



**Proponent Questions and CMHC Responses (Q&As)**

**RFx002627 – URN National Indigenous Housing Centre RFP**

**Date: February 14, 2024**

**Version 4**

**Q&A TABLE**

No.	Proponent’s Question	CMHC Response
1	<p>Frequently when the federal government is planning a large procurement process like this, they release an initial Request for Information or Letter of Interest which allows potential bidders to make suggestions about the eventual RFP. That approach was not taken with this procurement. Is it possible at this time for potential proponents to offer suggestions for the RFP ahead of submitting a proposal?</p> <p>For example, if a wording change is suggested such as requiring the National Indigenous Housing Centre to work in consensus within the recognized representatives of First Nations, Inuit and Métis in allocating funds. Or that the governance model of the Centre itself must include representation from the leadership of the three Constitutionally recognized Indigenous groups.</p>	<p>The Government of Canada committed to announcing the successful proponent to establish the National Indigenous Housing Centre before the end-of-March. Within this timeframe, a 2-step procurement process has been utilized, with an initial RFP, followed by a negotiated Service Agreement with the successful proponent/joint venture.</p> <p>As per Appendix C, RFP Specifications: Proponents are expected to demonstrate and be rated on evidence that they can address representation, identity, and inclusion in the following sections pertaining governance and partnerships.</p> <p>Section 4.1: Development of organizational structure, governance, and mandate: “The Centre is expected to develop and finalize an organizational structure and governance model that provides for adequate representation across: ... All Indigenous identities”</p> <p>R2 Organizational Structure, governance, and representation: “Demonstrated representation within proposed governance structure.”</p> <p>Section 5.5 - Partnership and Stakeholder Engagement: “Proponents are encouraged to outline their objectives for partnership development with Indigenous organizations and governments;</p>



		<p>private sector; and other levels of government (federal, provincial, territorial, regional, and municipal) that may, for example, .... Increase collaboration/relationship building amongst Indigenous organizations and governments that serve to strengthen Indigenous led approaches to housing and advance Indigenous rights under the United Nations Declaration Act (UNDA).”</p> <p>R5 Partnership and Stakeholder engagement: “Demonstrated existing or plan for establishment of a range of key relationships across sectors, regions, and identities.”</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Can the Procurement Advisor clarify the following - Can an Indigenous Organization that fully meets the criteria outlined in the RFP partner with a "for Profit " organization to form a new entity as long as the Indigenous organization holds 51% ownership?</p>	<p>Yes, as per Appendix C, Section 1 – Proponent Eligibility:</p> <p>“(1) To be eligible to enter into an agreement with CMHC subsequent to this RFP, the winning Proponent (or lead Proponent on a team) must:</p> <p>(2) Be listed on the Indigenous Business Directory (IBD) at the time of Contract execution. In order to be listed on the IBD, a business must be at least 51% owned and controlled by Indigenous peoples. An Indigenous business can be:</p> <p>(g) a <b>joint venture</b> consisting of 2 or more Indigenous businesses or an Indigenous business and a non-Indigenous business, provided that the Indigenous business or <b>businesses have at least 51% ownership and control of the joint venture.</b></p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Due to the timing constraints and the requirement to form a new legal entity in most cases, The Government of Canada Security clearance process does not provide the ability to provide clearances for the New Entity, officers of the organization before the RFP due date. Will CMHC allow the Proponent organization and Officers to proceed conditional on these Security Clearances</p>	<p>Yes.</p>



	in full being completed as the Security Clearance backlog allows.	
4	How do you verify the new entity is Indigenous owned, particularly it's a not-for-profit organization?	<p>CMHC can verify in accordance with Section 1.5.2 - Proponent's Eligibility of the RFP:</p> <p>"In addition to the general rights to verify and clarify Proponent submissions, CMHC can, at its discretion and at any time prior to execution of the Services Agreement, require Proponents to supply supporting documentation supporting their certification regarding legal capacity and status as an Indigenous Business, including, but not limited to, information about their legal structure, shareholdings and shareholders rights, corporate registrations, including for their corporate name and place of business, and evidence that the Proponents are in good standing."</p>
5	Does the proposed new Entity of a Proponent have to be established before submission of the Proposal or can it be after the Award as long as the Proponents proposal is fully compliant and is awarded the contract. This may be the case for an existing / functioning Indigenous organization that has a demonstrated capacity to fully deliver this contract but does not want to set up the new organization before award.	No. It does not have to be established before proposal submission. As indicated in the RFP, proof of legal capacity to enter into a Services Agreement must be made at the latest at execution of the Services Agreement.
6	<p>The RFP notes in section 4.3: "A maximum of 15% of program funding can go to support the coordination of wrap-around (ancillary housing) services, and enhanced coordination among agencies, governments, and the private sector that help sustain positive housing outcomes for Indigenous Peoples along the housing continuum."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is this referring to all the overhead the Centre can have?</li> <li>• Wrap around supports are a necessary piece to ensuring folks stay in housing, is the Centre</li> </ul>	<p>a) No. Overhead is considered <b>Operational</b> Funding. Section 4.3 stipulates 15% of <b>Program</b> Funding (see definitions in Section 1 of Appendix C).</p> <p>b) Recognizing the goal of the U.R.N. Strategy Framework is to reduce core housing need it is expected that the majority of program funding will be spent on projects that narrow the housing gap.</p>



	<p>expected to find other avenues of funding to support wrap around supports to keep people in housing?</p>	<p>Proponents are expected to outline their vision for the Centre which may or may not include supporting coordination of wrap around services, research and data, and capacity development. The Centre's: vision, mandate and scope as well as "Demonstrated knowledge of housing programs and services at all levels of government to develop affordable housing for urban, rural and northern Indigenous Peoples" are part of the elements to be evaluated under the Rated Criteria. In addition, the amendment published February 13<sup>th</sup> includes the following language: <i>U.R.N. <b>program</b> funding can only be used to support partnerships and coordination of existing wrap around (ancillary housing) services as opposed to funding these services directly. Other federal, provincial, territorial, regional, and municipal programs are <b>potentially</b> available to support this. <b>The Centre could seek to leverage other funding sources of related federal programs/initiatives.</b></i></p>
<p>7</p>	<p>The definition of the North includes Nunavut, but Inuit Nunangat includes all of Nunavut. Is 12% expected to be spent in Yukon and Northwest Territory as ITK has their own agreement for distinctions-based funding?</p>	<p>The proponent for the National Centre will have the flexibility on how the 12% minimum northern allocation is delivered. Eligible recipients could receive funding from both Rights Holder (distinctions-based) funding as well as from the National Centre so long as it does not exceed 100% of the costs.</p> <p>With respect to Nunavut, as per Appendix C Section 1: Recipient definition:</p> <p>"For the north, flexibilities will be afforded to support activities in Inuit Nunangat that are not duplicative of the existing Inuit Housing Strategy." The National Centre would be able to fund activities with Nunavut if it chooses so.</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Why is there so much emphasis on privacy? Including a large privacy questionnaire, when the Centre should</p>	<p>The RFP is intended to be as open as possible in terms of service models that could be submitted and whilst it is preferable that as</p>



	not be collecting personal data of patrons at Indigenous housing organizations. The Centre should only be collecting data from those who apply for funding as a method of record keeping.	little Personal Information or PII be gathered by the Centre, the questionnaire and the standards referenced therein seek to establish and preserve data integrity for all data, whether PI, PII or other. Note that the Centre will be processing financial data and information and for that reason should have robust data governance.
9	Will the work outlined in the RFP be split amongst multiple vendors?	No. A proponent may form a team or joint venture to delineate the work (as proposed as part of their submission on governance, scope and mandate) but the Services Agreement will be with one entity that is Indigenous led.
10	Is there currently an incumbent respondent?	No. The Centre will be selected by the open, transparent, and fair procurement process.  As per Appendix C, Section 2.0: “It is understood at this time that the overall vision for the National Indigenous Housing Centre’s structure, governance, partnerships, and other activities beyond the administration of U.R.N. Funds and reporting is to be developed and proposed by RFP Proponents. As such there is no one concept on how the Centre is to structurally look, operate, develop a mandate, collaborate with partners, choose funding recipients, disburse funding, or provide additional services.”
11	Can a one-month extension be provided for the RFP submission deadline? We believe that an extension would allow us the necessary time to submit a comprehensive proposal that meets all requirements.	Recognizing the ongoing urgent housing needs of Indigenous Peoples living in Urban, Rural and Northern areas, on December 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2023, the Government of Canada announced that a winning proponent for the RFP process would be announced in March 2024. Given this public commitment and the required steps required to take us to the announcement of the selected proponent in March, we are unable to grant an extension to the RFP deadline.  Please note that we recognize that proponents may be a different stages of readiness and that, as per the RFP and scoring criteria, proponents are to demonstrate <b>either</b> existing <b>or</b> a plan for



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		establishing such elements as partnerships, organizational set up, and funding delivery.
12	As of to-day's date, there are 2 Amendments and 2 Versions. Please confirm?	As of February 13, 2024, there are three (3) amendments to the RFP and three (3) Proponent Q&A Documents.  This is the fourth Proponent Q&A Document.
13	Since we need to register before we can bid on the RFP, we are in the process of getting into an alliance/co-operative to bid on this project. Can we just use one indigenous group as the lead and state the other members as partners? This will enable us to move forward.	Yes.
14	As stated in the RFP, the requirements to have various policies such as privacy, security, etc. Given we are in a startup mode, there may not be time to have all the details in place. Can we state that we will conform with the stated policies requirement and development is in progress?	Yes. As indicated in the instructions at the top of the table in Exhibit 1 to Appendix A, it is permissible to indicate how an organization intends to comply once it has become fully operational.
15	Since we are forming a partnership, how would you evaluate sustainability as part of the process?	As per Appendix C, Rated Criteria R5, Category Partnership and stakeholder engagement: proponents will be evaluated on "Demonstrated existing or plan for establishment of a range of key relationships across sectors, regions, and identities."  Demonstrated knowledge of housing programs and services at all levels of government to develop affordable housing for urban, rural and northern Indigenous Peoples."
16	Release of funding: a) Is this up to the discretion of the proponent? for instance, increase the distribution in the beginning and evenly distribute later? b) Would the funding be given to the proponent in the beginning of the fiscal year to distribute?	a) No. As per Appendix B, Section 3: The maximum funding range as well as the year-over-year amounts over the 7-year period have already been established by the Department of Finance in the Budget 2023 funding decision.



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	<p>c) As long as the applicant satisfies the criteria as presented in the RFP, do the applicants need to go through another scan with CMHC?</p>	<p>b) Yes. As part of the Service Agreement the Centre would submit an annual proposed budget to CMHC at the beginning of each fiscal year and the corresponding yearly funding would be advanced to the Centre by CMHC.</p> <p>c) As per Appendix C, Rated Criteria R4: the Proponent will be evaluated on “Provision of robust allocation methodology and plan for funding delivery.” Once this allocation methodology is agreed to in the Services Agreement, another scan of potential Recipients is not required (i.e. CMHC will not need to approve individual projects or funding agreements for the Centre’s further distribution of funding to support eligible programming). However, the Centre will be required to report quarterly and annually on results (as detailed in section 6.0 of the RFP) and program evaluation(s) will occur to assess overall performance and delivery.</p>
<p>17</p>	<p>For analysis purposes, do we need to use only Census 2021 data? Can we use our own data for assessment/evaluation, which will be stated in the RFP?</p>	<p>Proponents will be evaluated as per Appendix C, Evaluation Criteria R4:</p> <p>“Provision of robust allocation methodology and plan for funding Delivery.” While it could include Census 2021 data it is not a requirement. The allocation methodology is for proponents to propose/explain.</p>
<p>18</p>	<p>There is some confusion on the funding duration. Can you be more specific on the funding duration 7 or 8 full years?</p>	<p>At this point, and as announced in Budget 2023, funding has been secured for 7 years; however, the Centre is expected to provide a final annual report in Year 8 in order to capture funding and project data spent in Year 7.</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>The Proposal document clearly states that there was a sense of urgency to this RFP and the pre-RFP timeline and standard process was compressed. This has made it difficult for Proponents that fully comply to complete a compliant, complete, detailed proposal to be considered in a fair and competitive procurement</p>	<p>Recognizing the ongoing urgent housing needs of Indigenous Peoples living in Urban, Rural and Northern areas, on December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the Government of Canada announced that a winning proponent for the RFP process would be announced in March 2024.</p>



	<p>process. We respectfully ask for a reasonable extension.</p>	<p>Given this public commitment and the required steps required to take us to the announcement of the selected proponent in March, we are unable to grant an extension to the RFP deadline.</p> <p>Please note that we recognize that proponents may be at different stages of readiness and that, as per the RFP and scoring criteria, proponents are to demonstrate <b>either</b> existing <b>or</b> a plan for establishing such elements as partnerships, organizational set up, and funding delivery.</p>
<p>20</p>	<p>I wonder if one or more of the privacy reporting requirements are not in place because of the current nature of the business, but we commit to having it in place if RFP is awarded to us; will it suffice the purpose? My question refers to 7.3 Security Assessments in Exhibit 1 to Appendix A. Our current system satisfies the internal needs of our current business, but I understand that the Centre will have more expectations to meet and will be equipped with resources to meet such requirements.</p>	<p>As indicated in the instructions at the top of the table in Exhibit 1 to Appendix A, it is permissible to answer prospectively and indicate how future controls will be incorporated once the organization has become operational.</p>
<p>21</p>	<p>I also want to understand what level of details are expected to be included in the RFP, as some items require much information to share.</p>	<p>The level of details provided are up to the proponent's discretion.</p> <p>As per Section 2.6.5 Mandatory Submission Requirements: proposals must be completed and include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Submission Requirements Form (Appendix A)</li> <li>2) Pricing Form (Appendix B)</li> <li>3) Response to the Mandatory and Rated Criteria (Appendix C)</li> </ol> <p>Proponents are encouraged to provide as much detail in their proposal as necessary to demonstrate they fully meet the requirements. As per Section 3.1 Stages of the Evaluation:</p>





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		<p>“Only information provided in the solicitation document may be used in the evaluation of the Proponent’s proposal. Evaluators must consider only the information received via the RFP process and score criteria strictly on the content of the proposal.”, and</p> <p>“An evaluator may not consider information from sources, records, experiences or prior knowledge of the Proponent from outside of the formal RFP process.”</p>
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