

Information for members re: Request for Proposal (RFP) process for a technology solution to interoperability (“connecting the health care system”)

Health authority procurement of goods and services

As health authorities and government are accountable for their spending, they must ensure they obtain the best rates, terms, and conditions when buying goods and services. To do this, they use a competitive procurement process whereby individuals and businesses can bid on contract opportunities. This process is a legal obligation under BC’s *Procurement Services Act*.

A Request for Proposal (RFP) is one method of procurement and will be used by the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) to secure a successful proponent to provide a solution to enable interoperability of digital technology in BC (supporting a “connected health system”).

Health authorities and the BC government use RFPs when the decision to buy goods or services is based on more than price. Proponents must meet the specific RFP requirements and criteria, such as skills, methodology, and experience. The successful proponent for a contract will provide the greatest overall value to the health authority or government on a project.

PHSA’s procurement on this project

The PHSA is partnering with the BC government in rolling out its provincial Digital Health Strategy. Addressing the issue of interoperability (i.e., the ability for and connectedness of various digital systems across the province) is a key responsibility of the Provincial Digital Health & Information Solutions portfolio.

Integrity of the RFP process

An RFP is a competitive process that involves proponents’ submission of proposals and a review, evaluation, and selection process. All proponents are measured/scored against the same requirements. Some requirements, such as clinical needs, are weighted higher than others. Maintaining the integrity of this process is of utmost importance to ensure fairness to all prospective proponents. This, in turn, protects the process from challenges of unfairness.

All prospective proponents for a contract must be equal in their knowledge of the project needs and deliverables. This requires that everyone involved in the RFP development and process maintain confidentiality in advance of and during the RFP process. This sets a level playing field and ensures that all prospective proponents receive the same information about the RFP at the same time.

Maintaining this fairness would preclude participation by prospective proponents in meetings, webinars, or events that provide additional insight into a project’s needs and deliverables,

beyond what is outlined in the RFP details shared publicly on the BC Government's [BC Bid Portal](#).

Maintaining fairness

A single PHSA representative will be designated as the point of contact for all matters related to the RFP for the entire process. This individual will be identified in the RFP and will be the official source of information for the RFP. They will also ensure provision of responses to any queries and that any additional information about the RFP is posted on BC Bid. Again, this maintains fairness by ensuring that all proponents have the same information at the same time.

An independent fairness advisor is often assigned to oversee the RFP process from beginning to end.

RFP process outline

- RFP criteria refinement and clinical validation
- RFP posted on BC Bid (includes all requirements)
- Proponent responses
 - Posted to BC Bid
- RFP closing
- RFP evaluation*
- Executive approval
- Contract negotiations

** Doctors of BC clinical representatives will be among the members of the RFP Evaluation Group for this interoperability ("connecting the health care system") project.*

Complete information on the RFP and RFP process for this project will be available online on the BC Bid site in the near future.