# Stakeholder Interview Guide Template

## Instructions

Use this interview guide template as a starting point to populate protocols and questions for key stakeholders you’ll engage with in your agency.

We’ve populated a few sample templates to help you get started. This resource can be used in conjunction with the Stakeholder Interests Template to help you prepare for interviews with stakeholders. Keep in mind that stakeholder interests and concerns vary widely depending on the type of procurement, what is common practice in your agency, what you may be asking the agency to do, and the stage in the acquisition lifecycle.

As you continue to grow and learn more about digital services acquisition, you can use your experiences to add to and refine these resources so they continue to be useful in future projects.

## Sample Template 1

**Stakeholder Group:** Digital Services Acquisition Partnership

**Stakeholder Positions:** Product Owner, COR, Digital Services Team

**When to Engage:** From Pre-Award Requirements/Goal Definition (and throughout the process)

**Key Considerations:** Describe the purpose and outcomes of the interview (e.g., gain an initial understanding of the digital service initiative needs, goals, and requirements that will drive the acquisition strategy, market research, and plans.) Assume you are a member of the team and gathering information to do a good job in your role on the team.

**Pre-Award Questions to Ask:**

1. Please describe what you are trying to accomplish in your digital services initiative/product/service. How was it initiated and funded? Where did the impetus come from? Is there an executive sponsor?
2. What kind of customer or user research and data gathering have you done? Can I have access to that and engage with you on it?
   1. Who are the customers/users?
   2. What is their context? Needs? Desires? Uses or application for the digital services product or service?
   3. How do the goals of your initiative and your backlog align with these needs?
3. Why do you need a contractor or product provider to support this work?
4. Have you explored other options in getting this work done (or products/services we may already have available) – detailees, existing agency contractors with scope and ceiling on their contracts that fit this need, interns, etc.? Would you like any assistance exploring these options?
5. Do you have clear requirements or goals you are looking to accomplish with the contractor/product or service? Are there any ambiguities or nuances in these requirements or goals?
6. Where does the contractor/product or service fit in? What are you looking for the contractor/product or service to be able to do and for how long?
7. What are important characteristics of the contractor/product or service you are looking for? What kind of experience or track record? What talents, expertise, skills, and proficiency does the contractor need to have?
8. How will they best support what you are trying to accomplish?
9. What amount of funding, kind of funding, and budget timing is available for this work?
10. Who are the other players, inside and outside the agency, interested in this work?
11. Are there other considerations we need to be aware of?
12. Do you know firms or categories of firms, or existing products or services that may be suitable for this kind of work?
13. What is your timeline and/or release schedule?
14. How can I best help you get the job done?

## Sample Template 2

**Stakeholder Group:** Acquisition Stakeholders

**Stakeholder Positions:** Acquisition Policy Office, Senior Procurement Executive (SPE), Head Contracting Authority (HCA), Procurement Operations

**When to Engage:** From Pre-Award (and throughout the process depending on complexity, size, timeline and how out-of-the-ordinary your acquisition strategy and procurement approach may be)

**Key Considerations:** Describe the purpose and outcomes of the interview (e.g., understand the process for gaining management approval for an unusual acquisition strategy and plan for your digital services procurement). Arm yourself with the appropriate references to the FAR, the TechFAR, and agency policy that demonstrate how your procurement plans fit well within the regulatory/policy framework. Do your research on whether and how these players have been involved in OFPP initiatives regarding digital services acquisition, category management, and overall acquisition transformation. As much as possible, identify precedents that are the same as or similar to your digital services acquisition strategy and plan at your agency or an agency your stakeholders work with often and respect. Take a somewhat deferential attitude, be clear, to the point, and stick to the facts.

**Pre-Award Questions to Ask:**

*[Briefly describe what you are trying to accomplish, the benefits to the agency mission, and how the digital services initiative will help meet constituent or administration objectives. Let them know you are looking for their best advice and counsel on navigating your procurement through the agency processes for suitability, risk, and compliance. Describe background of OFPP’s support for digital services procurement.]*

1. What general advice do you have on the steps I should take to reduce the likelihood that my acquisition strategy and plans will raise concerns during our regular policy, compliance, and risk reviews? Other than making sure it adheres to our policy templates, is there anything that comes to mind so that I can avoid delaying or re-doing my acquisition strategy as my procurement goes through our review process?
2. What risk factors do you look at? What raises “red flags” for you? What will raise red flags during higher level reviews?
3. What regulatory or policy factors or characteristics do you look at? What raises red flags in this area?
4. Would you be willing to look through my acquisition strategy and plan for any of those red flags prior to my going in front of the Contract Review Board?
5. Are there any conditions in which you streamline our review and oversight processes so that they can go faster?
6. My procurement is a little different from common agency practice *[describe how]* but fits well within the FAR and our policies. Is there anything in my description that raises issues or challenges for you?
7. Is there anything I am not thinking of that I should be concerned with as I move forward with my strategy and plan for this procurement?

## Sample Template 3

**Stakeholder Group:** Advocates, Influencers

**Stakeholder Positions:** Related Category Manager(s), Other Agency Leaders

**When to Engage:** From Pre-Award Acquisition Strategy and Plan (and throughout the process if needed)

**Key Considerations:** Familiarize yourself with the various government-wide categories under category management and which one best matches the market you are in for your digital services procurement. Go onto the Acquisition Gateway prior to the interview to the resources and tools available in the Hallway(s) associated with this category and prepare additional questions on the basis of this understanding. Describe the purpose and outcomes of the interview (e.g., gain an initial understanding of how a category manager within the agency or government-wide can help identify market research, vehicles, evaluation, and contracting options that suit your digital services project needs and requirements).

**Pre-Award Questions to Ask:**

1. Are you familiar with any other current or past procurements agencies have done that are similar to mine? (assuming you could not find any on the Gateway or through the Federal Procurement Data System – Next Generation [FPDS-NG])
2. We are looking for contractors, products or services to fill this need. *[Briefly describe need].*  What are some market trends in this area? Who are the suppliers currently serving this part of the market?
3. Are there innovators, replacement services, or market disruptors entering this part of the market? What are you hearing about them? What are the risks of making them aware of this procurement?
4. Are there GWACs, BPAs, or IDIQs from other agencies that fit the scope of what I am trying to do?
5. Are there share services providers inside or outside government that fit the scope of what I am trying to do?
6. Are there strategic sourcing initiatives in agencies I can leverage that fit the scope of what I am trying to do?
7. Are there other ways you can help me find the set of contractors, products or services that will perform at the right price and deliver for us?
8. What advice do you have for me as I move forward with this procurement?