

BC Startup in Residence Proponents' Meeting Notes, March 31, 2017

The BC Startup in Residence pilot teams held a proponents info session on March 31, 2017. The following document summarizes the resulting Q&A on the program area as well as challenge specific questions. The challenge-specific Q&A also includes a time notation that matches the webinar audio recording to better equip proponents to find the section of the webinar that addresses the challenge of interest.

Note that the recording begins at the challenge-specific section of the presentation. You can download the mp3 file at <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/perl/soft/dl.pl/20170403144835-14-gp-cf07bac0-e3f2-4e13-8bf1-41b116d7?simple=y>

Program Q & A

Q: Am I allowed to participate in more than one challenge?

A: Yes,

Q: Are there limits to what technology can be used?

A: This is project dependent. Each CFP has included tech constraints where they exist. The spirit of this approach is to remain tech agnostic. Open source is not required unless it is specified in the CFP.

Q: Where will the residency program take place?

A: Like any good relationship, there will be points where you need to really get a chance to understand each other's business and for the STIR projects, that means face time in Victoria. Co-development (discovery, testing etc.) assumes a certain level of intimacy but that doesn't assume that the developer team has to be sitting next to the product owner every day or even every week. Proponents should articulate how you'd approach co-development in your project plan within the application and know that geographic location of the company is not one of the evaluation measures.

Q: Is there a requirement on the government side for the frequency of the interface with the company?

A: A cornerstone of this approach is that the solution design process be a collaborative co-development. We have not stipulated a minimum interaction from either party but we recognize it will be a critical component of success. The approach should be articulated as a part of the project plan within the proposal and would be agreed upon within a subsequent Phase 1 contract in June.

Q: Does the proposal need to be submitted by a company that exists already?

A: There are no restrictions. Anyone can submit a proposal. They do not have to be an incorporated entity.

Q: If teams are going to be working together can they work in the same space every day?

A: Yes. Government project teams know collaboration is an important part of this pilot. Space will be made available to the extent required and agreed to within the Phase 1 contract.

Q: Is participation restricted to BC companies?

A: No. All companies can participate – not just BC companies or small companies. It is recognized that the suite of benefits might appeal more to certain kinds of companies, but this is not part of the evaluation process.

Q: Is there are limit on the number of people who work in the company?

A: Individuals / sole proprietors can submit a proposal – indicate a back-up project manager as appropriate. Again, the approach and solution are the most important.

Q: How did teams function in the San Francisco model? What was the ratio of internal team members and external team members?

A: The ratio does not have to be 1:1. A BC company that participated in the San Francisco project put forward a team of three.

Q: Are patented methodologies allowed to participate?

A: Yes.

Q: How important is proposed price?

A: Price is included in the evaluation criteria with a value of 5 %. The hourly rate provided will not necessarily factor into the negotiation for Phase 2 as it may not be relevant to the proposed solution.

Q: Are we supposed to include an estimate for Phase 2 in the Phase 1 proposal?

A: If proponents think the information would be valuable they are welcome to include it. However, it will not be evaluated.

Q: What are the evaluation criteria and how are they weighted?

A: The criteria and weighting varies from challenge to challenge. The information is included in the CFP. An evaluation guide for each opportunity will be developed to ensure all proposals within a single challenge are evaluated against the same matrix.

Q: The program appears to be a four month period of pro bono work with no guarantee of a contract in Phase 2. Is this true? What kind of collaboration can we expect?

A: Yes, this is the approach. It is a shared risk model. Keep in mind that these are real problems faced by the business areas. They are interested in moving forward with a solution.

Q: what kind of interaction can expect from government through the residency period?

A: government project teams have committed to having a product owner and will also have representation from subject matter experts. They will sign off on an approach, including specifics on collaboration schedules and metric, as a part of the phase 1 contract which is expected to happen in June.

Q: Will there be payment for work in Phase 2?

A: Payment in Phase 2 will likely be a custom contract tailored to the specific challenge area and solution (e.g. license, subscription, maintenance, support). Business areas have also set budget aside – to the levels indicated in the Call for Proposal. Their decision to advance to Phase 2 will be based on the project performance within the first phase.

Q: The residency period is four months. Does this mean you expect the project to take this amount of time?

A: The solution should be achievable within this time frame. It is expected that by Demo Day in November that there will be a product to show.

Q: Will there be more than one team working on each challenge?

A: We expect that only one proponent will be chosen for each challenge.

Q: Can a company work on more than one challenge.

A: If they are resourced to do so, then yes.

Q: does the solution have to be Open Source?

A: Not unless specified. Most of the projects do not have a requirement for open source.

Challenge-specific Q&A

STIR-17-001 – Onboarding: 20:10

Q: Is there a lot of information available in different places and the purpose of this challenge is to bring it together?

A: We're staying open to what the solution might look like.

STIR-17-010 - The Services Challenge: 27:30

Q: Are you referring to a catalogue of internal APIs?

A: This initiative is not about gathering a list of APIs. We're looking for a full list, right down to the form level, of all the services delivered by government, digital or not. This has two parts : we need to bring together the information and figure out how to keep it current. And we need to turn the data into something visual, accessible, segmented to support decision-makers. We want as comprehensive a list as possible of all the services British Columbia offers.

Q: Is this an internal audit or external to government?

The objective is not to catalogue services internal to government. This is much more about citizen-facing, business facing services. Examples of these services include enrolling for MSP, getting a child care subsidy, getting a hunting permit etc. The single biggest indicator of a service is probably a form. We expect that we have about 65,000 forms.

Q: Everyone files taxes. Could the information be available through the CRA login?

A: No, the source of truth is not through the CRA. We are looking for a catalogue of provincial programs and services.

GeoBC 36:36

Q: How many data points are there (vendor sources of data)?

A: There are countless providers globally of this type of data, but about six in a given year. BC is also not the only agency that uses this data, meaning others would likely be interested in this type of a solution.

Education 41:20

Q: Is this internal facing, external facing or both?

A: The solution is meant to be for use between government and the school districts; and the school districts are not within the government systems environment and the solution will not be accessed by students or parents. Because it is personal information, we need to be able to evoke least privileged access to the data that stays within Canada.

Q: Is the solution Office 365?

A: The solution needs to be more about providing useful secure data to school districts in a format they can use no matter how technologically savvy they are.

Q: What is the issue with the current solution? (SharePoint)

A: It is too labour intensive to manage permissions on SharePoint. We need to be able to scale so more people can have secure access while still maintaining appropriate security. The current solution doesn't allow for engagement with the data – no analytical tools are available. Additionally, the current PDF and excel files (with pivot tables) are not unlocking the value within the data.

Q: Is there currently a team in government working on this?

A: There has not been any work done on possible solutions; and resources are allocated to work collaboratively on the project.

Q: Have you looked at/evaluated other Portal vendors? such as IBM, Liferay, Oracle, etc? Have you looked Tableau public as an interactive visualization tool?

A: We have not evaluated any tools that are on the market from any of these big vendors or started looking for solutions. The legislated requirement for data to stay in Canada and for securely transferring student personal information is critical to success of this project. The STIR project opportunity was fortuitous and we decided to seize the chance to find an innovative solution.

NRTS 50:00

Q: IS the issue that a single image may be too large?

A: Our existing corporate tools are built for a flat data structure. It means that you are multiplying spatial boundaries 80 times, if you have 80 objectives that apply to the same area. This is especially challenging in cases where the data has many-to-many relationships.

Q: Is NRTS building a single data base?

A: We have multiple smaller databases that we are enhancing. They all exist in one large corporate database.

Q: Are you looking for a dashboard?

A: A spatial visualization tool will be a component, yes.

MCFD 54:30

Q: Is there a spatial component to this challenge?

A: Yes, this is an important component for 1. Searching for a vacancy that suits an individual child and 2. Managing the overall inventory.

Q: Is there typically more demand than space or more space than demand?

A: Generally there is more demand. This varies in urban versus rural areas. Overall we struggle with maximizing spaces in rural areas.

Q: Who will update the data in the app?

A: Ideally it will be the service providers [who have a window into what they are providing]. Resource workers would have a global view of what's available in the area. We want both parties – the service provider and the government – to maximize the use space.

Q: How would a proponent get the information about current service providers?

A: There will be a discovery period for each challenge area where proponents will receive a “data dump”.

FLNRO - Digital Literacy 1:00:04

Q: Is this about the tech itself to deliver and engage rather than the content within it?

A: Yes.

DataBC 1:10:23

Q: Is this the same project as The Services Challenge?

A: No. This is about pushing notifications to the anonymous users.