

SELLING SOFTWARE PRODUCTS TO THE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT

The Ontario government is committed to a transparent, fair and competitive process for software selection and purchase to ensure that suppliers are treated fairly and equally.

What to Expect When Selling Software:

When selling software products to the Ontario government, you may be asked to submit a bid in one of the following ways:

Through a competitive Request For Proposal process, referred to as an RFP (details in the **How to Do Business with the Government of Ontario** document);

or

Through a Competitive Software Evaluation (CSE) process (**described below**).

These processes do not apply when the software product to be acquired is a ministry or corporate standard approved by the Government of Ontario, or is to be acquired using a vendor-of-record or similar agreement that was the result of the ministry running an earlier competitive tender process.

Where to find out about Software Business Opportunities:

All notices of the intent to select software will be published on the MERX electronic tendering service. To access this service, call 1-800-964-MERX (6379), or visit their website at <http://www.merx.com>.

How does the Competitive Software Evaluation Process Work?

If an RFP process is not used, the competitive software evaluation process will be used for ministry software procurements that have an estimated aggregate cost over \$25,000 during the course of the fiscal year. It involves two stages:

- Request for Qualification (RFQ)
- Request for Tender (RFT)

Stage One: Request for Qualification (RFQ)

- The Ministry will issue an RFQ to prequalify software product(s) and supplier(s).
- The RFQ will contain descriptions of the following:
 - The mandatory and desirable requirements to be used throughout the process;
 - The evaluation process and criteria as well as the testing that will be conducted on evaluation copies of the proposed software product.
- The notice of intent to procure is posted on MERX or in the Globe and Mail. Potential suppliers will be provided with at least 15 calendar days to develop and submit proposals.
- Suppliers must provide license rights for evaluation copies of software products they propose in their submissions. The Ministry will test the proposed software to determine its functionality as described in the proposal and its effectiveness in the business environment in which it will be used.
- The RFQ process should result in a list of qualified software product(s) and/or vendor(s).
- Each step of the RFQ process is documented thoroughly.

Stage Two: Request for Tender (RFT)

- The Ministry will issue an RFT to select and acquire the software products with the lowest evaluated cost from the products and/or vendors prequalified through the RFQ process.
- The RFT will:
 - identify all vendors and products prequalified through the RFQ process;
 - require that bidders identify if they are an authorized supplier under a Government of Ontario corporate software licensing agreement;
 - not prohibit the submission of bids from suppliers that are not authorized suppliers under a corporate software licensing agreement;
 - describe the evaluation process and criteria; and
 - comply with all purchasing policies of the ministry and Government of Ontario Procurement Directives.
- The notice of intent to procure is posted on MERX or in the Globe and Mail. Potential suppliers will be provided with at least 15 calendar days to develop and submit tenders.
- The Ministry will select the vendor or product with the lowest evaluated cost and enter into an agreement with the successful supplier of the selected software product.
- Each step of the RFT process is documented thoroughly.

Note: For acquisitions of office automation software, ministries must obtain Corporate Chief Information Officer approval prior to pursuing the acquisition and before awarding a contract.

Contact: Josie Ruggeri (416) 327-3588 or josie.ruggeri@mbs.gov.on.ca