canada (SSC) to provide segregated DCN connectivity services for the next 10 years to government partner sites, networks and environments, including those that may be deemed 24/7 Government Wide Mission Critical Services.

The purpose of this initial RFI is to achieve the following:

- a) Provide industry with initial information on the Data Centre Networking (DCN) Initiative;
- b) Request detailed information and feedback from industry, including preliminary cost estimates;
- c) Determine the capability of industry to satisfy the requirements; and
- d) Determine any limitations and restrictions to industry capabilities, such as, but not limited to, Intellectual Property Rights and other factors that would impact their ability to bid on any resulting solicitation and/or to deliver the requirements.

Respondents are requested to provide feedback based on requirements defined on Annex A – Statement of Work, Annex B – List of Deliverables and Annex C – Preliminary System Requirements. Further RFIs will be conducted with, but not limited to, the following objectives:

- a) Provide industry with Preliminary System Requirements and sustainment requirements;
- b) Refine the requirements and further develop the procurement and sustainment strategies;
- c) Gather industry knowledge, expertise and recommendations with regard to best practices that would increase the success of a solicitation and/or identify any risks that would impact a solicitation;
- d) Obtain industry feedback on any issues that would impact their ability to bid on any resulting solicitation and/or to deliver the requirements; and
- e) Enhance competition, access and fairness to the resulting solicitation(s).

1.2 Nature of the Request for Information

This is not a bid solicitation. This RFI may not result in issuance of a solicitation and will not result in the award of any contract. As a result, interested 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. Nor will this RFI result in the creation of any source list. Therefore, whether or not any interested supplier responds to this RFI, this will not preclude that supplier from participating in any future procurement. Also, the procurement of any of the goods and services described in this RFI will not necessarily follow this RFI. This RFI is simply intended to solicit information and feedback from industry with respect to the matters described in this RFI.

Nothing in this RFI will be construed as a commitment from SSC to issue a solicitation for this requirement. SSC may use non-proprietary information provided in this review and/or in the preparation of any formal solicitation document.

SSC will not be bound by anything stated herein and reserves the right to change at any time, any or all parts of the requirement, as it deems necessary. SSC also reserves the right to revise its

procurement approach, as it considers appropriate, either based upon information submitted in response to this RFI or for any other reason it deems appropriate.

PART 2 – RESPONSE INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION

2.1 Nature and Format of Responses Requested

Canada's current view of its requirement for the SSC NSSB Data Centre Networking initiative and the preliminary technical requirements are all detailed in this RFI.

Respondents are invited to provide comments regarding the content of the annexed documents included in this RFI. Respondents can comment directly on, and return an electronic copy of the applicable Annex(es) listed at Part 5 – Related Documents. Alternatively, Respondents can comment on a different media and format by appropriately referencing the document and section commented on. Respondents should explain any assumptions they make in their interpretation of the requirements.

Further, Canada is seeking input and feedback to specific requirements (refer to Annex B – List of Deliverables and Annex C – Preliminary System Requirements) covering important elements of the requirement prior to proceeding with developing its procurement strategy.

Respondents are invited to provide the name(s) of the person(s) who will participate to prepare supplier's responses.

2.2 Response Costs

Canada will not reimburse any respondent for expenses incurred in responding to this RFI.

2.3 Treatment of Responses

2.3.1 Use of Responses

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

2.3.2 Review Team

A review team composed of representatives of SSC review the responses and participate in all industry engagement activities. Canada 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.

2.3.3 Confidentiality

Respondents should indicate and mark any portions of their response that they consider proprietary or confidential. Canada will handle these portions in a confidential manner in accordance with the Access to Information Act of Canada.

2.3.4 Follow-up Activity

SSC may, at its discretion, contact any respondents to follow up with additional questions or for clarification of any aspect of a response. SSC may, at its discretion agree to meet with respondents to provide respondents with the opportunity to present and/or demonstrate their capabilities in relation to this RFI.

Respondents' presentations are at no obligation to SSC and respondents will be responsible

for all costs associated with SSC's invitation to make a presentation.

2.4 Contents of this RFI

This RFI contains preliminary draft technical requirements, costing information, and procurement information. Comments regarding any aspect of this RFI are requested.

2.5 Format of Responses

2.5.1 Response Preparation and Submission

SSC requests that respondents submit their responses electronically in MS Office, PDF or compatible formats.

Responses must be submitted only by email or through a link on an online storage platform. If the link is not accessible by SSC, Respondent's must provide an alternate method or an alternate online platform to submit their responses.

Due to the nature of the Request for Information, transmission of responses by mail/courier to SSC **will not be accepted**.

2.5.2 Response Content

The first page of each document of the response provided should contain:

- a) The RFI number;
- b) The name of the company that the respondent is representing;
- c) The title, the name, and the contact information of the respondent; and
- d) The date of submission of the documents.

All pages should be identified with the company's name along with page numbers.

2.6 Enquiries

SSC will not necessarily respond to enquiries in writing or by circulating answers to all interested suppliers as this is not a solicitation process. However, respondents who have questions regarding this RFI may direct their enquiries to the Contracting Authority named below:

Name:	Oliver Librada
Division:	Enterprise IT Procurement
Address:	180 Kent Street, Ottawa, Ontario
Telephone:	343-542-8460
E-mail address:	Oliver.Librada@ssc-spc.gc.ca

2.7 Submission of Responses

2.7.1 Submission of Responses

Suppliers interested in providing a response should submit it in accordance with section 2.5 to the attention of the Contracting Authority by the time and the date on page 1 of the RFI to the address indicated in Part 2 section 2.6.

2.7.2 Responsibility for Timely Delivery

Each respondent should ensure their response is delivered on time to the correct email address.

2.8 Security Requirements

There are no security requirements associated with responding to this RFI. Any future procurement actions undertaken in support of this requirement might require a government security clearance.

Suppliers interested in being sponsored should begin the process to obtain their security clearance by contacting the Contracting Authority.

2.9 Official Languages

Responses to this RFI are requested to be presented in either of the Official Languages of Canada.

2.10 Industry Day

During this RFI period, the following activities might take place:

- Additional One-on-One sessions, if required for clarification purpose

Canada will not reimburse any respondent for expenses incurred in relation to the attendance of any of the above activities.

Following the industry consultation period, SSC will review the responses received and update the provided information as applicable. This RFI will be amended with updated documents as appropriate.

PART 3 – PRELIMINARY PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

3.1 Introduction

The procurement strategy for any of the DCN Initiative requirements has not yet been determined. SSC will confirm, define and identify its proposed procurement strategy following internal and industry consultations such as this initial RFI.

As outlined in section 1.2 above, nothing in this RFI will be construed as a commitment from SSC to issue a solicitation for this requirement. No timeline has been established for the procurement of DCN Initiative requirements. This initial and follow-on RFI will inform the development of the potential procurement strategy, requirements and timelines.

3.1.1 Approximate Schedule

Activity	Date
Initial RFI with Initial Industry Feedback	March 15 – April 8, 2022
One-on-One Sessions if required for Clarification purpose	2 weeks after RFI Closing
Industry Day	TBD
Draft RFP	TBD (15 day posting)
Posting Final RFP on GETS	TBD (15 day posting)

3.1.2 Trade Agreements

Unless specified otherwise, the requirement is subject to the provisions of the Canada Free Trade Agreement (CFTA), Canada - European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), World Trade Organization Agreement on Government Procurement (WTO-AGP), Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), Canada - Chile Free Trade Agreement (CCFTA), Canada - Colombia Free Trade Agreement, Canada - Honduras Free Trade Agreement, Canada - Korea Free Trade Agreement, Canada - Panama Free Trade Agreement, Canada - Peru Free Trade Agreement (CPFTA) and the Canada - Ukraine Free Trade Agreement (CUFTA).

3.2 Background

It is part of SSC's mandate to plan, execute and manage the procurement of certain Goods and Services on behalf of SSC and its partners above a certain value.

3.3 Industry Capability

Respondents responding to this RFI are requested to provide feedback listed in Annex C – preliminary system requirements,

3.4 Preliminary System Requirements and Associated Costing

Annex C describes the preliminary technical requirements. This Annex requests Respondents to provide technical information in order for Canada to prepare its documents for project approval.

Annex B – List of Deliverables requests Respondents to provide list of deliverables and costing feedback based on the requirements specified in Annex C,

PART 4 – INDUSTRY DAY AND ONE-ON-ONE SESSIONS

To ensure the successful procurement of system requirements as identified by the DCN Initiative, Canada seeks to engage industry through an Industry Day and one-on-one sessions, as required, with interested suppliers as part of this RFI process.

Canada will engage industry to:

- a) Examine proposed solutions from industry to meet the DCN requirements.
- b) Establish cost estimates associated with potential solutions;
- c) Develop among Canada and industry participants a shared understanding of potential DCN procurement elements, risks, challenges, and opportunities;
- d) Discuss any additional sustainment requirements - including IP rights, supply chain collaboration, performance incentives for a more comprehensive sustainment, and understand current market capacity and interest;
- e) Develop an understanding of Canadian and international capabilities relevant to each of the DCN systems;

4.1 Invitation to Industry Day(s) and One-on-One Sessions

The initial Industry Day is planned for early spring. The location and timings will be published in an amendment to this RFI. The initial Industry Day objective is to review the scope of the preliminary requirements outlined in the RFI and to answer questions. It is recommended that suppliers who intend to submit a response to the RFI attend or send a representative.

Suppliers are requested to confirm their attendance by providing, in writing, to the Contracting Authority, the name(s) of the person(s) who will be attending and their title, the invitation form and a list of potential concerns they wish to discuss no later than (TBD)

4.1.1 Initial Industry Day

The initial Industry Day is intended to be an open forum. It will allow Canada representatives to present industry representatives with information about the DCN Initiative and communicate high-level equipment capability requirements. It will also provide a venue for industry representatives to ask questions and seek information required to gain a sound understanding of Canada's business needs.

Representatives from SSC will lead Industry Day presentations and discussions on the technical and procurement requirements.

PART 5 – RELATED DOCUMENTS

See attached files on Buy and Sell:

- Annex A – Statement of Work
- Annex B – List of Deliverables and Costing
- Annex C – Preliminary System Requirements
- Annex D – Invitation Form