

# BID SOLICITATION

Grand Challenges Canada / Grands Défis Canada  
MaRS Centre, West Tower, 661 University Avenue, Suite 1720, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5G 1M1  
T 416.583.5821 F 416.978.6826 E info@grandchallenges.ca



Grand Challenges Canada®  
Grands Défis Canada

**BOLD IDEAS WITH BIG IMPACT®**

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## **Bid Solicitation Saving Brains Learning Platform**

**Submission Deadline:  
May 3, 2021 – 5:00 pm EST**

**RFP Reference Number: RFP-SBP-2021-03-25**

## Introduction

### GRAND CHALLENGES CANADA'S OBJECTIVE

Grand Challenges Canada (or “GCC”) is dedicated to supporting **Bold Ideas with Big Impact**®. Grand Challenges Canada is seeking a learning platform (the “**Saving Brains Learning Platform**” or “**Platform**”) to support the “Saving Brains” program (“**Saving Brains Program**” or “**Saving Brains**”) for fiscal year 2021 (“**FY2021**”), with the possibility of renewal or extension up to one year for a maximum of three times, depending on the needs of Grand Challenges Canada.

Since October 2012, Saving Brains has invested \$3.6M in multi-disciplinary teams of global mentors and experts that accelerate and track the progress of the Saving Brains program towards the goal of measurable improvements in child development. The contracted team of experts will be responsible for providing non-financial support to the portfolio of innovators in the Saving Brains Program. The Saving Brains Learning Platform will be expected to accelerate and track the impact of the Saving Brains community of innovators. To do so, the Platform team will:

1. Enable individual projects within Saving Brains to work towards and achieve sustainable impact at scale;
2. Collect lessons and best practices arising from the portfolio of Saving Brains innovations to improve success of the Saving Brains innovations and disseminate to relevant stakeholders;
3. Track and disseminate the individual and collective impact of Saving Brains innovations within the learning community and to relevant external stakeholders.

The Saving Brains Learning Platform will serve as a key body through which the learning community, inclusive of innovators, partners, and partners’ grantees, can be nurtured and engaged. The Platform will act as the core component of the global Saving Brains learning community and a multi-sponsored vehicle to support system-level change in the early childhood development sector.

The objective of this “**Bid Solicitation**” is to select a candidate to enter into a contract with Grand Challenges Canada to provide the services described in the Statement of Work, attached hereto as Appendix A. All bidders (“**Bidders**”) are invited to bid (“**Bid**”) for consideration by Grand Challenges Canada in accordance with the terms of this Bid Solicitation.

**NOTE: Canadian candidates are strongly preferred. Priority will be given to those with previous experience working with the Saving Brains community. Bids that are able to address all the deliverables and activities below are strongly preferred.**

## Part 1: General Information

### 1.1 Objective

The objective of this Bid Solicitation is to select a service provider(s) to enter into a contract with Grand Challenges Canada to provide the services described in the Statement of Work attached herein as Appendix A in a manner that will provide the best value for Grand Challenges Canada's funds.

### 1.2 Period of Contract

The term of the resulting contract will be from approximately **April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022** with the possibility of renewal or extension for successive a one-year terms up to a maximum of three times, depending on the needs of Grand Challenges Canada.

### 1.3 About Grand Challenges Canada

Grand Challenges Canada is dedicated to supporting Bold Ideas with Big Impact®. Funded by the Government of Canada and other partners, Grand Challenges Canada funds innovators in low- and middle-income countries and Canada. The bold ideas Grand Challenges Canada supports integrate science and technology, social and business innovation – known as Integrated Innovation®.

One of the largest impact-first investors in Canada, and with a feminist investment approach, Grand Challenges Canada has supported a pipeline of over 1,300 innovations in more than 106 countries. Grand Challenges Canada estimates that these innovations have the potential to save up to 1.78 million lives and improve up to 64 million lives by 2030.

Grand Challenges Canada is hosted in Toronto at the Sandra Rotman Centre at the University Health Network.

**Our Mission:** To catalyze innovation that saves and improves the lives of the most vulnerable in Canada and low- and middle-income countries.

**Our Vision:** A world in which innovation accelerates the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

For more information, please see: [www.grandchallenges.ca](http://www.grandchallenges.ca), including our latest Annual Report.

### 1.4 About Saving Brains

The ultimate goal of the Saving Brains Program is to increase human capital through the development and delivery of bold ideas with real-world impact **that ensure healthy childhoods, thriving communities and nurturing environments at scale in an equitable, sustainable manner**. These ideas should be innovative, equality-focused and cost-effective products, services and/or implementation models.

## The Saving Brains Partnership

Saving Brains is a Grand Challenge that no single team or institution can solve on its own. So in 2014, GCC sought to establish a partnership (the **Saving Brains Partnership**) to bring together stakeholders who share an interest in elevating early childhood development on the global agenda, supporting innovative work in the space and ensuring shared learning within the early childhood development community. Since then, the Saving Brains Partnership has grown to leverage the expertise of different funders and partners that bring regional knowledge, global reach, scaling and implementation experience to move against the challenge.

GCC and the Saving Brains Partnership have also developed and continue to nurture a learning community that is focused on the Grand Challenge of Saving Brains. This community includes Saving Brains innovators, Partners and many other engaged stakeholders. Through sharing results and discussing lessons learned, the community is generating a body of evidence and practical knowledge on how to develop, refine, and evaluate innovative solutions. Together, the community is also creating a suite of interventions and implementation models for nurturing and protecting early brain development. The Saving Brains community encourages and fosters collective action, as projects working together have greater impact than they would alone.

## Timelines for Saving Brains Innovators

In FY2021, the Saving Brains program will be closing the final few projects under its final Proof-of-Concept (or seed) cohort. FY2021 will begin with an active cohort of 21 transition to scale (“**TTS**”) investments, all in their final phases of implementation and the last of which will close in June 2022.

TTS projects will continue to be brought forward to the Grand Challenges Canada Investment Committee and Board of Directors for funding consideration on a rolling basis, with approximately 1-4 Saving Brains investments considered each quarter. These projects can last from 1-3 years. Saving Brains will focus on further investing in the portfolio's most promising innovations, while also considering external pipeline opportunities that might meet certain investment gaps.

In order to support this growing community of seed and TTS innovators, Saving Brains is seeking to contract Saving Brains Learning Platform support.

## Part 2: Standard Instructions, Clauses and Conditions

### 2.1 Submission of Bid

- a. Grand Challenges Canada requests that each Bidder submit a Bid by email only, to the email address outlined in paragraph 2.2 below, as early as possible, but **no later than May 3, 2021, 5:00 pm EST (“Closing Date”)**. For greater certainty, Bids will only be accepted from March 25, 2021 at 3:00 pm until May 3, 2021 at 5:00 am/pm (bid solicitation period).
- b. The Bid must include the firm or vendor’s name, a contact name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and email address.
- c. Grand Challenges Canada requests that each Bid contain a covering letter signed by the Bidder or by an authorized representative of the Bidder. The covering letter should reference the RFP Reference Number found on the first page of this document. The Bidder’s signature indicates acceptance of the terms and conditions set out and/or referenced herein. The signatory must have authority to commit the organization by making such a Bid. A contract will not be awarded until a signed covering letter from the Bidder is received by Grand Challenges Canada. If the Bidder fails to provide a signed covering letter when requested to do so by Grand Challenges Canada, then the Bidder shall be disqualified from the bidding process and be declared non-compliant.
- d. It is the Bidder's responsibility to:
  - i. Obtain clarification of the requirements contained in the Bid Solicitation, if necessary, prior to submitting a Bid;
  - ii. Prepare its Bid in accordance with the instructions contained in the Bid Solicitation;
  - iii. Submit its Bid by Closing Date;
  - iv. Send its Bid only to the **“Contracting Authority”** at the email address set out in paragraph 2.2 below;
  - v. Provide a contact name, address, telephone number and email address in its bid, as indicated in paragraph 2.1b above; and
  - vi. Provide a comprehensible and sufficiently detailed Bid, including all requested pricing details that will permit a complete evaluation, in accordance with the criteria set out in this Bid Solicitation.
- e. Bids submitted during the bid solicitation period will remain **open for acceptance by Grand Challenges Canada** for a period of not less than fourteen (14) calendar days from the Closing Date of the Bid Solicitation. Upon notification to the responsive Bidders, Grand Challenges Canada reserves the right in its sole discretion to extend the Closing Date at any time for up to an additional fourteen (14) calendar days.
- f. Bids and/or amendments thereto will only be accepted by Grand Challenges Canada if they are received at the email address indicated below in paragraph 2.2, on or before the Closing Date and time specified therein.

- g. Bids received will become the property of Grand Challenges Canada and will not be returned.
- h. All information within this Bid Solicitation is to be held in confidence.
- i. Except as specifically provided otherwise in the Bid Solicitation, Grand Challenges Canada will evaluate a Bidder's Bid only on the documentation provided as part of its Bid. Grand Challenges Canada will not evaluate information not submitted with the Bid, such as references to website addresses where additional information can be found, or technical manuals or brochures not submitted with the Bid.

## 2.2 Contracting Authority

**Grand Challenges Canada**  
MaRS Centre, West Tower  
661 University Avenue, Suite 1720  
Toronto, ON M5G 1M1

**Attention:** Joanita Nakamwa, Program Analyst, Saving Brains  
**Email:** Joanita.Nakamwa@grandchallenges.ca

## 2.3 Late Bids

- a. The Bidder has sole responsibility for the timely receipt of a Bid by Grand Challenges Canada and cannot transfer this responsibility to Grand Challenges Canada.
- b. Grand Challenges Canada will return Bids delivered after the stipulated Closing Date referred to in sub-paragraph 2.1a, unless they qualify as a "delayed bid" in paragraph (c) below.
- c. A Bid received after the Closing Date but before the contract award date may be considered, provided the delay can be proven by the Bidder to have been due solely to a delay in delivery that can be attributed to incorrect handling by Grand Challenges Canada (a "**delayed bid**").
- d. Misrouting, traffic volume, weather disturbances, labour disputes or any other causes for the late delivery of Bids are not acceptable reasons for the Bid to be a delayed bid and accepted by Grand Challenges Canada.

## 2.4 Legal Capacity

The Bidder must have the legal capacity to contract. If the Bidder is a sole proprietorship, a partnership or a corporate body, the Bidder must provide, if requested by Grand Challenges Canada, a statement and any requested supporting documentation indicating the laws under which it is registered or incorporated, together with the registered or corporate name and place of business. This also applies to Bidders submitting a Bid as a joint venture.

## 2.5 Rights of Grand Challenges Canada

- a. Grand Challenges Canada reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to:
  - i. Reject any or all Bids received in response to the Bid Solicitation;
  - ii. Enter into negotiations with Bidders on any or all aspects of their Bids;
  - iii. Accept any Bid in whole or in part without negotiations;
  - iv. During the evaluation, members of the evaluation team may, at their discretion, submit questions to or conduct interviews with Bidders, at Bidders' cost, upon forty-eight (48) hours' notice, to seek clarification and/or verify any or all information provided by the Bidder with respect to this Bid Solicitation;
  - v. To award one or more contracts, if applicable;
  - vi. Not to accept any deviations from the stated terms and conditions in the awarded contract;
  - vii. Conduct a survey of Bidders' facilities and/or examine their technical, managerial and financial capabilities to determine if they are adequate to meet the requirements of the Bid Solicitation;
  - viii. Contact any or all references supplied by Bidders to verify and validate any information submitted in their Bid, if applicable;
  - ix. Correct any mathematical errors in the extended pricing of financial Bids by using unit pricing and the quantities stated in the Bid Solicitation;
  - x. Verify any information provided by Bidders through independent research, use of any government resources or by contacting third parties deemed reliable by Grand Challenges Canada;
  - xi. Incorporate all or any portion of the Statement of Work, Bid Solicitation, and the successful Bid in any resulting contract;
  - xii. Cancel the Bid Solicitation at any time without liability;
  - xiii. Reissue the Bid Solicitation without liability;
  - xiv. Extend the Bid Solicitation deadline without liability;
  - xv. If no compliant Bids are received and the requirement is not substantially modified, re-tender the requirement by inviting only the Bidders who bid to re-submit Bids within a period designated by Grand Challenges Canada;
  - xvi. Contract with vendors outside of the Bid Solicitation process; and
  - xvii. Not to award a contract in part or at all.
- b. Bidders will have the number of days specified in the request by Grand Challenges Canada to comply with any request related to any of the above items. Failure to comply with the request may result in the bid being declared non-responsive.
- c. Bidder acknowledges that any resultant contract for services arising out of this Bid Solicitation must include Government of Canada funder provisions around conflict of interest, access to information and confidential information, intellectual property, and declarations and guarantees around corruption, fraud and bribery, and anti-terrorism, as well as other mandatory terms.

## 2.6 Communications – Solicitation Period

- a. To ensure the integrity of the competitive bid process, all enquiries and other communications regarding the Bid Solicitation must be directed, by email, only to Grand Challenges Canada identified in the Bid Solicitation. Failure to comply can, for that reason alone, result in the disqualification of the Bid.
- b. To ensure consistency and quality of information provided to Bidders, significant enquiries received and the replies to such enquiries will be provided to all Bidders, without revealing the sources of the enquiries.

## 2.7 Costs

- a. No payment will be made for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a Bid in response to the Bid Solicitation. Costs associated with preparing and submitting a Bid, as well as any other costs incurred by the Bidder associated with the evaluation of the Bid, are the sole responsibility of the Bidder.
- b. No costs incurred relating to the work outlined in Appendix A: Statement of Work (“**Work**”) before the receipt of a signed contract or specified written authorization from Grand Challenges Canada can be charged to any resulting contract. In addition, the successful Bidder is not to perform Work in excess of or outside the scope of any resulting contract based on verbal or written requests or instructions from any Grand Challenges Canada personnel other than those specified by Grand Challenges Canada in the final contract.

## 2.8 Governing Law

This Bid Solicitation and any resulting contract for services shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the Province of Ontario and the federal laws of Canada applicable therein. Each Bidder agrees that any and all disputes, actions or proceedings relating to this Bid Solicitation whether as to interpretation, validity, performance or otherwise, shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of the Province of Ontario and each Bidder and Grand Challenges Canada irrevocably attorn to the jurisdiction of the courts of such province.

## Part 3: Bid Preparation Instructions and Evaluation Procedures

### 3.1 Format of Bid

All bids should include the following two clearly identified sections –

#### **Section 1: Technical Proposal**

In its technical proposal, the Bidder must demonstrate its understanding of the requirements described in the Bid Solicitation, as well as demonstrate how the Bidder will meet the requirements of the Evaluation Criteria and Basis of Selection, as described in Appendix B. The technical proposal **must not exceed 10 pages**, including the cover sheet and any appendices. The technical proposal should consist of:

- A brief narrative of the proposed contributions and how they relate to the program goals articulated in Appendix A
- A work plan conveying all proposed activities, corresponding timelines and deliverables for each activity, and the process by which the activity would be accomplished including any expected inputs or time needed from GCC staff or innovators/grantees, including both frequency, duration and mechanism (e.g., face-to-face, telephone, etc.)
- An outline of team, their roles and responsibilities within the proposed activities, including a clear management structure for all team members. Please also include specifics regarding the level of responsiveness that Grand Challenges Canada can expect on a regular basis. This section should include details about measures in place for when the primary contact/support staff are not available.
- Biographical sketches of each team member describing relevant experience and specific expertise that they will bring to this role. This section should demonstrate the ability of the Bidder to deliver on the specific items outlined in Appendix A.

#### **Section 2: Financial Proposal**

The Bidder must submit its financial bid in accordance with the Basis of Fees, attached herein as Appendix C. The total amount of any taxes (e.g., the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST), Goods and Services Tax (GST), etc.) is to be shown separately, if applicable.

### 3.2 Evaluation Procedures

- a. Bids will be assessed against all mandatory and rated requirements identified herein and evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria specified in Appendix B.
- b. Any firm currently providing audit services to Grand Challenges Canada cannot be considered for this Bid Solicitation due to the need for independence and perception of independence.

## Appendix A: Statement of Work

### A. Title

This Bid Solicitation seeks to engage an individual for hire in the role of:

- a. Saving Brains Learning Platform

### B. Scope of Work and Deliverables

Vendor(s) may select to bid for one or more of the portions of the Work outlined below. Vendor(s) must clearly identify which area(s) of the scope of work are included in submitted proposals.

The Saving Brains Learning Platform will be expected to:

#### 1. Enable individual projects within Saving Brains to work towards and achieve sustainable impact at scale, while also supporting the Saving Brains program to meet its own objectives

- Maximize the potential for success of projects to achieve impact and scale
  - This could include supporting projects to advance strong implementation strategies, refine theories of change, employ Integrated Innovation, and apply fast-cycle learning.
- Create resources and provide support to innovators to demonstrate the impact of their innovations
  - Support innovators in the development and execution of rigorous monitoring and evaluation frameworks, including the selection and use of appropriate metrics and assessments that can best demonstrate the impact of their innovations on child development;
  - Work with innovators to identify and apply metrics that could refine their intervention or could influence stakeholders' interest (e.g., government, private sector, other public sector players, etc.) in later uptake of the innovation at scale;
  - Support innovators to develop and apply rigorous data analysis plans;
  - Guide innovators to identify the right audience (e.g. funders and smart partners) and build fruitful connections to support uptake of their work and adoption into public or private systems; and  
Guide innovators in how to communicate the results and key highlights of their intervention and path to scale to relevant audiences.
- Develop the resources and provide support needed for effective and evidence-based innovations to achieve uptake at scale
  - Seed projects should be "investment ready" by the end of their grants (i.e., be well-placed to apply to the TTS program and/or to obtain support from external stakeholders and funders);

- Early phase TTS projects should be ready for “graduation” (i.e., ready further investment and poised to achieved greater scale) by the end of their funding period;
- Innovators may require support identifying and establishing smart partnerships, developing government engagement strategies, developing and implementing financially sustainable models or fundraising strategies, and identifying and developing team capacities needed for their innovations to scale.

*Anticipated distribution of resources across activities: 65%*

**2. Collect lessons and best practices arising from the Saving Brains community of innovators to improve success of the Saving Brains innovations and to inform the wider community of learning**

- Support a learning community where innovators learn from the strategies, approaches, challenges and successes of others in the Saving Brains community (including the grantees of Saving Brains partners) and from other innovative learning communities;
- Harvest, synthesize, articulate, and disseminate clear lessons, best practices, and strategies to be used by Saving Brains innovators, the Saving Brains Program, partners, and other global actors.

*Anticipated distribution of resources across activities: 25%*

**3. Track and disseminate the individual and collective impact of Saving Brains innovations within the community and to relevant external stakeholders**

- Track and analyze the impact of Saving Brains innovations and of the Saving Brains portfolio;
- Effectively communicate and disseminate the impact of Saving Brains innovations across internal and external stakeholders;
- Attract investors and smart partners (private, NGO, and government) to support the scaling of Saving Brains innovations;
- Support and foster the growth of the Saving Brains partnership and wider Saving Brains learning community.

*Anticipated distribution of resources across activities: 10%*

**NOTE: The percentage allocations are to indicate the initial proposed distribution of resources across the above goals only and are not final.** Grand Challenges Canada will finalize this based on the proposals and comments received.

The successful applicant ultimately engaged by GCC will be required to communicate over email, phone or meet face-to-face, as needed. We expect the majority of the engagement between the platforms and the Saving Brains innovators will be conducted through audio/video conference with periodic in person innovator community learning workshops.

### **Overview of Support**

The selected Saving Brains Platform will report to Grand Challenges Canada and will define the process and implement the infrastructure needed to provide the contracted services.

## Appendix B: Evaluation Criteria and Basis of Selection

### Evaluation Criteria and Process

- a. Only those Bids that meet all mandatory requirements identified in this Bid Solicitation will be further evaluated, based on the criteria listed below.
- b. The Bid should be concise and should address, at a minimum, all mandatory criteria identified below. It is suggested that the Bidder address these criteria in sufficient depth in the bid.
  - i. The Bid must identify the qualifications and experience of the personnel who will carry out the tasks, by systematically addressing each of the experience criteria as detailed below.
  - ii. The firm's profile and resume for each proposed resource must be included in the Bid.
  - iii. For each resume submitted, the Bidder should ensure that:
    - The name of the individual is clearly indicated; and
    - The resume clearly demonstrates where, when and how the stated qualifications/experience of the individual were acquired.
  - iv. For evaluation purposes:
    - **Where** means the name of the institution, as well as the position/title held;
    - **When** means the start date and end date (e.g., from January 2000 to March 2002) of the period during which the individual acquired the qualifications/experience; and
    - **How** means a clear description of activities performed and the responsibilities assigned to the individual in this position and during this period.
  - v. Listing experience without providing any supporting data will not be considered to be "demonstrated" for the purpose of this evaluation. Full details should be included that describe the number of projects completed and in progress, the period of the work performed in number of months, years in past and present employment, and other relevant information.

### Mandatory Criteria for Technical and Financial Proposals

In addition to those elements described above, the Bidder shall also provide:

1. **Basis of fees**, which will be evaluated separately, as described in Appendix C
2. **History of the firm and location**, affiliation with any relevant partners or networks, size, etc.
3. **Description of support team**, including bios, relevant experience and specific expertise that they will bring to this role – this section should demonstrate the ability of the Bidder to deliver on the specific items outlined in **Deliverables** in Appendix A
4. **Description of support process**, including specifics regarding the level of responsiveness that Grand Challenges Canada can expect on a regular basis – this

section should include details about measures in place for when the primary contact/support staff are not available.

5. **Two (2) client references ONLY**, for whom you have provided the services described in the statement of work – any Bidder who provides less or more than (2) references will be automatically disqualified from the bidding process and be given no further consideration.
6. **Value-added services**, including whatever the Bidder may want to add to its proposal.

## SCORING RUBRIC FOR EVALUATION

### 1. Experience (60%)

- a. Functional, technical and geographic/population – does the bidder have expertise in relevant:
  - i. Functional areas needed to accomplish their proposed deliverables (i.e., monitoring and evaluation, theory of change, public sector engagement, scaling interventions, etc.)?
  - ii. Technical areas of expertise needed to accomplish their proposed deliverables (i.e., early child development assessment tools, nurturing care and child development, early learning pedagogy, maternal health and nutrition, etc.)?
  - iii. Sectoral expertise – has worked with or shows demonstrated understanding of global external stakeholders, strategies and developments within the field?
  - iv. Geographic/populations-based expertise and bilingual (French and English) language competency necessary to accomplish their proposed deliverables (i.e., in low- and middle-income countries, low resource settings, with vulnerable communities)?
  - v. Last mile/base of pyramid client/user expertise needed to accomplish their proposed deliverables?
  - vi. Experience working effectively within complex governance structures?
- b. Is the bidder an effective, results-driven leader/team with the proven capacity to deliver on their objectives?
- c. Is the team structure appropriate with clear management and accountability structures?

### 2. Fees (20%)

- a. Are the scope of the proposed work and the funds requested reasonable and commensurate with the proposed goals?
- b. Does the proposal represent a particularly thoughtful and efficient use of resources?
- c. Is there an appropriate balance of resources between senior and other team members?

### 3. Ability to achieve program goals (20%)

- a. Does the proposal show strong feasibility to move forward the key deliverables on schedule?
- b. Does the proposal clearly articulate the key activities needed to achieve these deliverables?
- c. Will the completion of the proposed activities and deliverables help the program achieve its goals?

Evaluation of Bids will also be guided by the Objective and Principles of Grand Challenges Canada's Contracting & Procurement Policy, found at [www.grandchallenges.ca/funding-opportunities/resources/](http://www.grandchallenges.ca/funding-opportunities/resources/).

Based on the evaluation of the criteria described above, competitive Bids could be invited for an interview. The purpose of the interview would be to further assess the capacity of the Bidders to best deliver the scope of work outlined in the Bid Solicitation.

## **Appendix C: Fees**

Bidders are required to provide their estimated fees in Canadian dollars, excluding applicable taxes, for each deliverable listed in Appendix A. Bidders are requested to provide the hourly fee for personnel involved in delivering the proposed deliverables.