

Questions and Answers – Ms Dynamics 365

Date: 17 April 2024

Question 1:

With respect to all Corporate Mandatory and Point-Rated Technical Criteria – In order to ensure bidders are providing accurate and true information for the referenced contracts, many Federal Government Departments and Agencies are requiring bidders to provide a signed attestation from the Client Reference, not only by the Bidder. This has been included to protect the Crown from any possibility of any inflated information in the bids submitted. Example solicitations that have recently required this include:

- ISC (Solicitation #1000236449) - Microsoft Dynamics CRM and Power Platform – 2022
- DFO (Solicitation #WS4211053577) - Data and Analytics Digital Transformation Services – 2023
- StatCan (Solicitation #WS3684426687) - Cloud Initiatives Support Services – 2023
- SSC (R000152781/A) - Data Analytics/Data Management – 2023

To ensure the information is accurate and true for all customer references included in the Corporate Technical Criteria, would the Crown please add a section within the “Customer Reference Contact Information Form (Attachment 4 to Part 8)” for the individual Client Stakeholder to sign and attest the information is true and accurate.

Answer 1:

INFC does not see the need to amend as suggested. Refer to the statement in the Client Reference Contact Information Form at Attachment 4 to Part 8: “By signing below, the Bidder certifies that the information provided in this Form is accurate.”

Question 2:

Regarding M1 of the Corporate Mandatory Technical Criteria – Canada is currently seeking two (2) Customer Reference Contracts with a minimum value of \$1M each (Canadian, including taxes). From our understanding, the Crown would see value in a company who has not only been awarded a \$1M contract for the design and implementation of MS Dynamics 365 solutions, but who has proven to deliver these services on the contract.

- Would the Crown please confirm that for M1, “Bidders must provide two Customer Reference Contracts with a minimum invoiced value of \$1M each (Canadian, including taxes), demonstrating experience designing and implementing MS Dynamics 365 solutions”.

Answer 2:

Canada feels that by requesting a contract value of \$1M with a requirement to have been in place for 12 months, this is sufficient to demonstrate the required experience. M1 remains unchanged.

Question 3:

With respect to M4 of the Corporate Mandatory Technical Criteria – Canada is requiring bidders to provide a minimum of 200 cumulative person days billed across three (3) contracts for the TBIPS categories listed (or equivalent). It’s our understanding that Canada is seeking billed days that are relevant to this solicitation. Would Canada please confirm that the 200 person days billed for each category must have been for the design, implementation or integration of MS Dynamics 365 solutions?

Answer 3:

No, the work does not have to have been for the design, implementation or integration of MS Dynamics 365 solutions. M4 requires that the reference contract(s) (a maximum of three, but could be demonstrated by one or two, as applicable) show 200 billed days for each category in any capacity.

Date: 18 April 2024

Question:4

Regarding APPENDIX F TO ANNEX A - ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR PROPOSED RESOURCES, Page 58 of 71, can Canada clarify if this table is to be provided for every individual TA issued against the contract after contract award?

Answer 4:

Yes, the table will need to be provided for every individual TA issued against the contract after contract award.

Date: 19 April 2024

Question 5:

Is there someone currently, or has there been someone in the past providing similar or relevant services? If yes, who has been providing these services, what is (or was) the contract value and what is (or was) the duration of the contract (including any extensions), and are they allowed to bid on this opportunity?

Answer 5:

Yes, these services were provided by Coradix Technology Consulting Ltd., contract value \$11,653,125 for a period of two years; however, that contract was recently terminated.

No, they have not been invited to bid on this opportunity.

Question 6:

Regarding Mandatory Requirement M4, will Canada please confirm that task mapping a TBIPS A.7 Programmer Analyst, Level 3 resource as equivalent to a TBIPS A.7 Programmer Analyst, Level 2 will be acceptable as long as the work performed matches at least 70% of the tasks listed under the TBIPS A.7 Programmer Analyst, Level 2?

Answer 6:

Yes, that will be acceptable.

Question 7:

Would the crown confirm for M2 that bidders can submit customer reference contract demonstrating experience designing and implementing solutions for Grants and Contributions system(s) using MS Dynamics or similar solutions i.e. M365 and Power platform.

Answer 7:

No, Canada needs MS Dynamics 365 environment

Question 8:

Would the crown confirm that the basis of selection on the solicitation is 70% Technical 30% financial.

Answer 8:

No, please refer to part 4, paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4 "Basis of Selection" specifically 4.4.1 below:

4.4.1 Basis of Selection – Minimum Point Rating

- (a) To be declared responsive, a bid must:
- (i) comply with all the requirements of the bid solicitation; and
 - (ii) meet all mandatory technical evaluation criteria; and
 - (iii) obtain the required minimum points for the technical evaluation criteria which are subject to point rating; and
 - (iv) obtain the required minimum points for the financial evaluation criteria.
- (b) Bids not meeting (i) or (ii) or (iii) or (iv) will be declared non-responsive. The responsive bid with the lowest total evaluated price will be recommended for award of a contract.

Question 9:

Would the crown confirm the expected contract duration including option year periods?

Answer 9:

Please refer to Part 1, paragraph 1.2 (b) "It is intended to result in the award of one contract for two years."

Date: 23 April 2024

Question 10

Part 3.3 (f) of the RFP: Bid Preparation Instructions – Financial Bid – states that the Electronic Payment of Invoices (Part 8 Attachment 7) should be included in bidders' Financial bid, however page 63 of the RFP instructs bidders to include this attachment in the Certifications section. Can the Crown please confirm that this is an error, and that Part 8 Attachment 7 – Electronic Payment of Invoices - is to be included only in the Financial section of our submission?

Answer 10:

Please include Part 8 Attachment 7 in: Section III: Certifications and Additional Information. INFC will bring this to the attention of PSPC as it is part of the TBIPS Template.

Question 11:

Under Attachment 2 to Part A – Corporate Mandatory Technical Criteria – M4 requires that the bidder demonstrate "that it has billed a minimum of 200 cumulative person days, for the provision of professional services, or the TBIPS resource categories and levels (or equivalent resource category under a different title), identified in the table below. For a non-TBIPS resource category, the billable hours must be for work performed that matches at least 70% of the TBIPS resource category tasks.

Our interpretation of M4 is that Bidders using TBIPS contracts with direct resource category matches and levels to the ones listed in table M4 are not required provide task mapping. Can the Crown please confirm our interpretation is correct? If our interpretation is not correct can the Crown indicate how Bidders using TBIPS contracts are to substantiate this experience.

Answer 11:

That is correct, task mapping is not required for the TBIPS Categories.

Question 12:

In Appendix C to Annex A – Resources Assessment Criteria and Response Table (RFP page 51), Mandatory Resource Assessment Criteria Note to Supplier 1(a) states that to be considered, proposed resources “Must have obtained the required experience within the last 10 years prior to the date of Contract award”. As written, vendors will be required to propose Level 3 resources with 10 years of experience within the last 10 years for Mandatory Criteria M1.

As this is a two-year contract, we recommend that the reference to “prior to the date of Contract award” be amended to “prior to the date of Task Authorization issuance” as a resource’s most current and relevant experience could potentially be excluded if it occurred after the contract award date.

The time restriction “within the last 10 years” does not take account for even short breaks in employment (illness, vacation etc.), therefore we respectfully request that the Crown amend the Note to Suppliers to read “proposed resources must have obtained the required experience within the last 15 years prior to the date of Task Authorization issuance”.

Answer 12:

For Notes to Supplier, paragraph 1(a): Appendix C to Annex A will be amended to read “Must have obtained the required experience within the last 10 years prior to the date of Task Authorization issuance, unless otherwise specified in the particular criterion; and”. Please refer to Amendment #2.

M1 reads: “1. The Contractor certifies that the proposed resource meets the minimum 10 years’ experience as defined in the TBIPS SA for the resource category, Level 3”. This statement is to confirm that the resource has the ten years’ experience required under the TBIPS SA. Therefore, it does not require the experience for this criterion to be within the last ten years.

Question 13:

In section **4.3 Financial Evaluation** of this solicitation describes that the bidders overall financial score will be the total points received for each resource category based on their bid rates and where each category rate falls within the Median Band of -10% / +20%. This method also includes “Table 1” that describes the “Maximum Points Assigned” for each category.

ATTACHMENT 5 TO PART 8 PRICING SCHEDULE is using an incorrect type of pricing schedule that does not align with the pricing methods and approach that are laid out in Section **4.3 Financial Evaluation**. The financial evaluation methods are conducted by awarding financial points per resource category based on the Median Band and this financial evaluation is not conducted by evaluating a bidder’s total bid price. With current pricing schedule, INFC won’t be able to complete the financial evaluation in accordance with the RFP Median Band calculation unless the pricing schedule is updated correctly. Will INFC please amend the pricing schedule in order to comply with Section 4.3 as demonstrated below:

Contract Period Date of Contract award to two years later				
	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
Category	Level of Expertise	Estimated Number of Days	Firm Per Diem Rate	Total Cost (C x D)

A.1 Application/ Software Architect	Level 3	440	\$	\$
I.4 Database Modeller/ IM Modeller	Level 3	220	\$	\$
A.7 Programmer/Analyst	Level 3	440	\$	\$
A.7 Programmer/Analyst	Level 2	440	\$	\$
Total Price				\$ <TBD>

Answer 13:

As per **4.3 Financial Evaluation**, the pricing schedule will be used only for responsive bid(s). “The financial evaluation will be conducted using the firm per diem rates provided by the **responsive bid(s)**.”

The Pricing Schedule will be used to select the Lowest Cost Compliant bid.

25 April 2024

Question 14:

We have the following question regarding the Application Development Resources – Digital Platform for The Grants and Contributions Information Management System requirement (Solicitation No. INFC-2024/25-PS5362):

Reference Completeness of Bids (Pages 9-10) states: “....Specifically, the bid will be reviewed and deemed to be complete when the following elements have been submitted by the bidder:

1. *Certifications and securities required at bid closing are included.*”

Can the Crown please confirm if the reference to securities is a reference to the RFP security requirements (facility clearance and resource security clearances) or a bid security requirement (bonds)?

Answer 14:

Yes, that is correct. The securities refer to security clearance requirements and not bid security requirements such as bonds.

Question 15:

We would like to request a one (1) week extension to permit bidders to provide a detailed response and to contact corporate references. With Government Year End activities to complete in April, many government clients are difficult to reach this time of year as corporate references.

Answer 15:

The form asks only for the coordinates of a contact connected to the reference contract. INFC believes that the information required on the form should be readily available; however, the solicitation will be extended. Refer to Amendment #2.

Question 16:

Can Canada confirm that Bidders are allowed to submit redlines to section 2 of the APPENDIX D TO ANNEX A, in the section titled CERTIFICATION OF AVAILABILITY OF PERSONNEL? Specifically, these are the redlines we would like to propose:

<p>2. CERTIFICATION OF AVAILABILITY OF PERSONNEL</p> <p>a) The Contractor certifies that, should it be authorized to provide services under this Task Authorization, the persons proposed in the quotation will be available to commence performance of the work within a reasonable time from the date of issuance of the valid Task Authorization, or within the time specified in the TA Form, and will remain available to perform the work in relation to the fulfillment of the requirement.</p> <p>b) The Contractor certifies that it has accurately represented the employment commitments of every individual proposed to provide services under this Task Authorization and that such individuals have been instructed to will not perform work on any other contract(s) and/or Task Authorization(s) awarded to Contractor concurrently, except as disclosed in this certification. If the individual's employment commitments later change, the contractor will notify the Contracting Authority within two business days and will re-submit this certification for approval. Select one of the following:</p>
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Answer 16:

Please refer to Amendment #2.

Question 17:

Regarding APPENDIX F TO ANNEX A, we understand that bidders would need to breakdown the bill rates to reflect their indirect costs. Can Canada confirm that bidders could provide fully burdened rates, as long as we confirm that the rates provided are all-inclusive?

Answer 17:

No, the form must be filled out and submitted as per RFP, Part 7 sub-paragraph 7.3(b):

Assessment of Resources Proposed at TA Stage: Processes for issuing, responding to and assessing Task Authorizations must include the information, forms and certifications set out in Appendices A, B, C, D, E and F of Annex A.

Date: 26 April 2024

Question 18:

Based on the answer the Crown provided in Amendment 002, Question 13, it was stated: "The Pricing Schedule will be used to select the Lowest Cost Compliant bid." If this is the case, the quality of bids provided to the Crown will be significantly impacted if you are simply looking to award a contract to the lowest costing technically compliant bid.

In addition, Section 4.3 of the solicitation clearly states – "STEP 1 - ESTABLISHING THE LOWER AND UPPER MEDIAN BAND LIMITS FOR EACH PERIOD AND EACH RESOURCE CATEGORY: The Contracting Authority will establish, for each period and each Resource Category, the median band limits based on the firm per diem rates provided by the technically responsive bids. For each such Resource Category the median will be calculated using the median function in Microsoft Excel and will represent a

range that encompasses any rate to a value of minus (-) 10% of the median, and an upper median rate to a value of plus (+) 20% of the median.”

Will the Crown please confirm that the Financial Evaluation will involve using the Median Band formula for each vendor's per diem for each individual Resource Category provided within the technically responsive bids?

Answer 18:

Yes. The Median Band formula will be applied as per Section 4.3. Please refer to the example at Table 2.

Date: 29 April 2024

Question 19:

Regarding the Basis of Selection – currently the Crown is using a Basis of Selection of Minimum Point Rating. But because the Point-Rated technical criteria (max 120 points) is worth less than the “Total Maximum Points” under the financial evaluation criteria (max 200 points), the Crown appears to using a basis of selection weighted at:

- 37.5% Technically
- 62.5% Financially

This is much different than previous Federal Government solicitations that have used a Basis of Selection of (70% - Technical Score) and (30% - Financial Score) including:

- INFC Solicitation - 2022/23-PS4484
- INFC Solicitation - QA001-233002/A

To minimize the impact of receiving low cost, low quality bids, would the Crown please change the Basis of Selection to Highest Responsive Combined Rating of Technical Merit and Price? For example:

- Maximum Technical Score = 70 points
- Maximum Financial Score = 30 points

Answer 19:

No, the Basis of Selection will remain the same.

Date: 1 May 2024

Question 20:

I hope this finds you well. While the Crown is looking to procure resources to support this initiative, this solicitation may result in increased costs, delays and inefficiencies due to lack of knowledge in how to leverage technologies to deliver grants management. As an example, the potential costs anticipated for multiple resources over two years may certainly amount to significantly more than the cost of procuring a proven Commercial Off the Shelf solution that is configured to INFCs needs. The Crown has acknowledged and is taking measures to address Canada's housing and affordable housing shortage, and to this end, getting money in the hands of stakeholders quickly with strong controls and impact will be critical for a fast and cost-effective approach and solution.

Additionally, the Crown announced earlier this year that they are working to increase solutions-based contracts relative to task/resource-based contracts to strengthen the integrity of the procurement processes.

In an effort to deliver value for money and to accelerate the approach to meet the Crown's business needs, would you consider meeting with potential suppliers that have an off-the-shelf solution that may be more cost efficient and faster to implement?

Answer 20:

For this RFP, INFC is looking for resources in the categories as specified. The resources will work on INFC's existing environment and ecosystem as stated in the SOW and technical environment.

Date: 3 May 2024

Question 21:

Could you let us know what the budget is for this work?

Answer 21:

The contract value will be less than \$3.75M including taxes.

Question 22:

Could we request an extension to the submission deadline?

Answer 22:

No further extension will be granted.

Question 23:

Could you let us know if you are open to an east coast agency to do this work as we have for numerous other clients across the country for similar engagements or do you have a local preference?

Answer 23:

There is no restriction as to location of the Contractor; however, resources must be available to work on site in Ottawa if required and no travel and living costs will be reimbursed.

Question n° 21:

Pourriez-vous nous indiquer quel est le budget de ces travaux ?

Réponse n° 21

La valeur du contrat sera inférieure à 3,75 M\$, taxes comprises.

Question n° 22:

Pourrions-nous demander une prolongation de la date limite de soumission ?

Réponse n° 22 :

Aucune autre prolongation ne sera accordée.

Question n° 23:

Pourriez-vous nous dire si vous êtes ouvert à un organisme de la côte Est pour faire ce travail comme nous l'avons fait pour de nombreux autres clients à travers le pays pour des engagements similaires ou avez-vous une préférence locale ?

Réponse n° 23 :

Il n'y a aucune restriction quant à l'emplacement de l'entrepreneur ; cependant, des ressources doivent être disponibles pour travailler sur place à Ottawa si nécessaire et aucun frais de déplacement et de subsistance ne sera remboursé.