

# Second Official Language Development Pilot (SOLDP)

## Statement of Challenge

This document defines the Contractor's obligations and Canada's responsibilities under the resulting contract.

This Statement of Challenge is in Draft form and Canada expects to finalize its details after the Invitation to Refine (ITR) is complete.

### 1. Background

Shared Services Canada (SSC) is rolling out a Second Official Language Development Pilot (SOLDP) to support employee acquisition of their second language.

The services provided by the majority of SSC employees must be delivered in both official languages; however, as demonstrated in a special report released in 2019 entitled *Your Voice Matters: A Dialogue on Official Languages at Shared Services Canada* (Appendix A), SSC employees face many challenges related to working in their second official language.

More than ever SSC needs to continue to improve workforce capacity to perform services in both official languages at an advanced proficiency (CBC) level, especially at supervisory positions and above. As such, the demand for language training and development has also increased. Employees in SSC have access to language training providers via established standing offers and large enterprise-wide contracts. However, while the current mechanisms work for many SSC employees, they do not meet the needs of all participants in the successful attainment of the advanced proficiency level requirements.

As a result, SSC is launching a pilot initiative to identify and test new approaches for the challenges faced by SSC employees. For the purposes of this pilot, employees of SSC's Enterprise IT Procurement (EITP) Directorate will be selected to test the methods provided by the successful bidders as solutions to the problem statement and challenges.

### 2. Problem Statement and Challenges

#### 2.1. Problem Statement

SSC lacks methods to supplement the existing training and other mechanisms to enable participants to satisfy advanced (CBC profile) official language (OL) requirements in a timely manner.

#### 2.2. Challenges specific to the methods to be implemented under the contract

##### 2.2.1. Workload demands

SSC employees have a high workload and conflicting priorities resulting in a lack of self-directed study during part-time language studies.

##### 2.2.2. Lack of diagnostic tools

Current evaluation tools do not identify specific gaps in participant linguistic competencies and the areas of improvement required to satisfy the OL requirement (CBC). Additionally, current tools do not identify other limitations that contribute to linguistic insecurities (e.g., anxiety, lack of confidence, etc.), which may prevent a learner from successfully using their second language.

### **2.2.3. Critical path for success**

SSC employees have access to generalized learning plans to attain their linguistic profiles via language school assessments, but the plans are not personalized nor address specific gaps in the employee's competencies within a specified strategy (including timelines) to become successful in attaining their desired OL proficiency.

### **2.2.4. Limited exposure to French**

The working environment (including development of procurement-related documents) of EITP is mostly in English, which limits employee exposure to French.

### **2.2.5. Culture of bilingualism**

It is well known that the satisfaction of a position's OL requirements is a regulatory obligation, but the other benefits of bilingualism are less well known. In other words, employees develop their second language for career development but show limited understanding of the other benefits of the bilingualism, which sometimes limits motivation to continue to speak their other official language after obtaining their levels.

### **2.2.6. Anxiety**

The testing process is perceived as stressful by some individuals, limiting their capacity to successfully achieve their language levels. Additionally, employees may have linguistic insecurities that impact their ability to speak their second language in front of colleagues, despite demonstrating their competencies during language training.

## **3. About the SOLDP Project**

Under this pilot, the participants may be enrolled in language training offered by Canada via existing standing offers and contracts with language training schools. Successful bidders will be responsible to provide support other than language training to EITP to expedite the achievement of its workforce's OL requirements over the course of the 12-month pilot.

In this document, the following definitions apply:

**Training:** training refers to lessons given in class or virtually, given individually or as a group with specific learning objectives.

**Innovative Learning Mechanisms (ILM):** Innovative activities, support, and/or programming other than training offered by SSC to be provided by the Contractor to help EITP employees achieve the language requirements of their position. Although the ILM may be similar to activities or methods that are currently available to SSC employees, the implementation of the ILM must result in a fundamentally different way of addressing the problem statement than that which is already available at SSC.

### 3.1. Description of Participants

In preparation for the SOLDP, EITP developed 4 personas (Appendix B) that exemplify employees that are affected by the problem statement and challenges. EITP will select approximately 12 candidates from its workforce to take part in the pilot. Although the needs of each candidate may be slightly different, all candidates will share the following characteristics:

- will dedicate 25% of their working hours to ILM, whereas 75% of the remaining time will be dedicated to operational work activities.
- have a current level at least a BBB-level of bilingualism as assessed by approved testing mechanisms (e.g., PSC or enterprise assessments that have been approved for staffing purposes)
- will make an effort to prioritize ILM over other work-related activities. Vacation and other leave will be discussed with the Contractor before dates are committed.

Participants in the pilot may already be engaged in language training offered by SSC via language training schools. Should the Participant's Assessment and Implementation Plan require language training to address specific gaps in the participant's linguistic competencies, the Contractor, the participant and the participant's manager, and the Technical Authority will discuss how the training will be implemented into the participant's schedule. This may result in ILM being reduced (e.g., from 25% to 20% of working hours) to allow integration of training into the participant's schedule.

SSC employees have demonstrated success in attaining the written expression and written comprehension portions of the linguistic profile (the CB of the CBC level) via language training. As such, although we expect the contractor to support employees to achieve the OL requirements in the written comprehension (reading) and written expression (writing) portions of their linguistic profile, the Contractor's ILM should focus on activities designed to support EITP employees in the development of their oral expression.

### 4. Work Location

The Work will be conducted in the contractor's premises and meetings will be held virtually.

### 5. Language of Work

Given the nature of the Work, the Contractor must be able to deliver the services in both official languages.

### 6. Key Steps and Deliverables

#### 6.1. Key steps (**Annex B Pilot Timeline**)

The following key steps, roles and responsibilities will be applicable:

Key Steps	SSC Will	Contractor Must	Contractor's Deliverable
Identify participants	Provide profiles of participants including a description of their		

	current training regime and location of work.		
Pilot Preparation	<p>Provide the list of participants and their managers/supervisors. The list will include linguistic profiles, preliminarily identified linguistic insecurities and evaluation history</p> <p>Organize a pilot kick-off meeting with the Contractor and set the agenda</p> <p>Provide feedback on SOLDP implementation strategy</p> <p>Schedule PSC or enterprise-approved evaluations for participants that have expired linguistic profiles</p>	<p>Attend a meeting scheduled by SSC to receive participant information, discuss timeline and other details of the pilot.</p> <p>The contractor will schedule a meeting to present SSC its implementation strategy during the pilot based on information specific to participants provided by SSC</p>	<p>SOLDP implementation strategy (SIS)</p> <p>Meeting agenda and SIS presentation including demonstration of diagnostic tool</p>
Pilot Implementation	<p>Schedule PSC or enterprise-approved evaluations and provide results to the Contractor</p> <p>Upon request from Contractor, schedule language training for participants</p> <p>On a quarterly basis, survey participants and their supervisors/managers to assess key performance indicators (KPI) of the pilot</p>	<p>Assess participants to identify specific gaps in their linguistic competencies</p> <p>Schedule individual kick-off meetings with participants and their supervisor/manager and the Contractor</p> <p>Provide plan that is user-centric by identifying the participant's linguistic limitations and specific activities that will address those gaps</p> <p>Coordinate activities with participants</p>	<p>Kickoff meeting agenda</p> <p>Participant's Assessment and Implementation Plan</p> <p>Activity documentation, portal access, participant schedules, etc., as applicable</p> <p>Quarterly reports</p>

		<p>Recommend official assessments as required for successful participants</p> <p>Provide quarterly report of participant's progress (with respect to identified gaps and linguistic insecurities)</p>	
Pilot Close-out	Provide final KPI report	Present the outcomes of the pilots.	<p>Outcomes presentation</p> <p>Results report</p>

**6.2. Deliverables**

The following deliverables will be produced during the execution of the Contract.

<b>Deliverables</b>		<b>Delivery Date (business days)</b>
<b>Contractor's deliverables</b>		
<b>Pilot Preparation</b>	<p><b>SOLDP Implementation Strategy (SIS) presentation</b></p> <p>Based on information provided by SSC, the contractor must present its strategy for the pilot that includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how it will resolve the problem and address challenges proposed activities for participants to address specific challenges</li> <li>• expected timelines</li> </ul> <p><b>Kick-off meeting with participants</b></p> <p>The Contractor schedule a meeting with the participant and their supervisor/manager to introduce potential activities, tools, etc., that will address the problem.</p> <p>The Contractor must do a demonstration of their diagnostic tool that will identify specific gaps in a participant's proficiency in their second language.</p> <p>The Contractor must provide a proposed timeline for the pilot including how the hours will be generally allocated on a weekly and monthly basis.</p>	<p>Within 1 week after the SOLDP Pilot kick-off meeting</p> <p>Within 2 weeks after the SIS presentation</p>

	<p>The contractor must demo any ILM that will be implemented during the pilot and provide samples of documentation that were identified as novel by SSC in its review of the SIS.</p> <p>The contractor must collect any additional pertinent information provided by the participant and their manager/supervisor to aid in the development of the Participant’s Assessment and Implementation Plan.</p> <p>The meeting will be in the participant’s preferred OL (either French or English).</p> <p><b>Participant’s Assessment and Implementation Plan:</b></p> <p>The Contractor must use its diagnostic tool to draft participants’ assessments of their linguistic competencies, which will inform the Implementation Plan.</p> <p>The Contractor must deliver user-centric plan to address specific gaps in a participant’s competency in their second official language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify deficits and activities that will specifically address the deficit</li> <li>• Level of effort required to improve or master specific competency</li> <li>• Contingency plans for missed activities</li> </ul> <p>Plans and assessments should be delivered in the language of choice of each participant</p>	<p>6 weeks after contract award</p>
<p><b>Pilot Implementation</b></p>	<p><b>Roll out of the ILM:</b></p> <p>The Contractor must implement the method(s) proposed by providing continuous access to, for example, experts, websites, copy of workbooks, and/or any other tools that are required by the participants to address their challenges.</p> <p><b>Quarterly Progress Reports:</b></p> <p>On a quarterly basis, the Contractor must report on the progress of the participants. At minimum, the report must include:</p>	<p>6 weeks after contract award and as required thereafter</p> <p>Every 3 months starting 3 months after start of pilot</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities undertaken</li> <li>• Participation level of participant</li> <li>• Language deficits and improvements</li> <li>• Specific competencies that were addressed</li> <li>• Planned activities and competencies to be addressed during next quarter</li> <li>• Recommendation for formal assessment (PSC), if applicable</li> </ul> <p>The reports should be provided in the language of choice for each participant.</p>	
<b>Pilot Close-out</b>	<p><b>Pilot Close-out Presentation</b></p> <p>At the end of the pilot, the Contractor must deliver, for EITP senior management, a presentation that must include at minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What challenges were addressed during the pilot</li> <li>• What challenges require more time to improve</li> <li>• Lessons learned</li> <li>• How EITP contributed to the success of the pilot (i.e., what could EITP do better to ensure success)</li> <li>• What could be implemented at the next option</li> </ul> <p>The presentation must be bilingual and available in both English and French.</p>	20 days after the end of the pilot
<b>Canada’s Deliverables</b>		
<b>Identify Participants</b>	<p><b>Participants OL Assessments:</b></p> <p>SSC will schedule PSC- or enterprise-approved evaluations and provide results to the Contractor.</p>	Canada will provide the results when received.
<b>Pilot Preparation</b>	<p><b>Pilot kick-off meeting with the program:</b></p> <p>SSC will introduce the details of the pilot to the Contractor, present the participants profiles and answer questions the Contractor may have.</p> <p>The meeting will be in English.</p>	Within 2 days after contract award
<b>Pilot Implementation</b>	<p><b>Quarterly surveys summary:</b></p> <p>SSC will develop surveys to ascertain how well the participants feel the activities are contributing to their development in their second official language. Canada</p>	20 days after end of each quarter

	<p>will provide a summary of the findings for quarter to the Contractor.</p> <p>The summaries will be provided in English.</p>	
<b>Pilot Close-out</b>	<p><b>Final KPI Report</b></p> <p>SSC will provide a final report to the Contractor with the results of analysis of the quarterly surveys and participant self-assessment.</p>	6 weeks after the end of the pilot

\*Please note that given the current backlog of the PSC oral examinations being experienced in the public service, these assessments may not be completed within the duration of the pilot.

**7. Security**

SSC equipment will be provided to the Contractor in accordance with the Security Requirement Checklist (SRCL) attached in Annex A for any resource requiring access to Protected B information. Additionally:

- 1) The Contractor/Offeror must, at all times during the performance of the Contract/Standing Offer, hold a valid Designated Organization Screening (DOS), issued by the Contract Security Program (CSP), Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC).
- 2) The Contractor/Offeror personnel requiring access to PROTECTED information, assets or sensitive site(s) must EACH hold a valid RELIABILITY STATUS, granted or approved by the CSP, PWGSC.
- 3) The Contractor/Offeror MUST NOT remove any PROTECTED information or assets from the identified site(s), and the Contractor/Offeror must ensure that its personnel are made aware of and comply with this restriction.
- 4) Subcontracts which contain security requirements are NOT to be awarded without the prior written permission of the CSP, PWGSC.
- 5) The Contractor/Offeror must comply with the provisions of the:
  - a) Security Requirements Check List and security guide (if applicable), attached at Annex A;
  - b) *Contract Security Manual* (Latest Edition).

**8. Accessibility**

**8.1. SSC’s role in promoting accessibility**

The Accessible Canada Act is intended to enhance the full and equal participation of all persons, especially persons with disabilities, in society. This is to be achieved through the progressive realization, under federal jurisdiction, of a Canada without barriers, particularly by the identification, removal and prevention of barriers.

SSC is committed to providing leadership to procure accessible goods and services and supporting the goal of inclusive by design, accessible by default.

**8.2. Guidance for creating accessible documents**

For practical guidance on creating accessible documents, refer to the Accessible Document Guides found on the [Digital Accessibility Toolkit](#).

**8.3. Handling user ICT accessibility complaints**



Canada will identify any requested accommodations from the participants before the commencement of the pilot and will communicate with the Contractor all the accessibility requirements. The contractor may be required to provide additional support to participants with disabilities to ensure equal access and to meet accommodation requests.

In the event the proposed solution does not presently conform with accessibility requirements, an end user may put forward an issue, complaint, or request for accommodation to the Contractor. If an issue, complaint or request is received, the Contractor will contact the Contracting Authority immediately to discuss options to meet the immediate needs as part of a Duty to Accommodate.

While permanent solutions may already be part of an ICT accessibility roadmap, immediate accommodations are required to ensure equal access to all participants. The user must receive ICT accessibility accommodations within fifteen (15) business days of the issue, complaint or request being received and the Contracting Authority must be advised of both the request and the accommodation provided.

## **9. Options**

The following options may only be exercised by the Contracting Authority and will be evidenced, for administrative purposes only, through a contract amendment. The Contracting Authority may exercise the option by sending a written notice to the Contractor at any time. The options may be exercised multiple times.

### **9.1. Option 1: Implementation of Pilot Years 2-5**

During the execution of Option 1, Canada may require the Contractor to:

- Provide services as per Pilot
- Extend the solution and all its ILM to other SSC directorates for employees who would benefit from the ILM 'as proposed' during the pilot period.
- Extend the solution (including all ILM) to participants who do not already have an intermediate (i.e., BBB) linguistic profile
- The Contractor will be responsible for identifying how the ILM will be adapted to address the deficits in these types of participants
- Extend a portion of the ILM that were deemed successful in addressing specific challenges during the first year of the pilot. The assessment of the efficacy of the ILM will be done in accordance with Section 11 entitled "Decision-Making Framework"
- Improve or modify one or several ILM to better address competency gaps as assessed in accordance with Section 11 entitled "Decision-Making Framework"

### **9.2. Option 2: Accessibility Considerations**

If the proposed methods includes Information and Communication Technology (ICT) components, it should conform with the relevant accessibility requirements of the EN 301 549 (2018) Harmonised European Standard – Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services.

The Contractor must provide an Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR) based on the latest VPAT® for the ILM provided to the Government of Canada. The ACR will be completed preferably by a third-party (or by a qualified in-house ICT accessibility subject matter expert) and will be assessed against the EN 301 549

(2018) Standard, which includes WCAG 2.1, within the last 24 months. The Contractor is solely responsible for any upgrades, subcontracting or other work required to achieve conformance.

The Contractor will be required to submit a detailed roadmap on how they will achieve full conformance within the number of months specified in the amendment and provide updated roadmaps as they release solution upgrades (if applicable). At a minimum an updated roadmap is required once a year. The Contractor's roadmap will be reviewed and must be approved by Canada.

## **10. Decision-Making Framework**

Should Canada choose to proceed with the implementation of the solution or refinement of the ILM, Canada will use this Decision-Making Framework as a guide for deciding which Contractor's solution(s) will be selected to be implemented via optional amendments.

Canada may in its sole and absolute discretion, consider factors other than those listed below, by ensuring the ILM(s) selected result in best value in regards of resolving the problem and addressing the challenges or, if appropriate, the optimal balance of overall benefits to Canada.

The following factors will inform Canada's decisions:

Challenge 1: Workload demands:

- Time dedicated to language development compared with before the pilot or to a control group of learners
- Motivation to continue studies in their second official language
- Maintenance of decreased workload (-25%) over pilot period

Challenge 2: Lack of diagnostic tools:

- Identification of gaps in oral and written comprehension and expression
- Identification of linguistic insecurities
- Used effectively in participant's learning plan and during pilot implementation

Challenge 3: Critical path for success

- Quality and personalization of plans
- Integration of gaps, learning styles and accommodation requirements

Challenge 4: Limited exposure to French

- Proportion of time where the participant used and practiced their second official language compared with before the pilot and to the control group
- Reported changes in linguistic insecurities of participants
- Reported changes in motivation to use second language

Challenge 5: Culture of bilingualism

- Reported changes in participants' relationship with bilingualism in the workplace
- Changes in number of official language complaints by SSC employees or clients

Challenge 6: Anxiety

- Reported changes in anxiety during language training, speaking with colleagues in second language and during language competency examinations

## Annex B - Pilot Key Steps

