LETTER OF INTEREST

"OPEN BY DEFAULT" PORTAL PROCUREMENT PILOT

FOR

TREASURY BOARD OF CANADA SECRETARIAT

LOI No. # 24062-180072/A

1.   PURPOSE

The purpose of this Letter of Interest is to notify industry, academia and other stakeholders of Canada's intention to issue a Call for Proposals (CFP) in relation to the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's Open by Default Pilot Portal, and provide advance notice of the challenge (see section 3.1 for details of the challenge) for which Canada intends to seek proposals.

2.   BACKGROUND

The Government of Canada has made ambitious commitments to advance openness and transparency. One of its key tools for advancing openness is the open government website, Open.Canada.ca ("Open Government website").

The Open Government website was launched in 2012 as a single purpose data portal. It has since evolved to include various information resources and to facilitate engagement on the open government initiative and associated activities. In keeping with the Government of Canada's initial strategy on open government, the Open Government website's architecture is built around the pillars of open data, open information and open dialogue. As Canada continues to advance the open government initiative and to release a growing number of resources, it has become apparent that the ability of users to find information needs to be improved. There is also a desire to do more in terms of engaging with users and visitors through the Open Government website.

New resources of information are constantly being added to the Open Government website and the future vision is for it to become a hub of data, information and opportunities to participate and learn. Early research indicates that a majority of users are seeking data of one type or another with a smaller but significant group looking for opportunities to participate or engage with government.

Existing Open Government Website Digital Infrastructure

The Open Government website operates using the following open source tools:

1) CKAN (Data Catalogue)
2) Solr (Search Engine)
3) Drupal (Content Management System)
4) PostgreSQL (Relational Database Management System

As the Government of Canada's work on open government advances, there are opportunities to enhance the user experience of its online tools, including improving access to digital publications and draft documents made available by the federal government.

Existing Open Government Website Information Resources

Information resources currently housed on the Open Government website include:

- Open Data – Web-based portal containing datasets accessible to Canadians where individuals may view or request data. (http://open.canada.ca/en/open-data)
- Open Information – Web-based portal containing unstructured information that are typically official Government of Canada publications (http://open.canada.ca/en/open-information)
- Open by Default Pilot Portal – Draft content that is being worked on in real time by federal officials (http://pilot.open.canada.ca/open-by-default-pilot)
- Applications gallery - applications, mobile and web based (both created by government and submitted by open data users) (http://open.canada.ca/en/apps)
- Open data inventory – listing of datasets the government of Canada has but has not yet released. Users can vote for the data to be prioritized for release. (http://open.canada.ca/en/search/inventory)

- Suggested Datasets – listing of datasets suggested and voted upon by users as well as current release status (http://open.canada.ca/en/suggested-datasets)
- Open Dialogue – Web-based portal containing a blog, Canada's action plans on open government, consultations on action plan development and the results of previous consultations. (http://open.canada.ca/en/open-dialogue)
- Proactive disclosures – Information on financial and human resources released by departments and agencies to better hold government to account. (http://open.canada.ca/en/proactive-disclosure)
- Access to Information summaries – Web-based portal for information requests as per the *Access to Information Act* and the *Privacy Act*. (https://atip-aiprp.apps.gc.ca/atip/welcome.do)

<u>The Open by Default Pilot Portal</u>

The Open by Default Pilot Portal is the newest component of the Open Government website. It is an online beta site where draft documents are made publically available, providing users with insight into what government employees are working on. The Open by Default Pilot Portal leverages existing operational systems including the Open Government website and internal departmental document repositories, such as OpenText's Content Server, to provide the technical platform. The Open by Default Pilot Portal is a separate, beta-stage instance within the Open Government website based on a clone of the Open Government website.

The Open by Default Portal currently contains documents provided by groups in four partner departments: Natural Resources Canada, Canadian Heritage, Environment and Climate Change Canada, and the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. The Open by Default Pilot Portal is a pilot project; it includes works in progress that have not necessarily been created or formatted for release.

3. REQUIREMENT

TBS has a requirement for innovative proposals in support of the Open by Default Pilot Portal. The challenge for which pre-commercial open source solutions will be sought is identified below.

Under the CFP, Bidders will be required to demonstrate how their proposals respond to and address the challenge.

3.1 CHALLENGE

For the CFP, Canada is seeking innovative concepts for pre-commercial open source solutions ("Solution") to enhance and improve the user's experience in finding and retrieving information housed on the Open by Default Pilot Portal. Proposed Solutions must also be able to be integrated into the Open Government website's existing digital infrastructure. The Solution must enhance the user experience of the Open by Default Pilot Portal but given common infrastructure, it is also expected to yield particular improvements to the Open Government website as a whole. Following the evaluation process, one or more contracts will be awarded to responsive Bidders to develop their concepts into Solutions.

The following illustrative list provides examples of usability issues proposals may wish to address in responding to the challenge. This list is non-exhaustive; Bidders may address any of these usability issues or may propose Solutions based on usability issues not listed below.

- Reliance on manual indexing of assets available through the Open by Default Pilot Portal;
- Absence of natural language processing on the Open by Default Pilot Portal;
- Lack of responsiveness of current search functionality to plain language queries;
- Lack of uniformity in the application of controlled vocabularies;

- Weak discoverability of assets, including as a result of current metadata and data tags to catalogue assets;
- Outdated semantic and thematic content delivery;
- Difficulty of leveraging current search functionality, particularly where metadata tags are non-existent or insufficient;
- Limited capability for visualization of information and data assets;
- General difficulty of using the current website interface.

4.   ACQUISITION STRATEGY

It is anticipated that a bilingual CFP will be posted electronically on the Government Electronic Tendering Site (GETS), namely the Buy and Sell website (www.buyandsell.gc.ca).

This requirement is subject to Canadian Free Trade Agreement.

4.1   CFP PROCESS

Proposals submitted under the CFP will be assessed against the criteria tabled in the mandatory and point-rated evaluation criteria (to be detailed in the resulting CFP solicitation document). Proposals which meet all mandatory criteria and the minimum point-rated criteria score will be placed in a pool of pre-qualified proposals, provided that the total evaluated price does not exceed the budget available for this requirement.

Up to ten pre-qualified proposals with the highest point rating will be placed in a prioritized pool of pre-qualified proposals and invited to present aspects of their proposal to an Innovation Panel anticipated to be held in Waterloo, Ontario in mid-September, 2017. An independent Proposal Selection Committee will observe the presentations and convene to recommend proposal(s) for contract negotiation and award. Placement in a pool of pre-qualified proposals does not guarantee a contract will be awarded.

The maximum funding available for any contract resulting from this CFP is $65,000.00, Applicable Taxes excluded.

5.   GOVERNMENT OF CANADA APPLICABLE POLICIES

Suppliers interested in doing business with the federal government are encouraged to register in the Supplier Registration Information System (https://srisupplier.contractscanada.gc.ca) to be assigned a Procurement Business Number (PBN). Bidders responding to the resulting CFP must be in possession of a PBN.

The Canadian Content Policy applies to this requirement. This procurement is limited to Canadian goods and Canadian services. The Bidder must be Canadian. A Canadian bidder is defined as a Bidder having a place of business in Canada where the Bidder conducts activities on a permanent basis that is clearly identified by name and accessible during normal working hours.

The Code of Conduct for Procurement and Public Services and Procurement Canada's Integrity Provisions will apply.

6.   LICENSING

To support the objectives of the open government initiative, the Solution must be open source and licensed in accordance with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology License ("MIT License").

Under the resulting contract, the Contractor will be required to deposit the Solution's source code on the GitHub platform (https://github.com) – under the MIT License.

6.1   MIT LICENSE TEXT

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7.   INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Standard Acquisition Clauses and Conditions (SACC) Manual clause 2040 will form part of the resulting contract clauses. The SACC Manual can be accessed online at:
https://buyandsell.gc.ca/policy-and-guidelines/standard-acquisition-clauses-and-conditions-manual.

8.   NO OBLIGATION

The issuance of this LOI does not create an obligation for Canada to issue a subsequent CFP and does not bind Canada legally or otherwise, to enter into any agreement.

9.   ENQUIRIES

All enquiries and communication with the Government regarding Canada's requirement under this LOI must be directed in writing to the Public Services and Procurement Canada Contracting Authority as detailed below. Any clarification or information received from other Government officials will not be considered as an official response.

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