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REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer File No.: ECBH-RFI-2022-1638
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Title: Field Service Supply Solution (FSSS)	Date: September 21, 2022
Closing Date and Time: October 21 2022 – 2:00 P.M. EDT	

ENQUIRIES supplier@elections.ca	
Attention: Brandon Hua	Tel No. 873-415-0459

RESPONSES SUBMIT RESPONSE VIA EMAIL TO: supplier@elections.ca

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REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Field Service Supply Solution (FSSS)

PART 1. Background and Purpose

1.1. Background

The Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, an agent of Parliament, exercises general direction and supervision over the conduct of elections and referendums at the federal level. The Chief Electoral Officer of Canada heads the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, commonly known as Elections Canada (EC).

EC has approximately 500 people working at its offices located in Gatineau, Quebec (EC Offices) to perform on-going planning and administrative functions required by the Canada Elections Act. During a general election (GE), EC establishes approximately 685 field offices of varying types and sizes across Canada for the duration of the election period. The logistics and support involved in commissioning, operating, and decommissioning the field offices is significant and is mission-critical since a GE is a no-fail national event. Once established, election administrators responsible for these offices must plan and coordinate the opening of approximately 15,000 polling sites.

The current field technological services contract is expiring and EC is in the process of seeking information from industry to further inform its approach to field operationalization, particularly with respect to information and communications technologies (ICT).

EC is seeking opportunities to improve its supply of field technology for field offices and polling locations. To this end, EC has created the Field Service Supply Solution (FSSS) project.

1.2. Purpose

EC is launching this RFI to engage and seek feedback from suppliers on EC requirements for a solution or multiple solutions to support FSSS for both shorter term needs in a 2024 or 2025 general election, through to longer term needs for future electoral events.

The objectives of this RFI are to:

- A. Allow EC to become a more "informed buyer" with an enhanced understanding of supplier goods and service offerings, supplier capabilities and capacity, challenges, areas of innovation and what could be possible;
- B. Refine the EC approach, possibly including: procurement strategy, project structure, timelines, requirements definition, and other aspects of the requirement;

- C. Validate solution concepts, current and future trends, that could assist EC in further defining requirements and scope of work;
- D. Identify requirements/strategies, and develop planning and solicitation documents; and
- E. Provide an equal opportunity to suppliers that may be interested in supplier engagement with EC on FSSS and comment on a potential path forward.

1.3. EC Mandate

EC, headed by the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), an agent of Parliament, is an independent, non-partisan agency with unique organizational features that reports directly to Parliament. EC exercises general direction and supervision over the conduct of electoral events such as general elections, by-elections and referendums at the federal level. Its mandate is to:

- a) be prepared at all times to conduct a federal general election, by-election or referendum;
- b) administer the political financing provisions of the *Canada Elections Act (CEA)*;
- c) monitor compliance with electoral legislation;
- d) conduct public information campaigns on voter registration, voting and becoming a candidate;
- e) conduct education programs for students on the electoral process;
- f) provide support to the independent commissions in charge of adjusting the boundaries of federal electoral districts following each decennial census;
- g) carry out studies on alternative voting methods and, with the approval of parliamentarians, test alternative voting processes for future use during electoral events; and
- h) provide assistance and cooperation in electoral matters to electoral agencies in other countries or to international organizations.

1.4. Electoral Event Numbers

The following past volumetric data may be associated with a general election:

- (a) a minimum electoral calendar of 36 calendar days from the call of the general election to Election Day;
- (b) 338 electoral districts;
- (c) 485 local offices including satellite offices in remote communities;
- (d) 15,000 polling sites;
- (e) 70,000 Polling Stations composed of
 - i. 62,000 Election day Polls;
 - ii. 4,000 Polling Stations serving Long Term Care and Retirement communities; and

- iii. 8,000 Advance Polling Stations;
- (f) Special voting service points such as universities, hospitals and prisons
- (g) over 27 million electors; and
- (h) over 2,200 candidates.

PART 2. Nature of Request for Information

This is not a solicitation of bids or proposals. This RFI may not lead to the launching of a procurement process, the award of any contract or the creation of a source list. As a result, 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. Therefore, whether or not any potential supplier responds to this RFI, it will not preclude that supplier from participating in any future supplier engagement activities or procurement process. Also, the decision to whether or not to launch a procurement process for any of the goods and services described in this RFI is entirely at the sole discretion of EC. EC reserves the right to cancel or modify any of the preliminary requirements described herein. This RFI is simply intended to solicit feedback from industry with respect to the subject matter described herein and should not be considered as an authorization to undertake any work that would result in costs being charged to EC. EC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all comments received. Further respondent engagement may be conducted by EC which may include, supplier engagement days, one-on-one meetings, product demonstrations, requesting additional information from respondents, etc.

PART 3. Nature and Format of Responses Requested

Respondents are requested to provide their comments, concerns and, where applicable, alternative recommendations regarding how the requirements or objectives described in this RFI could be satisfied. Respondents are also invited to provide comments regarding the content, format and/or organization of any draft documents included in this RFI. Respondents should explain any assumptions they make in their responses.

PART 4. Response Costs

EC will not reimburse any respondents for any overhead costs or expenses incurred in responding to this RFI.

PART 5. Treatment of Responses

5.1. Early Responses

Early responses will be considered and are encouraged.

5.2. Use of Responses

Responses will not be formally evaluated. However, the responses received, may be used by EC to develop or modify procurement strategies or any draft documents contained in the planned RFP(s). EC will review responses that have been received by the RFI closing date. EC may, at its discretion, review responses received after the RFI closing date.

5.3. Review Team

A review team composed of representatives from EC will review the responses. EC 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.

5.4. Contracted Resources

The following list provides names of contracted resources who have been engaged directly by EC in the preparation of this RFI or as part of FSSS. These individuals and suppliers should not be employed by the respondent, nor assist in any way with the preparation of the response.

Name of Supplier	Contracted Resource Name
Experis Manpower Group	Dawn Mia
Coradix Technology Consulting Ltd.	Daniel Gregory
LuminalT	John Seguin

5.5. Confidentiality

Respondents are solely responsible for marking any portions of their response that they consider proprietary or confidential. EC will handle the responses in accordance with the *Access to Information Act* and the *Privacy Act*. The general right of access is limited by specific exclusions from disclosure. These exclusions include, among other things, certain types of third-party information, the disclosure of which could be detrimental to that party.

5.6. Follow-Up Activity

EC may, at its discretion, contact any respondents to follow up with additional questions or for clarification of any aspect of a response or for one-on-one meetings.

PART 6. Official Languages

Responses to this RFI may be submitted in either of the official languages of Canada, French or English.

PART 7. Information Requested by Elections Canada

7.1. Responses to Questions to Industry

This RFI includes an attached Annex A that consists of questions which respondents can respond to. Respondents are invited to provide information by populating sections in the table in Annex A for which they wish to provide a response. Respondents are not obligated to completing all sections in the table; only those they choose to respond to.

Additional supporting documents may be sent to supplier@elections.ca by the closing date and time identified on the cover page of this document.

The content of this RFI is at a preliminary stage only and new clauses or requirements may be added at EC's sole discretion to any solicitation that may ultimately be published by EC. Any of these clauses or requirements may be deleted or revised if used in any procurement process, at EC's sole discretion. Comments regarding any aspect of the draft document are welcome. This RFI contains specific questions addressed to suppliers.

PART 8. Volumetric Data

Any data is being provided to respondents purely for information purposes and may not form part of, or may differ from EC's description of any future requirements. Although it represents the best information currently available, EC does not guarantee that the data is complete or free from error. Reliance by respondents on the data is at their sole discretion. Consequently, EC is not responsible or liable in any way for the accuracy and integrity of such data.

PART 9. Format of Responses

Respondents are invited to complete any or all sections of Annex A of the RFI with details of products and services that could be of interest. For additional or supporting documents sent by email, please respond as follows:

9.1. Cover Page

If the response includes multiple volumes, respondents are invited to indicate on the front cover page of the response the title of the response, the RFI number, the number of volumes and the full legal name of the respondent.

9.2. Title Page

The first page of each volume of the response should be the title page, which should contain:

- a) the title of the respondent's response and the volume number;
- b) the Legal name and address of the respondent;
- c) the name, address, telephone number and email address of the respondent's contact;
- d) the date; and

e) the RFI number.

9.3. Numbering System

Respondents should prepare their response using a numbering system corresponding to the one in this RFI. All references to descriptive material, technical manuals and brochures included as part of the response should be referenced accordingly.

PART 10. Enquiries

This is not a solicitation, therefore EC will not necessarily respond to enquiries in writing or by circulating answers to all potential respondents. However, respondents with questions regarding this RFI may direct their enquiries to the Contracting Authority via the email address identified on the cover page of this document.

PART 11. Submission of Responses

11.1. Time and Place for Submission of Responses

Respondents interested in providing a response should complete any or all sections of Annex A with details of products and services that could be of interest and submit any additional or supporting documents to the Contracting Authority via the email address and by the closing date and time identified on the cover page of this document.

11.2. Responsibility for Timely Delivery

Each respondent is solely responsible for ensuring its response is delivered on time to the correct location, and to the correct email address, if applicable.

11.3. Identification of Response

Each respondent should ensure that its Legal name and address, name, address, telephone number and email address, the RFI number and the closing date are included in their response in a prominent location.

11.4. Security Requirement

There is no security requirement for this RFI. Although it is still to be confirmed, the resulting contract is expected to contain a security requirement.

PART 12. Business Context

12.1. Current Environment and Challenges

EC is required to lease, fit-up, equip and establish telephony and data communications for an office in each electoral district, in some cases multiple offices, for each election and by-election.

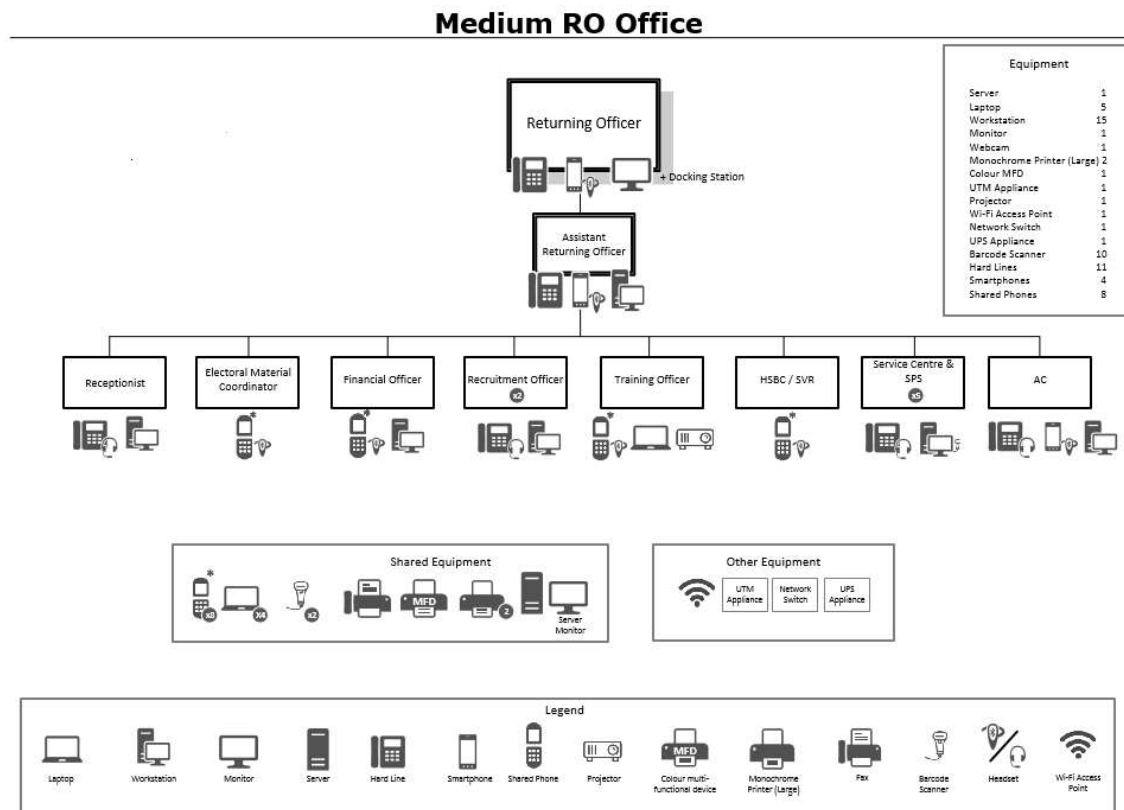
In a minority government situation, there may not be prior notice and the office must be fully operational in only a few days. While considerable work can be and is done in advance to identify possible office sites and to arrange contracts for furniture, equipment, telephone and network services, the extremely compressed time period for completing the office set-up in locations across Canada makes this a critical success factor for every general election. As all offices conduct all election delivery services (i.e., registration and information services, recruitment and training, preparation of polling site materials, printing and distribution of elector lists for local polling sites, etc.), there is no difference between the office set-ups (except due to size of the electoral district and the volume of transactions that would derive from the size of the district). Technical challenges in establishing telephony and network services can be significant, especially in remote locations. The management focus during the office set-up period is intense as there is a high expectation of issues or problems --- each location is unique and is not generally known until the election writ has been dropped; set-up services are contracted nationally but must be delivered locally; and telecommunications services may be affected by local conditions. Once an office is up and running, a number of major activities are dependent on applications installed on local servers and the performance of on-site printers.

External service points (ESPs) are located at post-secondary institution campuses across Canada. The ESP program provides students and other electors with the possibility to vote by special ballot on campus during an electoral event. Currently the ESPs are designated as Additional Assistant Returning Offices and are typically open from Day 16 to Day 12 prior to Day 0 (polling day). Technology is deployed to these locations in support of the voting process. Technology has not been used at traditional polls, but EC is exploring this opportunity.

Under current contracts, suppliers are responsible for the supply and support of integrated systems and services for the establishment and decommissioning of field offices and ESPs. This includes:

- Supplying and storing COTS equipment, accessories, and other consumable goods in the contractors facilities;
- Supplying licenses for COTS products;
- Upon notice from EC, assembling, configuring, testing, and delivering all required equipment for each field office across Canada;
- Upon notice from EC, uninstalling and removing equipment from all field offices to which it was deployed;
- Provision of support, in both official languages, to all field offices

The following EC diagram depicts the current technology capabilities and configuration of an average field office, which EC is looking to evolve under the FSSS project:



12.2. Opportunity

EC envisions an agile and flexible technology offering that leverages technological advances and innovations to continuously evolve and improve election services and reduce wired solutions; increase value added from technology enablement. Solutions will be guided by the following principles:

1. Hardware is a commodity - devices are relatively inexpensive, widely available, can function on a plug and play basis, and are interchangeable with other hardware of its type;
2. Solutions are modular - an 'Election in a Box' kit can be assembled for each service point from a base kit, easily adding and removing components needed for the type of service;
3. Solutions are scalable and agile - solutions can rapidly adapt to increase or decrease the configuration/number/type of equipment in response to demand, even during the election period;
4. Deployment – solutions can be rapidly and efficiently deployed and torn down;
5. Open digital standards, possibly including consumer devices and internet services;
6. Usability – an average Canadian with some experience in using computers, tablets, or mobile devices can take the "Election in a box" kit to a poll or service point, set it up

themselves and open for service in under an hour or two, with limited training and no technical IT experience necessary

7. Carbon footprint – reduction of the carbon footprint and the use of paper in the field

The following are key elements of ECs vision:

1. EC intends to host business applications and services using cloud technology to offer faster, flexible, and more scalable solutions. To the extent possible there will be physical servers in very few service points;
2. To the extent possible, reliable wireless technology is present in service points;
3. The solution must be secure by design;
4. Election administrators (EA) will be able to work from any location at any time and are no longer dependent upon installation of technology at their local office;
5. Portable devices are available to EAs at all times, inside and outside of an event period;
6. Field office staff may use their own devices;
7. Telecommunications services, including all necessary equipment and configuration, scalable to support at least 600 Field Offices and 6000+ users for applications in polling places.

The scope of services EC is seeking may include:

1. Guidance and support in the identification and adoption of service supply solutions that can benefit EC;
2. Supply of user-centric packaging and related services, for both offices and at the polls;
3. Supply, warehousing, distribution and recovery of materials and equipment. This includes accessories and consumable goods;
4. Option for installation and configuration of equipment in service points, but options for installation to be completed by local field office staff;
5. Tracking and reporting of supply chain activities;
6. Management of local equipment reserves and marketplaces;
7. Technical support.

12.3. Key Considerations

Solutions should consider the following factors:

1. The date of an election in a minority government is not known and an election can be called with little or no notice.
2. In most cases office locations will be known in advance but as leases cannot be signed until the drop of the writ, they are not confirmed until such time as the lease is signed. In some locations, commercial office space is limited, and therefore offices can be located in many types of buildings, some of which have obstacles such as walls and floors or other tenants that create interference in signals.
3. The wireless capability inside an office is not consistent across the country due to signal strength, building fabrication, amongst other factors.
4. Polling locations are temporary. Most are rented just for advance and ordinary polling days and arrangements for their use are only finalized after the call of the election. Availability of space balanced with accessibility and technical requirements may lead to less than optimal locations to facilitate technology (few electrical plugs, no windows or rural areas with spotty cellular signal).
5. Satellite offices are in remote communities, therefore equipment delivery and installation logistics require careful planning.
6. By-elections may occur between general elections in one or more electoral districts and require the same service supply solution as in a general election.

Annex A – Questions

EC has developed a set of questions that are intended to assist with development of a procurement strategy. EC has not assumed that a single supplier will provide all components of the solution.

Since EC has started its digital transformation, the agency would encourage suppliers to provide new and provocative ideas to support our mandate.

Please answer the questions below and add any information regarding any related products and/or services and/or solutions and/or ideas, that may be of interest.

1. The scale and timeline for acquisition and commissioning of field offices across Canada is challenging. Do you have recommendations for the management and deployment of technology that will assist with the following aspects of technology in field offices:
 - To facilitate more flexible work configurations, including the ability for key personnel to work in locations other than the field office;
 - Reduce the time to a fully functioning office at the drop of the writ; and
 - Provide consistency and compatibility in equipment such that replacements components are accessible by field personnel from local sources (such as reserves or marketplaces), or from neighbouring offices.
 - Do you have any other comments relating to the management and deployment of technology?
2. The scale of deployment is significant. Currently this consists of upwards of 600 field offices and external service points such as universities. Elections Canada also plans to introduce technology in up to 15,000 polling places, and potentially to meet numerous other requirements for technology in the field such as voting in hospitals, long term care, and correctional facilities. These locations are distributed across Canada, some in remote locations. Elections Canada is striving to have a consistent and compatible set of technology in all locations, however it is recognized that the requirements may differ between each type of location. For example, all offices will have a similar configuration, but the same configuration may not be suitable for a polling place. Given these considerations, please provide input on the following questions:

- Is it realistic for a single supplier to have the capacity to support all of these requirements? Can you please provide a rationale for the response.
 - Would you recommend an approach in which a supplier provides some or all of a solution based on considerations such as geographic area or type of location? For example, one supplier may be responsible for all field offices in Ontario only, another supplier in Quebec, etc. A supplier may be responsible for only a type of location, all field offices but not polling places, etc. Please explain the response.
 - Do you have any other comments relating to the deployment?
3. Elections Canada is attempting to determine a successful procurement strategy. Do you have any recommendations for both the solicitation and contract that EC may consider to be an attractive opportunity for Canadian suppliers?
 4. What do you believe are the key considerations on forming a long term, flexible, contract out of this requirement given the high likelihood for future service requirement and technological change?
 5. Given that EC is going to be dealing with multiple disciplines and business lines, In your experience, what type of service model is best suited for what Elections Canada is intending to achieve?
 6. How would you structure pricing to ensure flexibility given the need to adapt to future service requirements while aligning your financial incentives with EC's objectives?
 7. Is some or all of the work described here of interest to your organization and would you consider bidding should the opportunity be presented? Please provide an explanation on why or why not.
 8. Please provide any additional information that may be relevant to this RFI, such as:
 - Did you have sufficient information to respond to this RFI? If not what elements are you missing?
 - i. Would a presentation by EC regarding this requirement be valuable?
 - ii. Would 'commercial-in-confidence' one-on-one meetings to discuss this requirement be valuable?
 - Lessons learned from previous supplier engagements, procurements or contracts
 - Challenges and risks
 - Recommendations