



## Question and Answer Document 2

### Solicitation: 23-236864-1

#### QUESTION 1:

Under the sections RTC1.1, RTC2.1, and RTC3.1 there is a specific provision that states *“If the proposed resource’s education was obtained outside of Canada, the bidder must submit, with the proof of stated education, a Foreign Credential Validation against Canadian Standards assessment. Bidders can reach out to the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC), who can assist with the process.”*

Given that the majority of candidates for these positions will not have received degrees from a Canadian institution and given the very significant amount of time required to obtain these certifications and assessments, would GAC consider amending this requirement to be one which is required at contract award stage instead of at the proposal stage? The normal period required for a competitive RFP such as this is not sufficient for the attainment of an CICIC academic credential assessment, especially for a candidate from a developing country.

#### ANSWER 1:

Canada requires an academic credential assessment of Canadian Equivalency for all individuals who have studied outside of Canada. For evaluation purposes, you must provide us with the proof of education, as stated in each criterion. This would include copies of the degrees/certificates/diplomas etc. Under Part 5 – Certification of the RFP, a bidder’s certification of the education and experience of their proposed resources is not required with the bid but required precedent to contract award. This means that you do not need to provide the assessments with the bid, but must be able to provide the assessments, to certify the equivalency of the education before a contract can be awarded. Bidders will be permitted up to a maximum of 60 calendar days after the date of bid closing to provide the certification, which should provide ample time for the assessments to be obtained. This will be reflected in Amendment 01 of the RFP.

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#### QUESTION 2:

Page 4, section 2.3 Enquiries – Bid Solicitations, the current deadline for submission of questions is 14 days before bid closing date. We would request this be changed to 7 days before the bid closing date, to better react to any amendments, late questions, or other.

#### ANSWER 2:

The deadline for the submission of questions will remain as is. Should there be a decision to change this, it’ll be detailed in a later amendment.

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#### QUESTION 3:

Page 28, section 3 Travel, the section has no provision for notice related to travel requests for meetings or other works. Previous FSSPs, such as Vietnam, included a notice period. As FSS staff or technical specialists may have personal obligations that limit their ability to undertake last minute travel, we request the following addition, in line with other FSSPs travel guidelines:

#### **3. Travel**



*The Contractor must be aware of Government of Canada travel reports and warnings. Moreover, travel arrangements and meeting room capacity must comply with Government of Colombia and Government of Ecuador guidelines relating to social distancing and security measures (if applicable) at the time of travel.*

*The FSSP resources and the technical specialists must meet in person or virtually with DFATD representatives, government representatives and other stakeholders in Colombia and Ecuador, when requested. Regular meetings and visits may also take place outside of Bogotá, based on the FSSP's needs. **The technical authority (TA) will provide notice of up to one calendar week for these meetings and, if necessary, discuss logistical aspects with the consultant.***

*All travel must be pre-authorized by the Technical Authority and be in accordance with the National Joint Council (NJC) Travel Directive.*

### ANSWER 3:

This recommendation has been accepted and will be reflected in Amendment 01.

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### QUESTION 4:

On page 43, Annex D – Evaluation Criteria, MTC 1, the final line reads as: *The bidder may submit as many projects as necessary to demonstrate the minimum required duration of experience. Any overlapping experience will not be counted.*

No definition of what is meant by project is given. In previous FSSP projects, such as Burkina Faso and Benin, Vietnam, Kenya, Somalia & South Africa, definitions have been provided for key terms, such as developing country(ies), International Development Assistance Stakeholders, Projects, Recognized Education Institutions.

As such, we would request that DFATD provide definitions for these key works used in the RFP for FSSP in Colombia and Ecuador.

### ANSWER 4:

As per the request, please see all definitions below:

For this bid solicitation, the following definitions apply to the requirement:

- **Developing country(ies):** Includes any countries and territories listed in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list of Official Development Assistance (ODA) recipients. The list can be found at the following website: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/developmentfinance-standards/daclist.htm>
- **International development assistance stakeholder(s):** Includes the following types of organizations involved in international development: civil society organizations (CSOs), the private sector, think tanks, academia, multilateral organizations, donors, local or national governments.



- **International development project:** A project with a mandate to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in developing countries to reduce poverty and contribute to a more secure, equitable and prosperous world.
  - **Project Countries:** Colombia and Ecuador.
  - **Project Region:** the Andean region, which includes Colombia and Ecuador.
  - **Recognised Educational Institution:** defined as public, non-governmental or private entity that has been given or has limited authority to grant degrees by an act of the relevant legislature.
  - **Professional Association:** an organization made up of members that practice a profession or activity, which oversees the knowledge and skills of its members, the exercise of the profession or trade and the conduct of its members
  - **Discipline:** defined as a discipline related to political sciences, law, international development, economics, finance, business administration, project management, social sciences, engineering or applied sciences.
  - **Project:** For the purpose of the evaluation, the term “project” is defined as a mandate with specific tasks, products/deliverables and a specific period of assignment. A project can be part of a full-time job.
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#### QUESTION 5:

On page 44, RTC 1.1 Academic Qualifications and 1.2 Training Certificates; page 48-49 RTC 2.1 Academic Qualifications and 2.2 Training Certificates; and page 50-51 RTC 3.1 Academic Qualifications and 3.2 Training Certificates, require that all 3 positions have non-Canadian degrees go through a Foreign Credential Validation against Canadian Standards assessment.

This was not a requirement for the recent FSSP RFP in Kenya, Somalia & South Africa; Burkina Faso and Benin; Caribbean; nor Mali. This is a burdensome requirement as the process takes at least 4-6 weeks to complete and could disqualify many highly qualified candidates that otherwise meet all the RFP requirements.

#### ANSWER 5:

Please refer to the Answer to Question 1. Amendment 01 will provide some clarity.

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#### QUESTION 6:

It is mentioned that we may be requested to provide an area for occasional meetings throughout the duration of the project. Is this cost part of the local reimbursable expenses budget?

#### ANSWER 6:

Suppliers will not be requested to provide an area for occasional meetings throughout the duration of the contract. As per Section 4.2 of the Statement of Work, should the Technical Authority request a meeting with the supplier, it will either be held virtually or at a Government of Canada site. If the supplier and its resources believe a meeting space is required, it will be their sole responsibility to source and cover the associated fees.



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#### QUESTION 7:

We would like to confirm the following based on the definition of a project: if a candidate's role on a project is completed as per the contract/role requirements but the project is still in the reporting phase or on-going, it qualifies as a completed "project" by GAC.

Please note, as per Amendment 1, on page 6, the Project was defined as: *'For the purpose of the evaluation the term 'project' is defined as a mandate with specific tasks, products/deliverables and a specific period of assignment. A project can be part of a full-time job.'*

#### ANSWER 7:

**The project must be completed even if the candidate's role is completed.** The definition will be adjusted for clarity. This will be reflected in Amendment 002 of the RFP.

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#### QUESTION 8:

We request that the period questions can be submitted be changed from fourteen (14) calendar days before bid deadline, to seven (7) calendar days before bid deadline, to let bidders have enough time to respond to amendments.

#### ANSWER 8:

The request is accepted. Amendment 002 of the RFP will allow questions up to five (5) calendar days before the bid deadline. Subsequently, the solicitation period will be extended by an additional two (2) days to allow a little more time for inquiries, as necessary. The Solicitation closing date will be amended to reflect March 22, 2024, at 2:00PM Eastern Time.

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#### QUESTION 9:

In Amendment #1 to dated 2024/02/13, it is noted that Part 6 – Resulting Contract Clause, Section 6.7.1, Subsection D is replaced in its entirety with "**Other Direct Costs – Transportation, accommodation for third parties**" to cover "direct costs that it reasonably and properly incurred for the transportation, accommodation of third parties, during their participation in the training and knowledge sharing sessions. Can GAC clarify what 3<sup>rd</sup> parties are required for FSS Colombia and Ecuador? There is no reference to third parties, training and knowledge sharing sessions in Annex A: Statement of Work.

#### ANSWER 9:

Throughout the duration of the FSSP, it is possible that a 3<sup>rd</sup> party government official(s) of the recipient country(ies) may need to attend an event/conference/training, which is not hosted by the Government of Canada. Should such circumstance arise, Global Affairs Canada may request the contractor to prepare the logistical arrangements for the 3<sup>rd</sup> party to attend the event such as the travel, transportation, and accommodation for the individual. However, in relation to the FSSP in Colombia and Ecuador, there is



little anticipation that this envelope will be used. Consequently, a task will be added to the Statement of Work in Amendment 002 of the RFP to ensure clarity of the roles and responsibilities in reference to this envelope.