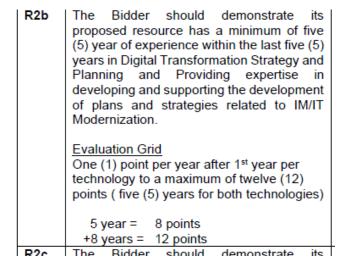Q1- Due to the complexity of preparing a response to this solicitation and the large number of bids currently out to tender we would like to request a one-week extension to the solicitation closing date to ensure that vendors are able to submit high quality responses that provide the best value to the crown.

A1- **1 week extension granted.**

Q2- Please confirm that Mandatory Criteria M1e and M2e are corporate requirements, not resource requirements, and that the asterisk next to the word contracts does not denote anything.

A2- **Yes and the asterisk does not denote anything.**

Q3- **For the Business Analyst Resource #2 For R2b**

Its asking for 5 years within the last 5 years but the scoring has full points for + 8 years. Can you please clarify if it's to be 5 years in the last 10 years.

R2b	The Bidder should demonstrate its proposed resource has a minimum of five (5) year of experience within the last five (5) years in Digital Transformation Strategy and Planning and Providing expertise in developing and supporting the development of plans and strategies related to IM/IT Modernization. Evaluation Grid One (1) point per year after 1st year per technology to a maximum of twelve (12) points (five (5) years for both technologies) 5 year = 8 points +8 years = 12 points
R2c	The Bidder should demonstrate its

A3- Confirmed. Changes made in the RFP amendment 1.

Q4- **For the Business Analyst Resource #2 For R2c**
The R2c requirement is asking for 5 years of experience within the last 3 years. Please confirm if it is supposed to be 5 years in the last 10 years

R2c	The Bidder should demonstrate its proposed resource has a minimum of one (5) year of experience within the last three (3) years creating IT business process	4

R2c	The Bidder should demonstrate its proposed resource has a minimum of one (5) year of experience within the last three (3) years creating IT business process	4

designs and workflows.
 	
Evaluation Grid
 	
Two (2) points per year of experience to a maximum of four (4) points (two (2) years)
 	
   5 years = 2 points
  +5 years = 4 points

A4- Confirmed. Changes made in the RFP amendment 1.

Q5- **For Resource #4 – IT Security Engineer**
Seems like Mandatory criteria M4d is missing.
A5- **This was a typo. The change has been made in the RFP amendment 1.**

Q6- Has there been an incumbent within the past twelve (12) months (or greater) either as a Term, Casual, or Agency Contract (THS, TSPS, TBIPS) performing these similar duties? If so, can you please provide us with the supplier's name, contract value, duration (mm/yyyy to mm/yyyy) and is the incumbent invited?
A6- **There are no incumbents for these positions.**

Q7- Mandatory criteria M1e and M2e are corporate requirements, requesting the bidder to demonstrate experience providing resources. Would the Crown please confirm these requirements were included in error and remove both M1e and M2e from the Business Analyst criteria for Resource #1 and Resource #2?
A7- **Both are the same category but not performing same tasks. The criteria will remain unchanged.**

Q8- Rated criterion R1b awards full points to resources that have 10+ years as a Business Analyst. Considering that M1a already requests the resource to have 10 years of experience conducting Level 3 Business Analyst activities, this requirement would be redundant, in addition, it is also unclear which methodologies are being scored for this requirement. It has also been our experience that assessing resource experience with multiple technologies under the same rated criteria creates unnecessary complexity. To facilitate an efficient procurement process and ensure that vendors are accurately citing the most relevant experience, we would like to recommend that R1b be split into two rated requirements which read as follows:

    a. "The bidder should demonstrate its proposed resource has experience as a Business Analyst with 1+ project specifically related to AI solutions. One point per year after 1st year to a maximum of four (4) points. (Five years) 1 year = 0 points, 2 years = 1 point, 3 years = 2 points, 4 years = 3 points, 5 years = 4 points."

    b. "The bidder should demonstrate its proposed resource has experience as a Business Analyst with 1+ project specifically related to Machine Learning solutions. One point per year after 1st year to a maximum of four (4) points. 1 year = 0 points, 2 years = 1 point, 3 years = 2 points, 4 years = 3 points, 5 years = 4 points."

A8- **a. Added AI as one of the methodologies.**
b. Added Machine Learning as second methodology.

Q9- Rated criterion R2c awards full points for 5+ years of experience, however it also states that the experience must be within the last 3 years. It also states the scoring for this evaluation is "two (2) points per year of experience to a maximum of four (4) points (two (2) years). Would the Crown please confirm this requirement includes a typo, and that demonstrating 2 years of experience in the last 3 years will score full points?

A9- **This was a typo and has been corrected in the RFP amendment 1.**

Q-10 Rated criterion R3c requires experience providing business architecture support to a project in a Secret or Top Secret environment. Considering this is a Technical Architect role, would the Crown please confirm that R3c should state "providing Technical architecture support" instead.

A10- **This was a typo and has been corrected in the RFP amendment 1.**

Q11- Rated criteria R4c and R4d states that two points will be awarded for every year of experience, up to a maximum of 6 points for three years of experience demonstrated, however the scoring shows that 6 points = 4+ years of experience. Would the Crown please confirm this requirement includes a typo, and please amend the Evaluation Grid for R4c and R4d to reflect the following: "Two (2) points per year of experience to a maximum of six (6) points. (Three (3) years) 1 year = 2 points, 2 years = 4 points, 3 years = 6 points"

A11- **This was a typo and has been corrected in the RFP amendment 1.**

Q12- Rated criterion R5d awards one (1) point per certification to a maximum of five (5), however the evaluation grid contains a typo. Would the Crown please amend the evaluation grid for R5d and confirm that resources with 5 certifications will be awarded full points?

A12- This has been corrected in the RFP amendment 1.

Q13- In **Item 7.5 Conflict of Interest and Unfair Advantage,** the RFP states: "The Contractor acknowledges and agrees that to uphold the integrity of any future procurement process(es) related to the STORM project, Canada reserves the right to reject any future submission, bid or response related to any future procurement process(es) related to the STORM project, in accordance with other conflict of interest and unfair advantage circumstances outlined at a future time.

Notwithstanding the previous paragraph, the experience acquired by the Contractor ,it's employees, consultants, subcontractors, former employees, advisors or representatives who are providing or have provided the services described in this Contract, will not, in itself, be considered by Canada as creating a conflict of interest or conferring an unfair advantage or creating a conflict of interest. The Contractor remains, however, subject to the criteria established in future RFPs regarding to conflict of interest and unfair advantage."

However, in Item **1.4 Conflict of Interest, the RFP states**: "Bidders agree and acknowledge that by submitting a bid for this requirement they may be precluded from bidding on future STORM procurement process(es), because of the nature of the work to be completed under the resulting contract."

For full clarity, can DND please confirm whether the nature of the work to be completed under the resulting contract – that is, executing on the Statement of Work for this Contract as written in the RFP – is or is not expected to create a conflict of interest or confer an unfair advantage for any future procurement process(es) related to the STORM project?

A13- The statement in the Request for Proposal (RFP) is intended to address concerns related to potential conflicts of interest and unfair advantages in future procurement processes related to the STORM project. The purpose of the statement is to ensure that vendors and their representatives who are involved in providing services under the current contract are aware of the need to maintain the integrity of future procurement processes. The RFP acknowledges that the experience acquired by the contractor and its associated entities in the course of executing the Statement of Work (SOW) under the current contract is not, in itself, considered a conflict of interest or an unfair advantage. However, to uphold the integrity of future procurement processes, the RFP reserves the right for Canada to reject future submissions, bids, or responses related to the STORM project under specific conflict of interest and unfair advantage circumstances.

In response to the question, the Department of National Defence (DND) clarifies that the contractors will have access to all the procurement resources needed for the next phase. However, the conflict-of-interest document is produced to mitigate any potential unfair advantage to the company during subsequent procurement

processes related to the STORM project. This measure is implemented to ensure a fair and competitive environment for all participants in future phases of the project.

Q14- Attachment 3.1 – Bid Submission Form asks Bidders to indicate which Workstream is covered by their bid. Please confirm this is included in error and that Bidders must provide a response to all categories within the RFP to be compliant.

A14- It was included in error. It is deleted from Amendment 1 of the RFP.

Q15- We would like to ask if the Industry One-on-One Sessions (if required) November 2023 - January 2024 were ever done and if there is still a chance to participate? PwC did respond to the RFI back in November.

A15- Any enquiries regarding STORM RFI WS4215386401, should be directed to the PSPC Contracting Authority Harold McKenny <u>harold.mckenny@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca.</u>

Q16- Regarding Mandatory Technical Criteria M4 for the Business Transformation Architect – Level 3, would DND accept a Bachelor of Arts in Economics degree from a recognized university, as this degree is relevant for roles in business and management and relates to computational analysis and data science?

A16- Yes.

Q17- In the Mandatory Grid requirements (a-d) for both 1.3 Business Analyst – Level 3 – Resource # 1 (Requirements M1e) and B.2 Business Analyst – Level 3 – Resource # 2 (Requirements M2e), it is stated that "The Bidder must demonstrate its proposed resource…." However, both roles share an identical requirement e, which states "The Bidder must provide two (2) contracts*…." The wording appears to suggest a corporate requirement rather than a resource qualification. Could you please confirm if this wording is intentional and if so, clarify whether there is meant to be a separate corporate requirement section within Attachment 3.3 – Bid Evaluation Criteria. Additionally, the asterisk (*) at the end of "contracts" suggests there might be a definition for "contracts" within the RFP. Despite our efforts, we couldn't locate this definition. Could you kindly provide clarification on the definition of "contracts" in the context of this requirement?

A17- The wording is intentional. The asterisk is meant to be interchangeable with 'projects' for these two mandatories.

Q18- Due to the complexity of preparing a response to this solicitation and the large number of bids currently out to tender we would like to request a one-week extension to the solicitation closing date to ensure that vendors are able to submit high quality responses that provide the best value to the crown.

A18- Granted. See Q1-A1.

Q19- Rated criterion R2b awards full points for 8+ years of demonstrated experience in Digital Transformation Strategy and Planning and Providing expertise. However, it is unclear which technologies are being scored for this requirement. It has also been our experience that assessing resource experience with multiple technologies under the same rated criteria creates unnecessary complexity. To facilitate an efficient procurement process and ensure that vendors are accurately citing the most relevant experience, we would like to recommend that R2b be split into two rated requirements which read as follows:

   a. "The Bidder should demonstrate its proposed resource has a minimum of five (5) years of experience in Digital Transformation Strategy and Planning. One point per year after 1st year to a maximum of four (4) points.
   b. "The Bidder should demonstrate its proposed resource has a minimum of five (5) years of experience providing expertise in developing and supporting the development of plans and strategies related to IM/IT Modernization. One point per year after 1st year to a maximum of four (4) points.

A19- This has been corrected in the RFP amendment 1.

Q20- Rated criterion R3a awards full points for 5+ years of experience, however it states that it must be in the last 5 years. Considering this will be impossible to demonstrate, and given some of the fields listed are still in early development and are not widely utilized, would the Crown please amend this requirement to accept 3 years of experience instead and remove the time limit to allow resources to demonstrate any 3 years of experience to score full points?

A20- This has been corrected in the RFP amendment 1.

Q21- Rated criterion R3b awards full points to resources that have 5+ years of experience in the last 7 years with machine learning, artificial intelligence and deep learning/deep automation, however it is unclear which methodologies are being scored for this requirement. It has also been our experience that assessing resource experience with multiple technologies under the same rated criteria creates unnecessary complexity. To facilitate an efficient procurement process and ensure that vendors are accurately citing the most relevant experience, we would like to recommend that R3b be split into two rated requirements which read as follows:
   a. "Experience with machine learning. One (1) point per year after 1st year to a maximum of four (4) points."
   b. "Experience with artificial intelligence, and deep learning/deep automation. One (1) point per year after 1st year to a maximum of four (4) points."

A21- This has been corrected in the RFP amendment 1.

Q22- Rated criterion R5b awards points for experience in the last 10 years reviewing certification results in design review documentation, however it is unclear how this requirement is being scored. We would like to recommend that R5b is amended to reflect the following scoring: "One point per year after year to a maximum of six (6) years."

A22- **This has been corrected in the RFP amendment 1.**

Q23- Rated criterion R5c requires 10+ years of experience as a Security Engineer with 5+ years of experience specifically incorporating and engineering AI/ML methods to increase security measures on a solution. Considering this requirement is for a Level 3 C.6 Information Technology Security Engineer that does already require the proposed resource to have 10 years of experience in this role and to facilitate an efficient procurement process and ensure that vendors are accurately citing the most relevant experience, we would like to recommend that R5c be amended to read as follows:
   a. The Bidder should demonstrate its proposed resource 5 years incorporating and engineering AI/ML methods to increase security measures on a solution. One (1) points per year after 1ˢᵗ year to a maximum of four (4) points.
   We would also like to request that the Crown please remove the requirement to identify the measurable outcomes achieved through the AI/ML for R5c, considering resources would be unable to disclose the outcomes achieved for project performed under Top Secret clearance.

A23- **This one is modified in the RFP amendment 1.**

Q24- In reference to the statement of work in Annex A, it seems the project scope is very focused on support services for the options analysis and definition of the STORM project, based on our understanding of the STORM project overall, we believe that DND would better benefit from a holistic approach with a strategic partner to support the end to end project and include scope for various phases of the project that would provide advisory services for project management, learning design experience, learning management system expertise, learning system architecture, technology advisory, vendor management, system engineering/integration engineering and organizational change management. Would DND consider adding this scope to Annex A?

A24- **No. This partnership cannot reflect our goals.**

Q25- In reference to 6.2.3 "Winning bidder of contract" and section 7 "Deliverables", it appears DND would require outcome-based deliverables but asking for invoicing resources on actual hours worked based on per diem rates as described in section 7.10 and Annex B "Basis of Payment". Would the Crown consider adding the option to the basis of payment to allow for fixed firm price payments by outcome-based deliverables within Task Authorizations?

A25- **No. That payment option cannot be used.**

Q26- Allowing different levels of resources on the contract to ensure the right experienced resources are working on the right level of activities at the right rate would bring more value to the Crown. Can the Crown please confirm whether the inclusion of Level 1 and Level 2 resources would be permissible alongside Level 3 professionals during the project's execution phase? It is essential to ascertain if the project must be exclusively staffed with Level 3 resources, as this could impact the feasibility of such arrangements.

A26-   No, it cannot apply to this requirement as more experienced resources are needed.

Q27-   Is there presently or has there been, an incumbent performing these services in some capacity, with the past twelve (12) months? If so, please provide the name of the vendor, the duration, and value of contract?

A27-   See Q6-A6