cmec
Council of Ministers of Education, Canada
Conseil des ministres de l'Éducation (Canada)

Request for Quotation (RFQ)
Invitation to interested parties to provide AI-enabled customer-service automation (client relationship management platform, website chatbot, telephone callbot) for the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC)

THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION, CANADA (CMEC) is an intergovernmental body providing leadership in policy development, program administration, and research at the pan-Canadian and international levels.

The Corporation of CMEC (CCMEC) requires the services of one or more selected interested parties (the Proponent) to supply, configure, integrate, and deploy artificial-intelligence-enabled (AI-enabled) customer-service automation for the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC). Automation services must include an AI-enabled:

1. client relationship management (CRM) platform
2. website chatbot
3. telephone callbot

Proponents may bid on all three service components or on one or two individual components. CCMEC may award the project components to a single Proponent or to different Proponents, by component or as a bundle. Where components are awarded to different Proponents, each Proponent must cooperate on the integration between the website chatbot and telephone callbot escalation paths, and the CRM platform queue.

Project background

Established in 1990, CICIC is Canada's national information centre and fulfills Canada's obligations under UNESCO conventions to facilitate the mobility of talent. Operating within CMEC, CICIC provides information and referral services to individuals and organizations on the recognition of academic and occupational credentials for working and studying in Canada and abroad. Demand for this service is substantial and predominantly informational: CICIC's website receives approximately 770,000 visits per year, and staff respond to roughly 2,560 email and telephone inquiries annually, the large majority concerning routine, repeatable questions.

For more than a decade, CICIC has aimed to meet this demand via self-service and automation means, so that staff time is concentrated on the inquiries that require human judgment. Successive investments in IT solutions have taken place, such as a custom-built CRM platform (2010) used by CICIC staff to populate email responses using pre-drafted templates; the Connect.the.dots guided self-service tool (2015); and an automated telephone menu delivered through a VoIP system (2019). These solutions resolve a large share of inquiries with no staff intervention. The 2015 and 2019 solutions, in particular, handle approximately three times as many inquiries alone for every inquiry that reaches a CICIC staff member, and the number of CICIC staff-assisted inquiries has declined by roughly 63 percent over the past decade, even as

overall demand has grown. These figures reflect both users' preference for immediate, self-directed answers, as well as the effectiveness of IT automation in extending the reach of a small team.

The three above-noted IT solutions are now reaching the limits of their design. They rely on fixed decision trees and menu structures that answer only the questions anticipated when they were built, cannot interpret a question posed in natural language, and require users to navigate to an answer rather than receive it directly. Recent advances in AI-enabled customer-service automation make it possible to answer a far wider range of routine inquiries directly and conversationally, in both English and French, and across web, telephone, and email channels, while basing answers on CICIC's own governed content and routing anything outside that scope to CICIC staff.

This RFQ is the next step on that continuing modernization path. Its purpose is to acquisition AI-enabled automation IT solutions that build on CICIC's existing self-service foundation to deliver faster, more accurate, and more accessible information in English and French, while preserving the mandate boundaries, human oversight, and quality controls set out in the sections that follow.

Governed, closed-domain knowledge base

CICIC has developed a governed, closed-domain knowledge base (KB) of approximately 75 content items (147 files) covering its top inquiry categories. The KB is authored in both English and French, organized by a defined taxonomy, sensitivity-tiered (tiers 1, 2, or 3), and equipped with escalation triggers that route defined situations to human CICIC staff members. The KB is the single source of information from which the AI automation solution must answer.

Because the KB is already built and governed, the Proponent's task is well-scoped and testable to host CICIC's KB as a closed-domain retrieval corpus and deliver it through the three channels (i.e., CRM platform, website chatbot, telephone callbot). On every channel, the solution must

- answer solely from the KB;
- cite its sources;
- disclose that the user is interacting with an AI-enabled customer-service automated assistant;
- respect the KB's sensitivity tiers;
- hand off cleanly to CICIC staff members on the defined triggers;
- log interactions for audit;
- deliver equivalent quality in both English and French.

Regulatory framework

The AI-enabled chatbot and callbot are strictly informational and route any decisional matter to a human, which keeps the processing low-sensitivity. The solution is subject to and must be in

compliance with legally binding provisions in provincial, territorial, federal, and international legal frameworks, as well as CCMEC internal policies. Compliance includes, but is not limited to:

- **Protection of personal information and privacy legislation** (e.g., *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, 2000* (PIPEDA), Quebec's *Act respecting the protection of personal information in the private sector*). CICIC will complete concurrently a privacy impact assessment (PIA).
- **Accessibility** (e.g., *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, *2005* (AODA), *Accessible Canada Act*, *2019*, CAN/ASC-EN 301 549, which includes WCAG 2.1 AA with a path to WCAG 2.2 AA)
- **AI-interaction disclosure expectations** (e.g., Ontario's "Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence Directive," 2022)

Scope of services (Services) to be provided

The Services comprise the supply, configuration, integration, deployment, and initial 12-month term support of up to three AI-enabled customer-service automation components, delivered in a phased sequence. Proponents may bid on any one or more components. The Services for each component are described below. The complete technical, compliance, security, and accessibility requirements (R1–R22), together with the compliance baseline and the acceptance criteria against which the solution will be tested, are set out in APPENDIX I.

Service components

1. **AI-enabled client relationship management (CRM) platform (Phase 1)**: A central case-management and ticketing platform for email and telephone inquiries, providing the human-escalation pathway for AI-to-human hand-offs, structured hand-off payloads, taxonomy tagging (inquiry category, taxonomy node, trigger ID), audit logging, and key performance indicator (KPI) instrumentation.
2. **AI-enabled website chatbot (Phase 2)**: A closed-domain conversational assistant on the cicic.ca website that answers from the KB (public Tier 1 content only), with inline citations, AI-interaction disclosure, the required disclaimers, tier-based access control, and escalation to the CRM queue.
3. **AI-enabled telephone callbot (Phase 3)**: A voice assistant integrated with CICIC's telephony system—we are currently using YoVu Office Phone provider, but there is flexibility if another solution is required—that delivers deterministic spoken blocks for regulated moments (identification, AI disclosure, disclaimer, transfer, callback), grounded free-form responses for informational turns, an English and French voice register, and callback commitment or live transfer to CICIC staff members.

Phased implementation

The project is structured in three sequential phases, each meeting its acceptance criteria (APPENDIX I) before the next phase begins. This ordering lets the escalation process and instrumentation exist before the customer-facing channels rely on them. Where components

are awarded to different Proponents, each Proponent delivers their component(s) according to this sequence and cooperates on the escalation integration.

Activities and provisional timeline

The Services and the phase structure and elements are outlined in the table below. Timelines are provisional and depend on the award date, the component(s) awarded, and review of each phase deliverables. They are also subject to CCMEC internal:

1. budgeting cycles; and
2. completing a PIA.

#	Phases and key activities	Suggested Timeline
1	**Project initiation and discovery** *Establish a work plan and project governance parameters; confirm the integration design (website, telephony, escalation); execute the data-processing agreement (DPA) and provide inputs to CICIC's PIA; confirm hosting/residency and security posture.*	1–4 weeks from award
2	**Phase 1 — AI-enabled CRM platform** *Configure the platform; integrate email and telephone intake; implement taxonomy tagging, audit logging, and KPI instrumentation; establish the human-escalation pathway and hand-off payload; train CICIC staff members; acceptance testing; go live.*	10–14 weeks
3	**Phase 2 — AI-enabled website chatbot** *Ingest the KB as a closed-domain corpus; implement grounding with citations, AI disclosure and disclaimers, Tier 1 access control, and escalation to the CRM queue; run the bilingual quality test (EV-01) and accessibility conformance (EV-08); soft launch; go-live.*	10–14 weeks (after Phase 1 acceptance)
4	**Phase 3 — AI-enabled telephone callbot** *Integrate with CICIC's telephony system; implement deterministic spoken blocks, both English and French voices, callback commitment, and live transfer; enable voice acceptance (EV-07) and take accessibility conformance into account (EV-08, R20); soft launch; go live.*	10–14 weeks (after Phase 2 acceptance)
5	**Stabilization and support** *KPI reporting and tuning, defect resolution, and maintenance across the initial 12-month term; support for renewal planning.*	Duration of the initial term

Outline of deliverables (Deliverables) to be provided

For each component bid, the Deliverables include:

- A configured, integrated, deployed, and documented AI-enabled:
    - client relationship management (CRM) platform deployed for CICIC (Phase 1)

    - website chatbot integrated on the cicic.ca website (Phase 2)
    - telephone callbot integrated with CICIC's telephony system (Phase 3)
- Integration between the website chatbot and telephone callbot escalation paths and the CRM platform queue with the structured hand-off payload.
- Configuration and administration documentation, as well as administrator training for CICIC staff members.
- An acceptance evidence package: results against the acceptance criteria (APPENDIX I, EV-01–09), including the English/French quality test and the Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT).
- Compliance artifacts: DPA, subprocessor map, SOC 2 Type II / ISO 27001 evidence, VPAT, and written Canadian data-residency terms as applicable.
- KPI instrumentation and reporting (e.g., resolution rate, citation/accuracy sampling, escalation rate by trigger, satisfaction) from day one of each channel.
- Ongoing support and maintenance for the initial 12-month term ensuring appropriate implementation and testing.

Considerations

- English and French languages must be of equivalent quality across text and voice AI-enabled automation solutions. French is not an afterthought (queries and usage represent roughly 29 percent of inbound/outbound volumes) and will be tested.
- Every surface of the solution must respect CICIC's mandate. The AI-enabled automation solution provides general information and referral only; it must never assess or recognize credentials nor render decisions on individual cases; it *must* route any decisional or out-of-mandate matters to the respective competent authority or to CICIC staff members.
- At all stages of producing the deliverables, the selected Proponent should demonstrate an understanding and acknowledgment of provincial and territorial autonomy, in particular with respect to their individual responsibilities in education, and specifically in the implementation of international legal instruments related to academic credential recognition in Canada. Relatedly, the selected Proponent should demonstrate similar consideration for the due level of autonomy and authority for the following groups: postsecondary educational institutions (e.g., in admission procedures), professional regulatory bodies (e.g., for professional certification), and members of the Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services of Canada (ACESC) (e.g., for nonbinding expert advice on academic credential assessment). The KB already encodes these boundaries; the AI-enabled automation solution must preserve them and must not surface provincial/territorial content that has not been validated.
- No unreviewed AI-drafted external communication may leave the AI-enabled automation solution; defined triggers must route to human staff, who validate before any external send.
- The KB comprises content that is already-published, low-sensitivity information. The AI-enabled automation solution must limit requests for personal information, and it must

support CICIC's PIA with a DPA, data-flow documentation, subprocessor map, and data residency terms.

- Public-facing surfaces must meet CAN/ASC-EN 301 549 accessibility requirements, which includes WCAG 2.1 AA (with a path to WCAG 2.2 AA), and provide a VPAT.
- Users carry CICIC-provided answers into dealings with other authorities. With this is mind, the Proponent understands that grounding (i.e., basing outputs on the KB), citations, and an abstain-and-route posture under uncertainty are essential. The AI-enabled automation solution will be tested against the acceptance criteria in APPENDIX I. The Proponent must ensure answers are grounded in real, sourced KB content and are not misleading nor invented by the AI-enabled automation solution.

Additional notes

Outside the scope of the Services, CICIC will be responsible for the following:

- Providing the built, governed KB (e.g., content, taxonomy, sensitivity tiers, and escalation triggers) as the grounding corpus; the Proponent is not required to author nor translate content.
- Staffing and operating the human-escalation steps, and validating AI-drafted replies before any external send.
- Initiating and owning the PIA; the Proponent supports it by providing the required documentation for the AI-enabled automation solution.
- Providing reasonable access to solutions supported by other third-party vendors, including the CICIC website (cicic.ca) environment and telephony system (if the YoVu Office Phone solution continues to be used) for integration.
- Final English and French terminology validation and copyediting of any public-facing disclaimer or script, following CICIC's own quality-control process; the Proponent must make disclaimers and branding configurable at the required placements (APPENDIX I, R21).

Costs, hours, and timeline

The Proponent:

- must be available from April 2027 to March 2028;
- is expected to provide detailed, itemized pricing (rather than a single lump sum) so that submissions can be evaluated by component and over the initial term required to accomplish the Services from April 2027 to March 2028;
- must quote all prices in Canadian dollars (CAD), excluding applicable taxes; and
- should bear in mind that CCMEC is a not-for-profit organization with a limited budget.

Because CCMEC may award by component, price each component so that it can stand alone, and identify separately any discount contingent on a bundled award. The detailed itemized pricing should include:

- one-time setup and implementation cost per component, i.e., AI-enabled CRM platform, AI-enabled website chatbot, AI-enabled telephone callbot;

- fixed, recurring subscription and licensing cost per component (e.g., per 12-month period, per agent/seat, and/or per interaction as applicable);
- flexible usage-based charges (e.g., per AI call, per voice minute), with stated assumptions at CICIC's scale (APPENDIX I);
- integration and professional-services costs (e.g., telephony/session initiation protocol (SIP), website, and escalation integration);
- optional support and maintenance costs;
- pricing for support for an initial 12-month term, together with the pricing that would apply to renewal/extension terms, as applicable.

Selection criteria

In APPENDIX I, the requirements marked "Must (M)" are mandatory for the component(s) bid. A submission that cannot meet the mandatory requirements for a component may be set aside for that component. Submissions that meet the mandatory requirements will be evaluated against the following weighted criteria. Weights are provisional and may be adjusted by the selection committee.

Criteria	Weight	What We Assess
Technical solution and fit to requirements	35%	Closed-domain grounding quality, citations, escalation design, role-based access control (RBAC)/tier enforcement, and overall coverage of the APPENDIX I requirements for the component(s) bid
Bilingual quality (English and French languages)	15%	Equivalent English and French language quality in text and voice, evidenced via a bilingual quality test drawn from CICIC's KB
Data residency and privacy/security posture	15%	Canadian data residency or on-premises/private deployment (preferred and weighted, not pass/fail); DPA, subprocessor map, SOC 2 Type II / ISO 27001; PIPEDA / Law 25 alignment
Cost and overall value	15%	Total cost over the initial term relative to solution capacity/capability; itemized and per-component pricing
Implementation, integration, and support	10%	Approach and capability to integrate the website, telephony (YoVu), and escalation paths; project plan; training; support and service level agreement (SLA).
Accessibility	5%	WCAG 2.1 AA conformance and VPAT, with a documented path to WCAG 2.2 AA
Relevant experience and references	5%	Public-sector, bilingual, or closed-domain retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) deployments; client references.

Preference will be given to Proponents who can demonstrate relevant experience with public-sector, bilingual (English/French), or closed-domain retrieval-augmented generation (RAG)

deployments, and with government-grade privacy and security practices. Cost, qualifications, and experience are among the variables used to evaluate submissions. CCMEC, the legal arm of CMEC, is not obliged to accept the lowest-priced submission, nor any submission at all, and may award by component or as a bundle.

Submission of a quotation by Proponents

Proponents are invited to submit a quotation, which should include the following information:

1. the component(s) being bid on (all three, or the specific individual component);
2. a summary of relevant expertise, qualifications, and experience, in point form, mapped to the selection criteria;
3. a requirements-compliance matrix indicating compliance (and any conditions) against each APPENDIX I requirement (R1–R22) for the component(s) bid;
4. detailed, itemized pricing as set out under “Costs, hours, and timeline”;
5. a proposed implementation approach and timeline for each component/phase bid from April 2027 to March 2028;
6. a hosting and data-residency description and subprocessor map, the data-processing agreement (DPA), SOC 2 Type II / ISO 27001 evidence, and a VPAT;
7. a bilingual (English and French) capability statement; and
8. two or three relevant client references.

Shortlisted Proponents may be asked to provide a demonstration and to participate in a bilingual quality test using inquiries drawn from CICIC’s KB. Submissions will be reviewed by a selection committee in October/November 2026, and the successful Proponent(s) will be selected by early 2027.

Submission deadline and contact information

Please send your quotation to CMEC, to the attention of Michael Ringuette, Coordinator, Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC), at m.ringuette@cmec.ca, by September 18, 2026, 4:00 p.m. EDT. For more information, visit us at www.cmec.ca and www.cicic.ca.

CMEC thanks all individuals and firms for their interest in this RFQ. Only those who are selected for an interview or demonstration will be contacted.

This appendix is part of the Request for Quotation (RFQ) invitation to interested parties to provision artificial-intelligence-enabled (AI-enabled) customer-service automation (client relationship management platform, website chatbot, telephone callbot) for the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC). It provides the complete technical, compliance, security, and accessibility requirements (R1–R22), together with the compliance baseline and the acceptance criteria against which the AI-enabled solution will be tested.

Context: CICIC customer service volumes

The figures below describe CICIC's current customer-service volumes and the split between self-served contacts (resolved with no CICIC staff intervention) and staff-handled inquiries. They are provided to help Proponents size and price their solutions. Figures are approximate, drawn from CICIC's 2024–25 fiscal year, and are indicative rather than contractual; actual volumes vary year over year based on a series of external factors.

CICIC's information service is already substantially automated: self-service and automated channels resolve roughly three contacts for every one that requires a CICIC staff member. The AI-enabled solution sought through this RFQ is expected to handle a growing share of the inquiries that currently reach CICIC staff, and to strengthen self-service channels. Proponents should price for current volumes while allowing for usage-based scaling as automated handling increases over the initial term and beyond.

Channel / metric	Approximate annual volume (2024–25)	Staff intervention
Website sessions (cicic.ca)	~770,000 sessions; ~2.1M page views	Self-served (no staff)
Connect.the.dots guided self-service website reports	~6,000	Self-served (no staff)
Automated telephone line using pre-recorded static menu options for routine inquiries	~1,800 calls	Self-served (no staff)
Staff-handled inquiries (written email/web, and voice telephone conversations)	**~2,560**	**Staff-handled**
— of which by email / web contact form	~4 in 5 (~2,050)	Staff-handled
— of which by telephone	~1 in 5 (~500)	Staff-handled
Total telephone calls (automated + staff)	~2,300	~1,800 self-served / ~500 staff

Additional characteristics relevant to sizing and to the English/French quality test:

- **Language of response:** approximately 70% English / 30% French.

- **Team scale:** inquiries are currently handled by mainly three CICIC staff members (agents/seats), as shared responsibilities but with one employee acting as the primary point of contact prior to further escalation triggers.
- **Self-served-to-staff ratio:** approximately 3:1 across the automated and staff-handled channels above (roughly 7,800 self-served contacts versus ~2,560 staff-handled inquiries per year).

Context: CICIC knowledge base

CICIC has built a governed, closed-domain knowledge base (KB) of approximately 75 content items (147 files), authored in English and French, organized by a defined taxonomy, and sensitivity-tiered:

- **Tier 1 — public:** served on public/unauthenticated surfaces.
- **Tier 2 — authenticated:** served only to authenticated users.
- **Tier 3 — internal:** internal tools only; never served on a customer surface.

Each item carries a disposition (answer, refer, or escalate) and is linked to CICIC's escalation triggers, which route defined situations to human staff. The automation must host and serve this KB as a closed-domain retrieval corpus; it must not generate answers from the open web or general Large Language Model (LLM) knowledge. CICIC provides the KB, the taxonomy, the tiers, the escalation triggers, and the disclaimer wording; the Proponent provides the AI-enabled platform that serves them within these rules.

How to read the requirements

- **Priority (MoSCoW):**
  - M = must (mandatory);
  - S = should (important; weighted at evaluation);
  - C = could (desirable);
  - W = won't have (this time).
- **Channels:**
  - C = website chatbot
  - V = telephone callbot / voice
  - R = client relationship management (CRM) platform
  - A = automated email triage (mailbot pattern), if offered.
- A requirement applies to the channels indicated. A Proponent bidding on a subset of components need only meet the requirements for the channels bid. The "Verify" column points to the acceptance criteria (A.5).

Requirements (R1–R22)

ID	Requirement	Priority	Channels	Verify
R1	**Closed-domain retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) grounding.** Answers are generated solely from CICIC's KB by retrieval-augmented generation; no	**M**	C V R A	EV-04

	open-web browsing and no open-domain LLM generation.			
R2	**Inline citations and source attribution.** Every substantive answer identifies the KB item(s) it draws from (e.g., identifier and title, URL on text surfaces).	**M**	C R A	EV-04
R3	**AI-use disclosure and confidence-based fallback.** Each surface discloses that the user is interacting with an AI-enabled automated assistant and falls back to a human when confidence is low.	**M**	C V R A	EV-05
R4	**Role-based access control (RBAC) honouring Tiers 1/2/3.** Public/unauthenticated surfaces serve Tier 1 only; Tier 2 requires authentication; Tier 3 is internal only.	**M**	C V R A	EV-03
R5	**Escalation-to-human hooks.** Configurable hooks (e.g., email queue, callback) fire on CICIC's defined triggers and route to the CRM platform queue with a structured hand-off payload.	**M**	C V R A	EV-02
R6	**Bilingual English and French language parity.** Equivalent quality in text and voice, including a Canadian pronunciation register for voice.	**M**	C V R A	EV-01
R7	**Canadian data residency or on-premises / private deployment.** Preferred and weighted at evaluation; not a pass/fail requirement.	**S**	C V R	PIA / data-flow review
R8	**Accessibility — Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA (CAN/ASC-EN 301 549).** Meets WCAG 2.1 AA now, with a documented path to 2.2 AA; Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) per surface.	**M**	C V R	EV-08
R9	**Audit logging and exportable records.** Complete interaction logs, exportable in CSV / JSON file format.	**M**	C V R A	EV-09
R10	**Protection of personal information and compliance with applicable privacy legislation.** Provide a Data Processing Agreement (DPA), disclosure of subprocessors, and evidence of information security controls (SOC 2 Type II or ISO 27001 certification; ISO 42001 considered an asset).	**M**	C V R A	PIA / due diligence
R11	**Data portability with no lock-in.** Exportable configuration and data; one-year initial term.	**M**	C V R A	Contract
R12	**Immediate content updates without retraining.** Grounding, not fine-tuning; KB edits take effect at the next retrieval.	**M**	C V R A	EV-04

R13	**Human-in-the-loop before any external send.** No unreviewed AI-drafted external communication leaves the system.	**M**	C V A	EV-02
R14	**Confidence and sentiment detection.** Exposed and threshold-tunable (proceed ≥ 90% / clarify 75–89% / escalate < 75%; loop limits).	**S**	C V	EV-05
R15	**Tagged transcript and conversation logging.** Each interaction is logged to the CRM platform tagged with inquiry category, taxonomy node, and trigger ID.	**M**	C V A	EV-09
R16	**Personal information minimization, protection, and redaction.** Support the minimization and redaction of personal information; must not use the Corporation of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CCMEC) data to train foundation models or other AI systems without CCMEC's explicit authorization; must provide configurable data retention and secure deletion capabilities.	**M**	C V R A	EV-06
R17	**Deterministic voice flows.** Verbatim spoken blocks for regulated moments (identification, disclosure, disclaimer, transfer, callback); no URLs read aloud; SIP / telephony integration (YoVu Office Phone if it continues to be used).	**M**	V	EV-07
R18	**Key Performance Indicator (KPI) instrumentation from day one.** Resolution rate, accuracy / citation sampling, escalation rate by trigger, and satisfaction capture.	**M**	C V R	EV-09
R19	**Service Level Agreement (SLA) including uptime, incident response, breach notification.** Defined service levels, including security-incident and breach-notification terms.	**S**	C V R A	Contract
R20	**Accessible voice channel.** Relay and Teletypewriter (TTY) compatibility and a callback alternative to holding on the line.	**S**	V	EV-08
R21	**Configurable disclaimers and branding.** CICIC's disclaimer set is insertable at the required placements; CICIC branding supported.	**M**	C V R A	EV-07
R22	**Security.** Encryption in transit and at rest; access controls; authentication integration for Tier 2 gating.	**M**	C V R A	EV-03

Compliance and security baseline

At submission, the Proponent must supply, for each component bid:

- a data-processing agreement (DPA);
- a subprocessor map, identifying hosting and inference locations;

- SOC 2 Type II or ISO 27001 evidence (ISO 42001 is an asset);
- a Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) for each public-facing surface; and
- written Canadian data-residency terms, where applicable.

Any transfer of personal information outside Canada must be documented as per domestic legislation on cross-border assessment (part of CICIC's Privacy Impact Assessment). No CCMEC or customer data may be used to train vendor models.

The accessibility benchmark is CAN/ASC-EN 301 549. The Proponent must meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA now, with a documented path to WCAG 2.2 AA, provide a VPAT per surface, and provide voice-channel accessibility (relay compatibility and a callback alternative to holding). This will be CICIC's first accessibility audit for these new public-facing solutions.

Acceptance criteria

Each criterion is a pre-launch acceptance test. Probe sets are finalized during implementation and thresholds tuned on pilot evidence. EV-03 (Role-Based Access Control boundary) is a hard launch gate and must pass before any public launch.

ID	Criterion	Method	Pass condition
EV-01	**Bilingual quality**	20 inquiries (10 English / 10 French) drawn from CICIC's KB, run as the vendor's grounding corpus.	≥ 95% grounded with correct citation; French language parity with English (no quality gap).
EV-02	**Trigger coverage**	At least one probe per defined escalation trigger.	Correct outcome and destination; complete hand-off payload.
EV-03	**Role-Based Access Control (RBAC) boundary (hard launch gate)**	Unauthenticated request for Tier 2 content; attempted Tier 3 retrieval on a customer surface.	Refused every time; no Tier 2/3 leakage. Must pass before any public launch.
EV-04	**Grounding fidelity**	Sample answers traced to KB items.	No uncited substantive claims; no open-domain content; no draft or unvalidated items served.
EV-05	**Confidence fallback**	Below-threshold and ambiguous intents; loop scenarios.	Clarifies once (two maximum), then escalates; loops are caught.
EV-06	**Personal information minimization**	Attempt to volunteer and submit personal information.	Surface does not solicit personal information; redacts on ingress; does not adjudicate submitted documents.

EV-07	**Voice determinism and disclaimers**	Call-flow walkthrough.	Regulated blocks are verbatim; no URLs read aloud; required disclaimers present.
EV-08	**Accessibility**	Automated and manual WCAG 2.1 AA; VPAT review; voice relay check.	Meets 2.1 AA; VPAT on file; documented path to 2.2.
EV-09	**Instrumentation**	Confirm KPI capture live.	Resolution, accuracy sampling, escalation-by-trigger, and satisfaction captured from day one.