

**Solicitation 1000203413 - Artificial Intelligence (AI) pilot project for surveillance of suicide-related behaviours using social media**

**Q&A #16- #27**

**Question #16**

Where will the data be stored (on-prem/cloud / which cloud preference / in Canada)

**Answer #16**

It is the Contractor's responsibility to generate a storage strategy to support the AI applications, using the optimal storage technologies for the kind of data that the AI will generate. For a proposal to receive higher marks in the proposal evaluation process, the Contractor must elaborate on the strategy and describe in detail the various components of the project, including: data source identification and acquisition, processes to obtain, securely store, clean and refresh data, model building and deployment into production, timelines, roles and responsibilities and level of effort.

The Public Health Agency of Canada will work with the Contractor to facilitate the secure transfer of aggregate data and reports between the Contractor and PHAC.

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**Question #17**

What kind of data will be available to us:

- a. Does PHAC have records/data that they can share (anonymous),
- b. Does it have keywords to focus on and
- c. Can we get a sample of that data to develop an algorithm
- d. How is social media data represented (social media handle, actual posts, not at all)
- e. if yes to the above, which social media platforms are represented (Instagram, twitter etc)"

**Answer #17**

- a) The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) does not have access to, nor will be able to provide, any records or data on suicides or any related behaviours.
- b) PHAC will assist the Contractor in defining search exclusion and inclusion criteria for this project, including suicide-related key word and phrases.
- c) PHAC does not have a sample of data from which an algorithm may be developed. This project is the first of its' kind for PHAC using AI technology to monitor the burden and scope of suicide-related behaviours in Canada, and trends and risk and protective factors associated with suicide-related behaviours among various population groups.

For context, the Contractor may consult the Suicide Surveillance Indicator Framework, which was developed by PHAC as a set of indicators necessary for comprehensive suicide surveillance to inform suicide prevention initiatives. These indicators included measures of outcomes and risk and protective factors at the individual, family, community and societal level.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/reports-publications/health-promotion-chronic-disease-prevention-canada-research-policy-practice/vol-37-no-8-2017/at-a-glance-contextual-analysis-suicide-surveillance-indicators.html>

- d) Social media data may include publicly available user profile information and social media handles, social media behaviour include conversations and message content, updates, content shares, likes, comments. PHAC understands that the data provided by users in their profiles may or may not be accurate, in some cases, to ascertain sex, age group, region or ethnicity; therefore, the Contractor is expected to conduct sound and rigorous analyses of social media data to identify or infer sex, age group, ethnicity and geographic region.
  - e) PHAC will not be providing a list of social media platforms for data gathering. The Contractor is expected to identify and use the social media platforms or sites.
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**Question #18**

Suicidal tendencies could be true/false or on a continuum - what is the exact outcome required by PHAC?

**Answer #18**

The Contractor will not be measuring whether suicide-related behaviours are true/false or on a continuum. PHAC's focus is on suicide-related behaviours, not their relationship to deaths by suicide – we want to learn more about online discussions related to suicide.

Specifically, we want to test the possibility of using AI to identify and analyze patterns and trends associated with suicide-related discussions on social media by sex, age group, ethnicity and geographic region. It is not to measure the accuracy of the algorithm to predict the likelihood of an individual or group of individuals in taking their own life. If the pilot project is successful, the Public Health Agency of Canada will explore the opportunity for regular reporting on these trends and risk factors.

While the information gained from this pilot project is intended to inform suicide prevention efforts, it is important to first take the time to evaluate the incoming information, and to understand whether it is a feasible and informative data source.

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**Question #19**

Being a start up with a small AI Lab - does client need to have significant privacy/ documentation/audit requirements or can a 2-3 year startup bid for this

**Answer #19**

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) welcomes proposals from Start-ups.

Proposals will be evaluated based on various criterion, including the technical criteria to provide a detailed statement demonstrating the team's expertise in identifying and mitigating potential privacy risks for similar projects, including:

- # years of experience in privacy management
  - # of projects containing a privacy management component
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**Question #20**

What kind of privacy policies are required if this is real data and would it be anonymized by Govt?

**Answer #20**

The Contractor will anonymize the data and provide the Public Health Agency of Canada with aggregate data for various populations (not identifiable individual data) and will not predict suicides by individuals or include any interaction with people on social media or otherwise.

The Contract must demonstrate that their organization/company/team has their own privacy policies, including how means or measures are applied to protect privacy and to address potential privacy concerns (e.g., re-identification of individuals). All mined data is to be 'real data' from social media where each user has agreed to allow open access to their accounts and data. The mined data that is collected from online sites will contain no personal or identifiable information. Mining of the data must be done in compliance with each site's terms and conditions and efforts to protect the privacy of individuals, and must be clearly demonstrated by the Contractor. This project is to be non-intrusive and should not contain direct interactions with social media users.

The Contractor must provide a detailed statement demonstrating the team's expertise in identifying and mitigating potential privacy risks for similar projects, including:

- # years of experience in privacy management
- # of projects containing a privacy management component

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**Question #21**

Are we limited to the data that comes from you or can we go source out for data?

**Answer #21**

All data collected for this pilot project will come from public social media platforms only, where each user has agreed to allow access to their accounts in compliance with each site's terms and conditions.

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**Question #22**

If we were allowed to go source for data are we limited to publically available data only?

**Answer #22**

All data collected for this pilot project will come from public social media platforms only, where each user has agreed to allow access to their accounts in compliance with each site's terms and conditions.

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**Question #23**

Are we allowed to run a campaign for a target market to collect data?

**Answer #23**

The Contractor may not run a campaign for a target market to collect data. All data collected for this pilot project will come from public social media platforms only, where each user has agreed to allow access to their accounts in compliance with each site's terms and conditions.

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**Question #24:**

Can we use this project to get private and public funding grants?

**Answer #24:**

This project may not be used to get private and public funding grants. This is a contract for a project solely for the Public Health Agency of Canada, and will not be a partnered or collaborative project with other funding agencies, companies, government organizations or stakeholders.

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**Question #25:**

Will we get classified data of people who have committed suicide?

**Answer #25:**

PHAC does not have access to, nor will be able to provide, any personal information on suicides or any related behaviours.

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**Question #26:**

With respect to the question in R4 , what is our expectations is terms of targeting key influencers?

**Answer #26:**

The Bidders' proposal should demonstrate their capabilities to identify key influencers found in blog commentary and social conversations, and how key influencers engage with their followers with regard to suicide-related behaviours.

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**Question #27:**

Is this product a predictive model for suicidal behavior or a management of social media database of behavioral patterns? In other words what does the end product look like?

**Answer #27:**

This project will not be able to predict suicides by individuals or measure the accuracy of the algorithm to predict the likelihood of an individual or group of individuals in taking their own life. The goal of this pilot project is to test the possibility of using artificial intelligence (AI) to identify and analyze patterns and trends associated with suicide-related discussions on social media by sex, age group, ethnicity and geographic region. If the pilot project is successful, the Public Health Agency of Canada will explore the opportunity for continued use of the AI surveillance tool and social media data mining for monthly reporting on trends and risk factors.