Request for Proposals

Issued on: **November 28, 2022**
Closing Date: **December 20, 2022 at 4:00pm (PST)**

FAST Canada
Component A: Website Redesign & Deployment
Component B: Data Sourcing & Implementation

About IEC-BC

The Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC) facilitates the integration of skilled immigrants into Canada's workforce by connecting employers with the talent they need. As a champion of employers, we foster solutions, build connections, and are a catalyst for employer success.

IEC-BC works directly with employers, industry, and sectoral organizations to develop innovative solutions, tools and resources that support employers in integrating skilled immigrants into the Canadian workforce and empower immigrants with relevant tools to boost employment outcomes.

Through partnerships with businesses, government, and community partners, we deliver employer-driven solutions that give businesses an edge in an increasingly competitive economy.

Facilitating Access to Skilled Talent (FAST)

A program of IEC-BC, Facilitating Access to Skilled Talent (FAST) is a free online program to support immigrants' career preparation and facilitate a competency assessment based on industry of interest. FAST helps immigrants better prepare to enter the labour market in positions that make full use of their skills by overcoming employment barriers like international credential recognition and a lack of Canadian work experience.

Driven by employer-informed feedback, FAST was developed to provide immigrants with an orientation to Canadian cultural and workplace norms through educational modules, while providing more comprehensive cultural and essential skill competency assessments to determine level of existing knowledge in each industry. FAST is currently available for six in-demand industry streams: Accounting, Biotechnology and Life Sciences, Culinary Arts, IT and Data Services, Skilled Trades, and the newly launched Seniors Care stream.

By completing FAST, immigrants are better prepared for the Canadian workplace and have a greater understanding of how their prior learning and

experiences can be leveraged within their chosen industry. In addition, gap training is identified to support further training and upskilling if required to access the desired occupation.

1. Statement of Purpose

The FAST program has expanded over the last two years to serve a national network of service delivery partners, reaching immigrants across Canada and abroad. The stated work is intended to ensure that the FAST website reflects the national scope of the program, while also integrating key data components to support immigrant employment integration.

The request for proposals is divided into two, related components:
- Component A: Website Redesign & Deployment
- Component B: Data Sourcing & Implementation

Interested parties can submit a proposal for one component (Component A or B), or both components (Component A and B). Information about the requirements for each component is described below.

It should be noted that the overall intent is to have map-based elements on the new website, developed as part of Component A, leveraging data made available via Component B. As a result, if different proponents were selected for the two components, each would be expected to liaise with the other to the extent necessary to accomplish the required integration.

We are developing a new Employer Portal in our FAST platform (reference 1.1.1.3) and our desire is to use common GIS solutions in both the website and in FAST so that, for example, job openings for specific occupations can show up in the right locations on the map anywhere in our solution architecture.

1.1 Component A: Website Redesign & Deployment

Based on ongoing feedback from program stakeholders, the FAST website needs to be redesigned to align with the new FAST branding guidelines, reflect the national scope of FAST Canada, and be optimized for user experience.

IEC-BC is requesting proposals from vendors with website design and development experience to redesign a FAST Canada website. The redesigned and deployed website should incorporate the following features and components:

- Redesigned CMS-based website; WordPress preferred
- Responsive for use on mobile devices and computers (PC and Mac)
- Incorporate the revised FAST brand, including colours, hero images, and icons, as well as create custom graphics and/or web widgets
- Effectively highlight the program components, key messaging, and value proposition for different users (immigrant jobseeker, community partner, employer)

- Engage users and provide easy navigation to key elements on the website, notably to have clear calls to action (CTA) such as 'learn more' or 'register'. Users are defined as:
  - Primary user: skilled immigrant
  - Secondary users: service delivery partners; community organizations; employers; employer associations
- Development should prioritize the creation of reusable page templates and functionality that allows internal IEC-BC staff to update content easily and on an on-going basis

A redesigned FAST Canada website should provide optimal user experience, prioritizing ease of use: finding relevant information easily and clearly understanding the call-to-action is critical. The FAST Canada website should respond to these common questions from users:
1. What is the FAST program?
2. How can FAST help me? (immigrant; partner; employer)
3. Who is eligible for this program? (immigrant; partner; employer)
4. How much is this program? (immigrant; partner; employer)
5. What partners are currently offering FAST? (locations on map of Canada)
6. What are partners and program graduates saying about FAST?

1.1.1 Component A: Contract Scope & Deliverables

The successful proponent will demonstrate the ability to fulfill the following requirements for the FAST Canada website redesign and deployment:

1. **Content Management Expertise.** The FAST website currently uses WordPress for its content management system. The vendor should demonstrate experience designing and developing websites using WordPress, with a thorough understanding of the various plug-ins that can be leveraged to optimize design and utility. The redesigned website must balance both the useability for users and the administrative back-end for internal IEC-BC maintenance. IEC-BC should not need a developer to make content changes.

2. **Design and usability.** The successful proponent will have a demonstrated expertise in web design and will have demonstrated success in delivering engaging and user-friendly websites. The proponent must be able to edit, revise, update and create new textual and graphical content. The redesigned website will comply with the FAST program brand standards, as well as with privacy and security standards set out by our funder.

3. **Integration.** The FAST Canada website integrates with a few primary applications, most notably the Learning Management System for FAST hosted on the ShiftiQ Competency Based Education & Training platform ("ShiftiQ") which underpins the delivery of the FAST program. The new website will need to direct applicants to ShiftiQ in various places, and most of our client data is managed within ShiftiQ. The selected

        proponent will bring expertise around integrating both external data and user information collected through the website and other online tools.

4. **Optimization.** Audience reach is of utmost importance to FAST. The use of search engine optimization is required to ensure that the FAST program is found prominently in search engines. The vendor will demonstrate experience in undertaking audits and creating designs and content requirements for effective SEO. A thorough understanding of Google Analytics and effective social media integration (and related analytics) is also required.

5. **Browser compatibility.** The successful proponent must ensure that website upgrades are compatible with all browser types, with special attention paid to the inclusion of computers, phones, tablets, and other mobile devices through responsive design.

6. **Assistance and troubleshooting.** The successful proponent must provide a point of contact for real-time troubleshooting and provide an overview of their response protocol. Priority support during downtime or an incidence of hacking is a requirement.

7. **Training and Support.** The selected proponent will be able to provide training of all aspects of the website to identified IEC-BC staff prior to launching the new site. A visual manual/guide or recorded training videos should be provided as a reference.

8. **Project management.** An ability to set realistic and efficient timelines, and deliver projects on time and on budget, is critical. The successful proponent will have an in-house point of contact who will keep projects on track and keep all parties informed.

The successful proponent will be responsible for delivering these key contract milestones to budget and timeline in fulfilling the work requirements of this RFP:

- **Independent Review**
  The vendor will conduct a thorough review of the current FAST website, FAST brand guidelines and available marketing materials.

- **Collaborative Needs Assessment**
  The vendor will conduct a needs assessment with the FAST team to collect requirements and feedback to inform the redesign of the FAST Canada website.

- **Site Structure & Content**
  The vendor will develop the suggested site structure and determine the site content required. Once the structure and content are approved by the FAST team, the vendor will move onto the design.

- **Comprehensive Website Redesign**
  The vendor will develop a website redesign plan that includes wireframes, incorporating content and graphic requirements to be developed to build an engaging FAST Canada website that is easy to navigate for users and easy to update for IEC-BC FAST staff. After reviewing with the FAST team, the vendor will incorporate feedback and move forward with development.

- **Deployment and Testing**
  Upon approval from the FAST team, the vendor will finalize the website redesign for deployment. After user testing and feedback, required changes and modifications to the website will be implemented before project completion.

- **Documentation**
  Sufficient documentation to enable IEC-BC Administration to select, add and remove pages (including navigation linkages), and to edit content.

1.2.1 Component A: Timeline

Activities and milestones described in the proposal should adhere the following timeline.

Activity	Proposed Completion Date
Issue RFP	November 28, 2022
Proponent Info Session	December 8, 2022 | 2:00pm (PST) Register here
RFP Closing Date	December 20, 2022
Proponents Call (if required)	December 21-23, 2022
RFP Decision	December 28, 2022
Contract start	January 6, 2023
Contract close	March 15, 2023

All deliverables associated with this contract will need to be completed and delivered **on or before March 15, 2023.**

The proposal should include further details to executing against the above timeline, and a corresponding budget inclusive of fees for overall process design and delivery. This should include time to collaborate with the FAST project team and time to implement feedback. Please identify any related expenses you anticipate and applicable taxes, specifying:

- Daily rates and expected time commitments
- Other estimated costs and expenditures

The current budget for Component A is not to exceed $35,000 (plus taxes).

1.2 Component B: Data Sourcing & Implementation

In addition to a new FAST Canada website, IEC-BC is seeking vendor(s) that can **source and integrate** map-based data to support newcomer understanding of the opportunities across Canada. While FAST helps skilled immigrants understand their skills, to effectively integrate into the labour-market, place-based data can help them determine where best their skills can be applied across Canada based on labour market information.

In this first phase of development, IEC-BC aims to provide visitors to the FAST Canada website with timely, aggregate data on:

- Current **job vacancy rate** of each of the 6 industries* by location
  - Locations defined as: Province; Economic Region; Town/City

- Top 5 **occupations in-demand** in each of the 6 industries by location
  - Occupation based on 4-digit NOCs
  - Locations defined as: Province; Economic Region; Town/City

- Current **rental vacancy rate** by location
  - Locations defined as: Province; Economic Region; Town/City

The goal is to visualize the above data points on a map of Canada, that the users can easily navigate and explore.

FAST provides assessments in 6 industries: Accounting, Biotechnology and Life Sciences, Culinary Arts, IT and Data Services, Skilled Trades, and Seniors Care. IEC-BC will work with vendor to determine the 6-digit NAICS that most closely align with the FAST industries.

1.2.2 Component B: Contract Scope & Deliverables

There are three distinct data sets identified in this RFP: job vacancy rate, occupational data, and rental vacancy rates. We anticipate that proponents will have different skill sets in data sourcing and procurement and may need to subcontract specialized expertise. The vendor should specify the data sources and expertise they anticipate bringing to meet our requirements.

The successful proponent will demonstrate the ability to fulfill the following requirements for the data sourcing and implementation component:

1. **Experience and expertise.** Supporting clients using data to power and inform end user tools, including:
   a. Geospatial representation of data in easy-to-use map-based interfaces
   b. Use and development of Application Program Interfaces
   c. Use and development of extract, transform, and load ("ETL") engines to support harvesting data from 3rd party sources
   d. Expertise in the development and use of databases, functions and other proprietary systems is required, particularly with

    regard to developing any required underlying tabular data stores needed to aggregate 3rd party data for efficient map rendering if the datasets do not lend themselves to real-time integration

2. **Data source and availability.** API for monthly* data updates; historical data up to 2018 to visualize data as a graph/trends to the most current dates available.
If monthly updates are not feasible, please provide the applicable periodic updates that can be achieved.

3. **Sustainability.** Given the current funding environment for non-profits, it is critical to have clear documentation regarding fees, and flexible costing to customize data views based on fee structure. Please provide:
   a. Costing breakdown which clearly depicts the fees associated with data inputs. Strong preference for vendors that can demonstrate the cost differentials between the purchase of data for all industries and occupations across Canada versus the cost for the six in-scope industries*, select occupations and select provinces.
   FAST provides assessments in 6 industries: Accounting, Biotechnology and Life Sciences, Culinary Arts, IT and Data Services, Skilled Trades, and Seniors Care. IEC-BC will work with vendor to determine the 6-digit NAICS that most closely align with the FAST industries.

   b. Document approach to periodic update of all delivered datasets, including approach to integration with the databases developed to support the requirements.

   c. Sufficient documentation to understand:
      i. The solution architecture
      ii. Databases deployed and their structures including relationships between tables
      iii. All APIs used or developed
      iv. All ETL processes used in the solution, including documentation on the source data and manipulations used in loading into solution databases (3.c.ii)

The successful proponent will be responsible for delivering these key contract milestones to budget and timeline in fulfilling the work requirements of this RFP:

- **Independent Review**
  The vendor will conduct a thorough review of the current FAST website, ShiftiQ LMS and requirements prepared by the FAST team.

- **Collaborative Needs Assessment**
  The vendor will conduct a needs assessment with the FAST team to collect requirements for the data inputs. The vendor will also be

responsible for liaising with the successful vendor for Component A (if different).

- **Comprehensive Data Implementation**
  The vendor will develop an implementation plan that includes wireframes, incorporating data requirements to be integrated into the FAST Canada website. After reviewing with the FAST team, and confirming the plan is feasible with the vendor for Component A (if different), the vendor will incorporate feedback and move forward with intregration.

- **Integration and Testing**
  Upon approval from the FAST team, the vendor will finalize the data inputs for integration into the new FAST Canada website. After user testing and feedback, required changes and modifications will be implemented before project completion.

- **Documentation**
  Sufficient documentation and training support to enable IEC-BC Administration to manage the integration and sustain the implementation.

1.2.3 Component B: Timeline

Activities and milestones described in the proposal should adhere the following timeline.

Activity	Proposed Completion Date
Issue RFP	November 28, 2022
Proponent Info Session	December 8, 2022 | 2:00pm (PST) Register here
RFP Closing Date	December 20, 2022
Proponents Call (if required)	December 21-23, 2022
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Contract start	January 6, 2023
Contract close	March 15, 2023

All deliverables associated with this contract will need to be completed and delivered **on or before March 15, 2023**.

The proposal should include further details to executing against the above timeline, and a corresponding budget inclusive of fees for overall process design and delivery. This should include time to collaborate with the FAST project team and time to implement feedback. Please identify any related expenses you anticipate and applicable taxes, specifying:

- Daily rates and expected time commitments

- Other estimated costs and expenditures

The current budget for Component B is not fixed based on the different data components requested: current **job vacancy rate** of each of the 6 industries by location; **top 5 occupations** in-demand in each of the 6 industries by location; and **current rental vacancy rate** by location. We recognize that as a vendor you may specialize in one, or all the data inputs requested. In your proposal, please specify which data inputs you can provide, and a comprehensive cost-breakdown of the fees associated.

For vendors interested in Component B, it is highly recommended you attend the Proponent Information Session on December 8 at 2:00pm (PST). Register here.

2. Proposal Submission

This RFP is open to qualified contractors/consultants from across Canada, provided that the successful proponent(s) are available to deliver all required deliverables as per sections above.

2.1 Proponent(s) Requirements

1. Demonstrated experience and expertise as specified for each component:
   - Component A: review requirements
   - Component B: review requirements
2. Experience working with external stakeholders to meet goals; experience with non-profit organizations is an asset
3. Demonstrated ability to complete projects on time and on budget
4. Excellent interpersonal and communications skills
5. Knowledge of immigrant integration and/or workforce development strategies is an asset

2.2 Proposal Format

Evaluation of proposals is made easier when Proponents respond in a similar manner. The following format and sequence should be followed to provide consistency in Proponent response and ensure each proposal receives full consideration.

- Cover letter, showing Proponent's name and address, a contact person's name, address, telephone number, and email address to communicate with IEC-BC in relation to this RFP
- Table of contents, including page numbers
- A brief overview of the proposal including which Component(s) is the proposal submission for
- The body of the proposal, that addresses required information
- Sample works/portfolio of similar initiatives or projects completed (please include links or PDF attachments)
- Recommended font: Trebuchet, 11pts

All pages should be consecutively numbered and follow the evaluation criteria.

2.3 *Content of Proposals*

Proposals must demonstrate that the vendor can meet all "Proponent(s) Requirements" listed above. Proposals must also include:

1. Information about the qualifications of the consultants, including subcontractors (if any) who will be working on the project and descriptions of their experience with similar projects.
2. For each Component (A and/or B) being proposed:
    a. A work plan that includes specific activities, timelines, milestones, and deliverables.
    b. A budget that itemizes and justifies the cost of the services. The budget must specify professional fees and attribute them to activities and individuals, indicating hourly or daily rates (daily rates must indicate the number of hours in a proposed workday).
3. Two client references, including email addresses and telephone numbers. By providing this information, the bidder gives IEC-BC permission to contact these references.

Proposals are **not to exceed 8 pages including appendices and other attachments**, excluding a cover page and table of contents. All proposals must be submitted electronically as a PDF document.

2.4 *Evaluation and Selection Process*

Proposals will be assessed against the requirements stated in this RFP and evaluated based on the degree to which they demonstrate the following:

1. Understanding of the work required
2. Current, relevant knowledge, qualifications / experience of consultants
3. Capacity of the vendor to provide required services
4. Realistic and understandable work plan and timelines for achieving deliverables
5. Value for money

IEC-BC reserves the right to:
- Not evaluate any or all proposals if the information is incomplete or if the proposal is received after the deadline
- Request vendors whose proposals meet essential criteria to provide additional information
- Negotiate one or more aspects of a proposal
- Accept a proposal in whole or in part

Send proposals and direct all communication related to this RFP by email to: Devon Franklin at devon.franklin@iecbc.ca by the proposal deadline of **December 20, 2022.** Submissions received after this date will not be considered.