

Government of Canada

Request for Information (RFI)

Request for Information No.	CS-PC-2024	Date	March 22 nd , 2024
------------------------------------	------------	-------------	-------------------------------

Issuing Office	Shared Services Canada		
Contracting Authority (The Contracting Authority is the representative for all questions and comments about this document.)	Name	Daniel Leon	
	Telephone No.	613-290-5158	
	Email Address	PVRCloudServicesRCRs.DCCServicesinonuagiquesARF@ssc-spc.gc.ca	
Closing Date and Time	April 15 th , 2024 – 12:00 (noon)		
Time Zone	Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)		
Destination of Goods/Services	Not applicable – Request for Information Only		
Response Form	https://forms-formulaires.alpha.canada.ca/en/id/clu2ry45z01bcxk81ws6v1ylr		

Executive summary

In November 2023, SSC launched its new cloud hosting strategy. In support to this strategy SSC will be developing an ecosystem of procurement vehicles. This request for information is being used to gather insight from industry regarding Hardware as a Service and Infrastructure as a Service Platform to help build a Private Cloud Solution.



Shared Services
Canada

Services partagés
Canada

Canada

Table of Contents

1	Purpose and Nature of the Request for Information (RFI)	3
1.1	Nature of the Request for Information (RFI).....	3
2	Response Instructions and Information.....	3
2.1	Nature and Format of Response Requested	3
2.2	Response Costs	4
2.3	Treatment of Responses.....	4
2.3.1	Use of Response.....	4
2.3.2	Access to Information.....	4
2.3.3	Sharing Information with Other Government.....	5
2.3.4	What We Heard Report.....	5
2.3.5	Enquiries	5
2.4	Submission of Responses	5
2.4.1	Time and Place for Submission of Responses	5
2.4.2	Responsibility for Timely Delivery.....	5
2.5	Security Requirements.....	5
2.6	Official Languages	5
3	RFI: Statement of Challenge (SoC) Draft for Consultation.....	5
3.1	Context	5
3.2	Desired Outcomes	6
4	Draft Problem Statement and Challenges.....	6
4.1	Problem Statement	6
4.2	Challenges.....	6
5	Questions and Key Definitions.....	7
5.1	Key Definitions.....	7
5.2	Questions.....	7
6	Request for Information Rules of Engagement.....	8

1 Purpose and Nature of the Request for Information (RFI)

The Government of Canada is launching this Request for Information (RFI) to gather insight from industry regarding Hardware as a Service and Infrastructure as a Service Platform to help build a Private Cloud Solution. The Objectives of this RFI are to:

- a) Get feedback from industry to help the GC understand potential solutions to build a Private Cloud.
- b) Explore what industry has to offer in regard to Hardware as a Service and Infrastructure as a Service Platform.

Respondents are requested to provide answers and feedback related to the questions in Part 5 (Questions to Suppliers).

1.1 Nature of the Request for Information (RFI)

This is not a bid solicitation. This RFI is simply intended to solicit information and response from industry to help SSC develop the solicitation.

2 Response Instructions and Information

2.1 Nature and Format of Response Requested

Respondents are invited to provide answers to questions, either in written form, video form or both. While you are not required to address all the questions, please ensure clarity and conciseness in your answers, point forms answers are acceptable and appreciated.

Instructions to Respondents

a. Rules of engagement

Respondents will find the Rules of engagement in Section 6 and in the Response Form. Respondents that wish to participate must accept the rules of engagement.

b. Written input

Respondents are invited to provide answers to questions in the Response Form accessible from the link provided below. Please note there is a maximum number of characters per question as our goal is to ensure responses are brief and focused. We hope this will lead to more clear and direct answers that remove unnecessary complexity.

Link: <https://forms-formulaires.alpha.canada.ca/en/id/clu2ry45z01bcxk81ws6v1ylr>

c. Video input (optional)

The video input is to complement the written answers. Here respondents can provide additional information on the questions provided in this RFI, as well as add any other feedback you believe may help Canada elaborate a solicitation. Please note, respondents wishing to provide a video

response should be **kept under 30 minutes**. Possible video feedback includes but are not limited to:

- a) A virtual presentation,
- b) Showcase a demo
- c) Screen shots with oral feedback.

A couple more details:

- Respondents are required to provide a link in the written form. The video must be available to download for 4 hours after the closing of the RFI.
- If there are any issues with accessing the video, the contracting authority will reach out to the point of contact provided.
- The video format must be MP4, MOV, or WMV.
- The video responses should come with an index listing the RFI questions alongside corresponding timestamps. This index will allow quick and easy navigation through the video for ease of reference and review. For any feedback not directly addressing the questions, include timestamps as well.

2.2 Response Costs

Canada will not reimburse any respondent for expenses incurred in responding to this RFI.

2.3 Treatment of Responses

2.3.1 Use of Response

Responses will not be formally evaluated. The responses received will be used by Canada to help develop the solicitation. Canada will review all responses received by the RFI after closing date. Canada may, at its discretion, request a follow-up on responses after the closing date.

2.3.2 Access to Information

The *Access to Information Act* provides, upon request, a right of access to information in records under the control of a government institution. The general right of access is limited by specified exclusions from disclosure. These exclusions include, among other things, certain types of third-party information, the disclosure of which could be detrimental to that party. Respondents are requested to indicate and mark any portions of their response that they consider proprietary or confidential. Canada will handle these portions in accordance with the *Access to Information Act*.

2.3.3 Sharing Information with Other Government

Canada may share some or all the information collected in the process of this Request for Information (RFI) with provincial and/or municipal governments.

2.3.4 What We Heard Report

Following receipt of the Response Form and/or Videos, SSC will produce a “What We Heard” report.

2.3.5 Enquiries

Respondents who have questions regarding this RFI may direct their enquiries to the Contracting Authority listed on Page 1.

2.4 Submission of Responses

2.4.1 Time and Place for Submission of Responses

Respondent that wish to provide input must submit the response form and/or the video (optional) before the Closing Date and Time indicated on page 1 of this RFI.

2.4.2 Responsibility for Timely Delivery

Each respondent should ensure their response is submitted on time.

2.5 Security Requirements

There are no security requirements associated with responding to this RFI

2.6 Official Languages

Responses to this RFI are requested to be presented in either of the official languages of Canada.

3 RFI: Statement of Challenge (SoC) Draft for Consultation

3.1 Context

The Government of Canada (GC) has recognized the essential role of Cloud Services in meeting its vast array of organizational needs, as outlined in the [Shared Services Canada \(SSC\) 2024-2025 Departmental Plan](#). To enhance its digital infrastructure and to further meet Canadians' expectations for simple, secure, and efficient delivery of government services and benefits, the GC is expanding its cloud services portfolio.

This initiative is part of the GC's broader strategy to create a secure and resilient enterprise digital security ecosystem. Such an ecosystem is vital not only for continuing the delivery of services that Canadians rely on today but also for advancing Canada towards more modern, secure, reliable, user-centric, and barrier-free services. Prioritizing privacy and transparency within this ecosystem are crucial for maintaining the trust of Canadian citizens in their institutions.

To address the diverse digital needs of its operations, the GC is strategically adding Private Cloud to its hosting solution portfolio. A consideration in this procurement is the effective management of hardware lifecycle, to ensure alignment with technological advancements.

This approach highlights Canada's dedication to a balanced hosting strategy that meets the evolving needs of Canada's digital landscape.

3.2 Desired Outcomes

The GC must continue to address the challenges of digital modernization and the risks of its aging IT systems. This will provide long-term benefits to all the people and businesses it serves, including GC employees.

For the initial phase, Canada will have nation-wide scalable dedicated IT infrastructure required to implement a private cloud solution to respond to fluctuating business requirements. The hardware and software solutions will facilitate faster idea-to-value transformation, robust security, and compliance mechanisms while ensuring cost predictability and value for Canada.

The management and lifecycle of the hardware will be handled by the Contractor through evergreening, ensuring technology keeps pace with advancements. The solution will enable Canada to accurately forecast and efficiently manage cloud service costs, ensuring enhanced financial transparency and predictability across government operations. It will also enable automation and process optimization, further streamlining government operations and service delivery.

This solution will enable continuous improvement of Canada's digital service delivery to meet its evolving needs, and commitments, ensuring a robust framework for the protection and privacy of data.

4 Draft Problem Statement and Challenges

4.1 Problem Statement

Canada lacks the ability to deploy dedicated IT infrastructure across Canada with agility, velocity, and capacity to scale up and down to advance its service delivery for Canadians.

4.2 Challenges

Canada's IT environment is characterized by an aging, legacy infrastructure limiting its ability to advance its digital agenda. Couple that with a large sensitive data set, which, if compromised, would have a significant impact on the security and privacy of Canadians, the GC and stakeholders.

The following challenges limit Canada's capacity to resolve the problem:

- a) The inability to address demand fluctuations and to scale on-premises services in a timely manner to meet departments business needs.
- b) The inability to obtain additional infrastructure on-demand when utilization thresholds are reached in GC Data centres.
- c) The inability to provide departments with cost predictability when using Cloud hosting solutions.
- d) The inability of SSC to provide hosting solutions geographically located across Canada which limits disaster recovery options as well as distributed workload.
- e) The inability to maintain full data sovereignty, where we have full control of our data storage and processing.

5 Questions and Key Definitions

5.1 Key Definitions

Private cloud is cloud infrastructure provisioned for exclusive use by a single organization (GC). It may be owned, managed, and operated by the organization, a third party, or some combination of them, and it may exist on or off GC.

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) is the capability provided to the consumer is to provision processing, storage, networks, and other fundamental computing resources where the consumer is able to deploy and run arbitrary software, which can include operating systems and applications. The consumer does not manage or control the underlying cloud infrastructure but has control over operating systems, storage, and deployed applications; and possibly limited control of select networking components (e.g., host firewalls).

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.

5.2 Questions

Introduction

1. How might the Government of Canada (GC) benefit from adopting a Private Cloud? Please provide specific use cases.

Hardware as a Service (HaaS)

2. What might be the **benefits** and **challenges** to the GC from consuming HaaS (not including deployment)?
 - a. Benefits

- b. Challenges
- 3. What might be the **benefits** and **challenges** to the GC to deploy HaaS in:
 - a. GC Enterprise Data Centres?
 - i. Benefits
 - ii. Challenges
 - b. 3rd party data centres in Canada?
 - i. Benefits
 - ii. Challenges

Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) Platform

- 4. What options are available for operating an IaaS Platform on top of hardware?
- 5. What might be the **benefits** and **challenges** to the GC in deploying and operating an IaaS Platform?
 - a. Benefits
 - b. Challenges

Procurement / Contract

- 6. What would you like to see as part of the procurement process that would facilitate a fair, efficient and successful outcome for both Canada and Industry?
- 7. What factors should the GC consider in future contracts to ensure value to Canada and Canadians, while also maintaining agility and velocity in service delivery?

General

- 8. How might Canada fail at deploying a Private Cloud solution by consuming HaaS and deploying an IaaS Platform?
- 9. How do you see the division of responsibility between SSC and the Contractor? Who should be responsible for what?
- 10. Is the problem statement and challenges clear and easy to understand? If not, can you provide detail on how Canada can improve them?
- 11. Based on your experience and expertise, what recommendations would you make to the GC as it considers HaaS and an IaaS Platform as part of its Private Cloud solution?

6 Request for Information Rules of Engagement

By participating to the consultation process, the Respondent:

Acknowledges and agrees that:

Respondent will have equal opportunity to share preliminary ideas, which Canada could potentially use to develop the private cloud solicitation; and

Undertakes to:

- Work within defined parameters of this RFI.
- Foster fairness and transparency during the consultation process through open communication and information sharing with Canada;
- Raise any fairness or transparency concerns about this process with the Contracting Authority in a timely manner; and
- Participate in this process in an open, honest and respectful manner.