Questions and Answers

Request for Information for a Private Cloud solution

Solicitation number CS-PC-2024

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Shared Services Canada   Services partagés Canada

Canada

Powering world-class technology for Government

1. **SSC provided a definition for private cloud and IaaS aligned to NIST. What is the reference for the HaaS & IaaS Platform definitions?**

A: HaaS and IaaS Platform are SSC defined and not from NIST. For ease of reference, please see the definitions below:

Hardware as a Service (HaaS) is a subscription-based model that allows organizations to lease dedicated hardware infrastructure, such as servers, storage devices, networking equipment, and other physical components, from a service provider. Key benefits include the capacity to scale up and down in response to business needs.

Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) Platform is a software solution that enables the delivery of Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) services to end-users via self-service and automation.

2. **SSC states it wants to build a Private Cloud as a Solution or a Service. The question is will it be a service or a solution, not clear in your documentation.**

A: SSC aims to develop a private cloud that provides self-service capabilities to partners and clients. Additional information will be provided once the Challenge-Based Solicitation is released.

3. **Why has SSC given industry such a short period of time to respond to the RFI? With a long weekend in between, there are only five business days remaining until the response is due.**

A: Response period has been extended to April 15th, 2024, 12:00 p.m. (noon) EDT.

4. **Would SSC consider multiple solutions from a single provider (and if so, would you prefer a single response)**

A: SSC encourages all submissions. If a single provider believes that multiple solutions are best presented through multiple responses, they are welcome to do so.

5. **Can we assume automation will be priority for service request management?**

A: Yes. Further details will be provided once the Challenge Based Solicitation is released.

6. **What expectations will SSC have on the uptake from departments for Private Cloud?**

A: SSC is currently collaborating with GC partners to better comprehend the expectations regarding the uptake of Private Cloud by departments. In order to further comprehend their requirement, SSC intends to arrange additional engagement sessions. So far, SSC has already engaged with over 80 representatives from more than 21 departments.

7. **Your categories of IaaS, HaaS, IaaS platform, and the operational model to support, can all be from different vendors. Will you be breaking into different procurement streams or expect an all under one umbrella approach?**

A: Currently, SSC's objective is to collect comprehensive information from the industry to assist us in developing the most optimal solution.

8. **How does the Government of Canada intend to integrate the proposed Private Cloud Solution with existing IT infrastructure and legacy systems? Are there any compatibility requirements or constraints that need to be addressed?**

A: Following the release of the Challenge-Based Solicitation, and throughout the agile procurement process, SSC will share draft technical requirements for industry consultation. This will allow industry to ask additional questions and engage in further discussions with the Government of Canada.

9. **Has SSC established a business model for charging departments for use of the proposed Private Cloud solution?**

A: This will be defined at a later stage. In the meantime, SSC welcomes all suggestions and encourages industry to contribute any ideas and perspectives to help us shape this procurement process.

10. **Does the Government prefer dealing directly with the service delivery organization or are resellers/agents going to be part of the ultimate contracting model?**

A: This will be defined at a later stage. In the meantime, SSC welcomes all suggestions and encourages industry to contribute any ideas and perspectives to help us shape this procurement process.

11. **SSC will be far more successful if it separates HaaS from Private Cloud thus respecting the Cloud principles.**

A: The objective of this RFI is to collect high-quality feedback that will aid SSC in refining the procurement process. SSC encourages industry to share their valuable insights.

12. **You have asked us to comment on a large number of areas far outside what you've asked us in the RFI. Can you please drop the requirement to constrain our response to 500 words so we can provide valuable guidance?**

A: Although the response length will remain the same, SSC encourages you to use the video response option to provide additional valuable guidance. Please note that this RFI will not be the only opportunity for industry input and engagement. There will be multiple occasions for collaboration with industry throughout the agile procurement process.

13. **The value of Cloud is no longer simply hardware and virtual servers. It is the applications and services (PaaS and SaaS) capabilities such as AI, DevOps, security, etc. Is it SSC's intent to extend Private cloud to develop services that add value to your clients? Will SSC's Private Cloud simply stop and provide basic VM's?**

A: This will be defined at a later stage. In the meantime, SSC welcomes all suggestions and encourages industry to contribute any ideas and perspectives to help shape this procurement process.

14. **Will SSC's Private Cloud be only within SSC's datacenters? Or will you be extending the datacenter and ops model to 3rd parties?**

A: This will be defined at a later stage. In the meantime, SSC welcomes all suggestions and encourages industry to contribute any ideas and perspectives to help shape this procurement process.

15. **From SSC's analysis of the demands from their partners departments, what the forecast % split of your partners workloads across your various hosting strategies?**

A: SSC is actively working with GC partners to gain a clearer understanding of this matter. Additional engagement sessions will be conducted to gain a deeper understanding of their needs. To date, SSC has already engaged with over 80 representatives from more than 21 departments.

16. **Has Canada already procured or shortlisted the Hardware technology platform(s) on which the IaaS-platform could be deployed as part of this private cloud initiative? If so, please provide details on what hardware was selected or is being considered?**

A: At this moment, Canada has not procured or shortlisted any HaaS or IaaS platform for this initiative. The purpose of this RFI is to actively engage with industry and gather insightful feedback that will contribute to shaping the procurement process and building the most optimal Private Cloud Solution.

17. **Can you provide some additional information and the size and scope of what the SSC are looking to offer to the GC as part of Private Cloud?**

A: SSC is actively working with GC partners to gain a clearer understanding of this matter. Further engagement sessions will be scheduled to gain a better understanding of their requirements and expectations. To date, SSC has already engaged with over 80 representatives from more than 21 departments.

18. **Is the intent to create a procurement vehicle for private cloud solutions that can be used by the GC or is it to procure a private cloud solution for that will be used to deliver cloud services to the GC?**

A: SSC is seeking input from the industry regarding various contracting and technical models that can benefit Private Cloud. SSC will continue to refine all these throughout the agile procurement process.

19. **Is the Crown considering Platform as a Service and/or Software as a Service as part of this private cloud initiative? If not, why is this not being considered?**

A: This will be defined at a later stage. In the meantime, SSC welcomes all suggestions and encourages industry to share any ideas and perspectives that will help shape the ongoing procurement process.

20. **For Question 10, if the response is "No", are you interested in understanding why this answer was chosen? If so, will you please consider adding a text box so that this specific feedback can be provided by the respondents?**

A: If you select "No" as your response, the form will trigger a subsequent question to gather more information or seek clarification on the matter.

21. **The Response Form does not allow for the inclusion of attachments. How should Respondents provide attachments that are a necessary component of our response?**

A: The Response Form does not allow for the submission of attachments. However, SSC recommends using the video response option as an alternative. Please note, this will not be the only

opportunity for industry input and engagement. There will be multiple instances of collaboration with industry throughout the agile procurement process.

22. With whom from the Provincial and Municipal government will the information collected be shared and for what purpose?

A: The reason for including this provision in the RFI is to ensure that if there is interest from provincial and municipal governments in our project, SSC can share information with them openly and facilitate broader collaboration and knowledge sharing. At this moment in time, SSC has not received any expressions of interest from entities outside of GC departments.

23. Why the "Private Cloud" instead of simply using the "Public Cloud"? Is it only to meet the security requirements at the SECRET level?

A: The Private cloud is intended to compliment current hosting solutions. SSC welcomes all suggestions and encourages industry to contribute any ideas and perspectives to help shape this procurement process.

24. You defined the "deployment model" of the private cloud and the "service model" IaaS according to NIST's definitions, but you didn't specify the key features of the NIST cloud. SSC combines HaaS and an IaaS platform (SSC's definition) with a private cloud, which is extremely complicated and almost impossible to achieve within a reasonable time frame. It appears that this requirement is aligned with one of SSC's organizational divisions rather than with its strategic plan. SSC should seriously consider separating the HaaS Platform and the IaaS Platform (branded and defined by SPC) from an extremely well-established private cloud offering that is fully compliant with GC security and the NIST definition.

A: SSC is seeking industry input and opinions on the various contractual and technical models. As part of the Agile procurement process, SSC is committed to exploring various opportunities and adapting the models based on the industry's input.

25. HaaS consists in purchasing/leasing/paying for the IT infrastructure per use (hardware, software, others) to improve the sustainability and modernization of SPC data centres (legacy and corporate); You can't imagine a business model in which SPC will manage to scale up and down using HaaS, let alone comply with the key features of the cloud.

A: SSC is seeking industry input and opinions on the various contractual and technical models. As part of the Agile procurement process, SSC is committed to exploring various opportunities and adapting the models based on the industry's input.

26. SSC has successfully created 8 PBMM public cloud framework agreements with thousands of service offers that address most GC program use cases. Cloud service providers continued to innovate at an incredible speed, integrating these innovations into the existing offer. Why terminating agreements rather than making the necessary course corrections to address the less desirable aspects, given SSC's very important lessons learned, corporate memory and global public-private peer relationships?

A: As GC Cloud adoption continues to accelerate, SSC is committed to continuously improving and evolving cloud procurement, ensuring to provide ongoing value to the GC and address emerging challenges through its framework renewal approach.

A review of lessons learned from the Framework Agreement (FA) confirmed the value it has brought to the speed and security of accessing cloud services, however, the review also identified some challenges and recommendations for improvement as cloud consumption grows across the GC. For example, under the FA we must compete each department requirement above 4.5M individually, which not only limits buying power but is also not an efficient practice or use of resources.

To enable the whole-of-government procurement approach outlined in the new Strategy, SSC needed to modernize its approach and as such began developing a new generation of procurement vehicles that will form an ecosystem where:

- Contracting operations are competitive by default.
- Suppliers are qualified within their market segment under multiple vehicles.
- New vehicles can be added, existing ones can be opened to new vendors.
- Long-term contract vehicles where contract value could be scaled.
- Capacity to include new features or technology as needed.
- Fair and transparent practices through engagement with vendors.
- Data analytics enabling price and performance monitoring.

This shift represents an important milestone for the GC, as we will be looking to compete the requirement on behalf of the entire GC and put in place long lasting contracts that will ensure that the GC is able to procure cloud for the long-term, while increasing stability and efficiency.

The GC's Chief Information Officer and Shared Services Canada (SSC) are working in collaboration to evolve cloud procurement in a holistic way to support the needs of the modern GC Hosting Strategy and achieve the best value for Canada and Canadians.