TBS SOLICITATION 24062-24-283
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SERIES 3

Question 1

The RFP includes a Bid Submission Form as Annex C on page 50. However, it is not referenced in Bid Preparation Instructions on page 9 of the RFP.

How should we treat this? As a separate form to be submitted as a separate Section (IV?). Or should we add it to one of Sections I, II, or III specified in the Bid Preparation Instructions?

Answer 1

Please submit Annex C as a separate document.

Question 2

I can't seem to find the last date to ask questions on RFP 24062-24-283 that was released on Wednesday.

Can you assist?

Answer 2

Part 2 - BIDDER INSTRUCTIONS paragraph **2.4 ENQUIRIES - BID SOLICITATION** states:

All enquiries must be submitted in writing to the Contracting Authority no later than **5 calendar days** before the bid closing date. Enquiries received after that time may not be answered. *Questions should be submitted by May 8th at the latest.*

Question 3

Section 5.3 on page 28 of the RFP stipulates that "**every** individual who will be providing support to TBS for this contract will be fluent in both English and French."

Our project team includes technical specialists, such as software engineers, DevOps, and site builders, who unilingual. To limit the team working on your exclusively to fluently bilingual individuals would deprive you of the full expertise of our team as well as limit their ability to work.

Would it satisfy this requirement if we assign a bilingual support contact, whose responsibility it would be to field your support requests and then to ensure that the support is provided in the preferred language of the person requesting the support?

Answer 3

The Crown agrees to modify section 5.3 and also welcomes the suggestion of assigning a bilingual support contact acting as the single point of contact.

Please see Amendment 1 to the RFP.

Question 4

Section 6.3 on page 33 of the RFP states: "There are no security requirements for this contract."

In light of this, may we mark the Annex C – Bid Submission Form Security Clearances sections "N/A" for not applicable?

Answer 4.

On ANNEX C - BID SUBMISSION FORM please mark the Security Clearance Level of Bidder and Security Clearance Level of Bidder's Individuals Resources all N/A

Question 5

In the pricing section on page 13, the RFP includes a requirement for: "The migration of existing (4-8) projects and their associated functionality (i.e., forums) and content to the new platform."

The work and budget could vary significantly based on the nature and extent of the existing projects and content. Could you please provide the URLs of the specific projects so that we can review them and estimate the work required?

Answer 5

The existing projects requiring migration are:

URLs – RAS Platform Feedback:

EN - https://letstalkfederalregulations.ca/feedback-on-the-let-s-talk-federal-regulations-platform /

French - https://parlonsdesreglementsfederaux.ca/retroaction-sur-la-plateforme-parlons-des-reglements-federaux

URLs – OpenGov Action Plan

EN: https://letstalkopengovernment.ca.engagementhq.com/nap-engagement-project

FR: https://parlonsgouvernementouvert.ca.engagementhq.com/participez-a-l-elaboration-du-plan-d-action-national-de-2025-2029-du-canada-pour-un-gouvernement-ouvert

All other projects currently hosted on the platform would be archived on other Government of Canada platforms and do not require migration of their functionality.

Queston 6

The Financial Bid on page 13 includes the following requirement: "The engagement platform will be required to go through full functionality, accessibility and quality assurance testing, to ensure seamless user experience."

This type of process can vary greatly depending on the expectations and process established by the client. We require more precise information in order to provide an cost estimate.

Will Treasury Board be conducting this testing? Does Treasury Board have a prescribed methodology for the testing as well as acceptance thresholds?

Answer 6

There is no prescribed methodology for quality assurance testing. TBS will complete testing in cooperation with the service provider and report any bugs and issues before the websites are live. The requirement is to ensure that there is full functionality in both official languages so that there are no issues for users once the websites are launched.

Question 7

The Pricing Schedule section on page 13 includes the stipulation that, "Two websites will be hosted on the platform, each with a unique URL."

The amount of work we must do will vary with the number of websites. Should we price the Managed Services to include two websites throughout the first two years and the option years?

Answer 7

The Regulatory Affairs Sector has one website (EN/FR) and OpenGov has the other (EN/FR). That said, the intention is that the service provider will provide an engagement platform for both sectors that will be hosted on the Contractors website for the entire duration of the contract which may include option years if exercised by Canada which will provide the functionality (engagement tools, widgets) as outlined in the Statement of Work, and not to build a website.

Question 8

In the pricing section on page 13, the RFP includes a requirement for: "The migration of existing (4-8) projects and their associated functionality (i.e., forums) and content to the new platform."

1. Has Treasury Board made a firm decision to move off the existing platform?
2. If not, is the existing contractor eligible to submit a bid in response to this RFP that would continue to use the existing platform?
3. If the existing contractor is eligible to submit a bid, how do you ensure a level playing field with new bidders who will have the cost of migration, which the existing supplier would not have?
4. If the existing contractor is eligible, could you please provide information regarding the cost of the current platform and services provided by the existing contractor? This knowledge would give an unfair advantage to a bidder if it was not also known to other bidders.

Answer 8

1. The existing platform is being hosted and managed by a current contract that is expiring June 30, 2024

2. Yes, the current contractor can submit a response to this bid solicitation if they choose. If the current contractor's bid submission is deemed compliant and they win the contract in accordance with the Section 4.2 Basis of Selection methodology than they would continue the services as outlined in the contract.

3. The Bidder should have the existing capability to offer these services, and the migration would be to populate tools (such as a forum) in a similar manner to how they are currently used. The Crown does not see this as an advantage to the current vendor.

   The current vendor if they choose to submit a proposal will be treated in the same transparent manner as all other bidders and must meet the Technical and Financial requirements of the RFP so the playing field is equal.

4. The current incumbent is Granicus (Engagement HQ) . The contract period was April 1st, 2023 to June 30th, 2024. Total contract value: $146,900.00

   The services mentioned in this current RFP are the same or similar services that Granicus is currently providing.

Question 9

Section R2 on page 26 requests information on available training tools. The Point allocation includes,
- tool type = 1 point
- webinar = 1 point
- How to Videos = 3 points
- detailed written guides = 5 points

Webinars, how to videos and written guides are self-explanatory. However, the first reference to "tool type" is undefined.

Could you please provide more information regarding what you mean by "tool type" and what you will consider in allocating a point to our response?

Answer 9

Please see the Amendment 1 to the RFP.

The Crown has modified the Point allocation, scoring for R2 has been modified to:

- ~~tool type = 1 point~~
- webinar = 2 points
- How to Videos = 3 points
- detailed written guides = 5 points

Question 10

Is it the preference of the Treasury Board to have two sites with different urls, one for the English speakers and the other for the French speakers? or would the Board also consider a fully bilingual site (back and front end) reachable though a single url. In the latter both submission in English and French would be displayed on the same site.

Answer 10

The Crown has obligations under the *Official Languages Act* (and, more specifically, in Section 6.6. of the *Directive on Official Languages for Communications and Services*) to ensure information is available simultaneously and of equal quality in both official languages on all of its websites, so Yes, we would consider a fully bilingual site (back and front end) reachable through a single URL for each sector (1 for RAS and 1 for OpenGov) so that both Official Languages would be displayed on the same site.

The Crown gives the Bidder the flexibility to choose how they will meet the bilingualism requirement outlined in the RFP, In other words, what is described in this question, if it was of equal quality and simultaneously available, could meet these requirements.

Question 11

How many staff members of the Treasury Board will require access to the platform?

Answer 11

It depends on how the platform management works so it is difficult to provide a firm number. Generally speaking, however, each platform (Regulatory Affairs and OpenGov) would require three people with whatever qualifies as administrator access on the platform.

Question 12

This is a follow up to Questions 8 and 5 in Question and Answers Series 1.

In your response to question 8, point #3, you state, "…the migration would be to populate tools (such as a forum) in a similar manner to how they are currently used."

Also, in your response to question #5, you specify existing content that you want migrated into the new platform.

Granicus provides the existing platform and does not have to incur the cost of migration, which they then can bid as $0. Every other bidder will have to migrate content and therefore will have a cost that is greater than $0.

Will you exclude the cost of migration from the evaluation criteria in order to eliminate the clear cost advantage held by the incumbent, Granicus?

Answer 12

See Amendment 1 to the RFP, for modifications to the Annex A - Statement of Work; and Attachment 1 to Part 3 - Pricing Schedule.

TBS will be responsible to extracting information from the existing engagement platform in the appropriate format (i.e. text files). The Bidder will not be responsible for migrating content, the Bidder needs to provide tools and interfaces for TBS to use the engagement platform to input the data.

Question 13

In Question and Answer Series 1, Answer 5, you have stipulated the content to be migrated to the new platform.

Will you extract the content from the existing platform and then transmit it to the new contractor for migration into the new platform? If yes, in what file formats will you provide the content? Will images, graphics and videos be provided in their original format? If not, will we have administrator access to the current platform so that we may extract the data ourselves?

Answer 13

TBS will extract and populate the content in a text format (.txt or .docx) in the engagement platform. The only media is photos, which would also be provided (.jpg). TBS will also work with the contractor on the uploading of this information, which should be supported by the Bidder's existing engagement platform. As an example, the type of migration would include a welcome page for which text already exist and a photo to go with the content.

Question 14

I am hoping for some assistance; would someone be able to elaborate and provide further context on the following:

1.   "Add Slider". What is the purpose and use case of this?
2.   "Podcast hosting and publishing capabilities". How is this intended to be used?
3.   "Add Testimonial". What is the purpose and how is this intended to be used?

Answer 14

1.   **Please see Amendment 1 to the RFP**. Slider and carousel are the same feature and will be evaluated as one feature.
2.   This refers to TBS hosting audio files on the website or to link to existing podcasts, both of which would need to be publicly available.
3.   This refers to users who may be giving feedback or a review through a testimonial, and could take the form of a text box or other engagement tool that allows users to interact. It could be seen as similar to a review.

Question 15
(R3, h) What specifically is meant by: "Ability to integrate an email marketing platform for communications with users"?

Answer 15

This means that the platform would have the ability to allow TBS to communicate with users through, for example, a newsletter that could be sent to all registered users.

Question 16

(M4, 3) What specifically is meant by: "Add spacer"?

Answer 16

This refers to web design components for spacing, headings, etc. on individual pages.

Question 17

We also have concerns about M3: "*provide expert Search Engine Optimization (SEO) content and ensure the site will rank first.*" Are companies expected to be able to _**guarantee**_ a site ranking first? This is impossible to guarantee. Furthermore, where do you require the site to rank first?

Answer 17

No, there is not an expectation to guarantee it ranks first, but the Bidder is expected to demonstrate that they have SEO capabilities.

Question 18

In Question and Answer Series 1, Answer 5, you have stipulated the content to be migrated to the new platform.

Will you extract the content from the existing platform and then transmit it to the new contractor for migration into the new platform? If yes, in what file formats will you provide the content? Will images, graphics and videos be provided in their original format? If not, will we have administrator access to the current platform so that we may extract the data ourselves?

Answer 18

See Answer 13.

Question 19

In Section M5 on page 24, you have asked that we demonstrate that our platform has the following components:
- Slider
- Carousel
- Testimonial

1) Slider and Carousel are two names applied to the same feature. Could you please clarify how you define a slider vs. a carousel and provide an example of each (a URL link to the example will enable us to see the feature in action.)

2) Could you please define what you mean by "testimonial" and point to an example of a testimonial (a URL link to the example will enable us to see the feature in action.)

Answer 19

1) **Please see Amendment 1 to the RFP.** The Crown agrees slider and carousel are the same feature and will be evaluated as one feature.

2) This refers to users who may be giving feedback or a review through a testimonial, and could take the form of a text box or other engagement tool that allows users to interact. It could be seen as similar to a review.

Question 20

In the Managed Service table for the initial 24 months (page 14), you ask for a monthly rate to provide:

- Preparation of reports and results analysis
- Adaption, creation and configuration of web analytics functionality to track "impressions" and "usage statistics" of individual projects on the websites hosted on the engagement platform

The cost of these activities will vary with the number and scope of the activities launched on the platform, as well as the breadth and depth of the analysis.

Could you please provide a more detailed and specific specification of the projected activities that we can use to calculate our costs? As an alternative, would you be willing to change the costing methodology for these activities to an hourly rate? (An hourly rate would provide you with control of your variable costs.)

Answer 20

The activities outlined in this question refer to analytics for given engagement activities and consultation projects on the engagement platform. These depend on TBS needs and activities, but generally speaking would refer to traffic and other analytics to evaluate the success of a project. For example, how many users visited the platform, posted comments, made accounts, etc., for each engagement activity.

Question 21

In the Managed Service table for the three option years (page 15), you ask for a monthly rate to provide:

- Preparation of reports, **action plan**, and results analysis (emphasis added)

Could you please clarify your expectation for the action plan? Also, the cost of these activities will vary with the number and scope of the activities launched on the platform, as well as the breadth and depth of the analysis.

Could you please provide a more detailed and specific specification of the projected activities for each year that we can use to calculate our costs? As an alternative, would you be willing to change the costing methodology for these activities to an hourly rate? (An hourly rate would provide you with control of your variable costs.)

Answer 21

TBS needs depend on the project, as noted in the question, so an action plan would be developed to ensure that the engagement platform is being used effectively to reach target audiences effectively. For example, an action plan may support which tools would be used (polls, forums, ideas, etc.) based on the needs identified by TBS for a given project.

Question 22

In the Managed Service table for the three option years (page 15), you ask for a monthly rate to provide:

- On-demand training for new users & new functionalities

Could you please provide an estimated number of on-demand training sessions and number of participants for each of the option years so that we have a basis for costing? As an alternative, would you be willing to change the costing methodology for these activities to an hourly rate? (An hourly rate would provide you with control of your variable costs.)

Answer 22

Training sessions depend on the scope of projects and the types of tools used which is why the on-demand approach is proposed. We are not able to provide a firm number at this time.

Question 23

Can we request a one week extension of this RFP to May 20, 2024?

Answer 23

See Amendment 1 to the RFP. The Crown Agrees closing is extended to **May 21, 2024**.

Question 24

Should a new vendor be selected, will Granicus/Engagement allow the release of current data to be migrated?

Answer 24

Yes.

Question 25

Should a new vendor be selected, please confirm we will have access to your current engagement site's API for the migration of data - Meaning your site will still be live and active for us to pull from. If so, until what date?

Answer 25

TBS will be responsible for extracting information from the existing engagement platform in the appropriate format (i.e., text files), the Bidder will not require access to the existing supplier's platform.

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==**New Question and Answer**==

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Question 26

Would the team would be willing to open up 30 minute demonstrations as part of the evaluations?

Answer 26

No.