JAB PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA AND GUIDANCE

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FedRAMP

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06/29/2017	1.0	All	Initial document creation	FedRAMP PMO
06/14/2018	2.0	All	Added criteria information from other document and updated content on JAB prioritization process	FedRAMP PMO

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1.   GUIDANCE ON THE JAB PRIORITIZATON PROCESS

The FedRAMP Program Management Office (PMO) invests heavily into creating a broad marketplace of Cloud Service Offerings (CSOs) to help meet government wide mission needs. However, as a statically funded PMO we have limited resources to conduct Joint Authorization Board (JAB) authorizations, and rely on Agencies (currently almost 70% of approved vendors) to provide a scalable way to balance additional demand. In order to select the most impactful vendors for a JAB authorization, FedRAMP worked with the JAB, OMB, and the CIO Council to create criteria in order to fairly and consistently select CSOs to prioritize for JAB Provisional Authorizations (P-ATO).

The prioritization criteria focuses first on demand as the most important criteria and a go/no-go decision point for working with the JAB. Second, the criteria places heavy preference on vendors who have demonstrated the ability to achieve a JAB P-ATO through being deemed FedRAMP Ready. Finally, there is a selection of preferential criteria that would be considered if demand and FedRAMP Ready status did not provide a clear prioritization of vendors.

Based on evaluations of level of effort and current resourcing and funding levels, FedRAMP has set the number of CSOs to be prioritized at 12 per year. FedRAMP Connect is the process facilitated by the FedRAMP PMO by which CSPs are evaluated against the prioritization criteria and recommended to the JAB and CIO Council to work toward a JAB P-ATO. In order to reduce the time between CSPs being prioritized and kicking-off with the JAB, the FedRAMP PMO aims to prioritize three (3) CSPs each quarter. *As part of the prioritization decision, CSPs are required to become FedRAMP Ready within 60-days of being prioritized and must be able to kick-off with the JAB within 90-days.*

In order to streamline the FedRAMP Connect process, CSPs interested in working with the JAB are required to submit a "Business Case" to info@fedramp.gov comprised of a simple PDF form and excel worksheet gathering demand information. This Business Case submission provides a normalized view for comparison of CSOs and allows prioritization to be conducted in a consistent and fair manner. The FedRAMP PMO will collect Business Cases on a rolling basis and will have cut off dates for each quarter's prioritization decision. FedRAMP will share upcoming due dates on our JAB Authorization webpage and will provide reminder communications through our blog and listserv (sign-up here). **Before a CSP begins to pursue JAB prioritization and complete their Business Case, the PMO encourages them to review this document in its entirety.** Please reach out to info@fedramp.gov if you have any questions on the process or would like to have a one-on-one coaching call with the PMO prior to submission of your Business Case.

2.   JAB PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA

The prioritization criteria provides the benchmarks and characteristics by which Cloud Service Providers (CSPs) are evaluated and chosen to work with the JAB toward a P-ATO. The prioritization criteria consists of three categories: Demand, FedRAMP Ready, and Preferred Characteristics.

2.1. Demand for CSP Product

Demand is a go / no-go criteria for prioritization and a CSP is required to provide verification of current or potential demand from the equivalent of six (6) customers. There are multiple ways for a CSP to prove demand for their CSO, however CSPs are not expected to meet all demand categories. These categories of demand were selected to ensure that the CSPs' product will be used by a critical mass of Government Agencies so the JAB can most efficiently utilize its resources.

DEMAND CATEGORY	MEASURE OF DEMAND
Current Agency Use	Existing unique Federal Agency customers
Indirect Demand	CSP to provide evidence of FedRAMP authorized cloud services that use the service and the number of FedRAMP ATOs issued for that FedRAMP CSO
Potential Agency Use	CSP to provide justification for projected adoption within 12 months of ATO. Examples of how a CSP could provide justification include (but are not limited to): ▪ Federal customers using your on premise or commercial version that are interested in moving to your CSO or government version ▪ Government RFIs, RFQs, RFPs, and pending awards ▪ Business capture plan provided by CSP grounded by Agency needs and spend ▪ Use by State, Local, Tribal, or Territorial Governments ▪ Use by Federally Funded Research Centers (FFRDCs) and Labs
OMB Policy / Priorities / Shared Services	Defined by administrative priorities for cross-Agency services. Examples of OMB Policy, Priorities, and Shared Services could include (but are not limited to): ▪ Alignment with National strategy and policies ▪ CSP provides a new solution to existing Federal requirements (such as CDM or HSPD-12) ▪ CSP provides a solution for existing Federal mandates where there are large areas of Agency deficiencies
Agency Defined Demand	Annual CIO Council Survey or Agency Advisory Group selected by CIO Council
	Official requests by Agencies to the FedRAMP Program Management Office (PMO)

2.2. FedRAMP Ready

FedRAMP Ready is a designation received by CSPs that have had a 3PAO perform a Readiness Assessment and have proven their Readiness Capabilities. The Readiness Assessment serves as an initial risk assessment and determines whether a cloud system is secure and if it can meet the FedRAMP

security requirements. *Although it is not required that a CSP be deemed FedRAMP Ready to apply for a JAB Authorization, it is a heavily weighted criterion in our prioritization.* Additionally, if a CSP is prioritized, they must be deemed FedRAMP Ready within 60 days of the prioritization. Before a CSP is officially prioritized, the FedRAMP PMO will meet with their security team to ensure they would be able to achieve a FedRAMP Ready designation within this time frame.

2.3. Preferred Characteristics

These criteria are not mandatory for prioritization but are preferred characteristics by the JAB for Government-wide solutions and will be evaluated when the demand and FedRAMP Ready criteria do not provide a clear prioritization decision.

The preferred characteristics were chosen because solutions with these criteria meet at least one of the following factors.

1. Designed for the Government

2. Demonstrate a proven track record of managed risk and secure implementations

3. Provide heightened security, presenting less risk for the Federal information

4. Meet Government needs

PREFERENCES	RATIONALE
Government Only Cloud	Demonstrates that the CSP has a cloud environment designed specifically to meet Government requirements. Additionally, Government only presents less risk to Government customers.
Other Certifications (SOC2, ISO27001, PCI)	Demonstrates that the CSP has been assessed for security in other compliance regimes proving a track record of security compliance.
High Impact > Moderate Impact > Low Impact	High impact solutions have the greatest return on investment for security and cost for IT modernization across the Government.
New and Innovative with Demonstrable ROI for Government	Demonstrates that the CSP product meets the mission needs of Government Agencies. The JAB defines ROI as reducing risk, saving cost, and/or addressing political considerations.
Proven Maturity (CMMI Level 3+, ISO Organizational Certifications)	Demonstrates that the CSP has a proven track record of mature organizational processes that increases the likelihood that the CSP will be able to maintain an acceptable risk posture.

PREFERENCES	RATIONALE
Prior Experience with Federal Security Authorizations (e.g. use of a 3PAO in "consulting" capacity, other systems owned by the CSP with existing FISMA ATOs)	Demonstrates that the CSP has resources that are experienced with FISMA and FedRAMP, which increases the CSPs likelihood of success.
Dependencies from other cloud service offerings (e.g. IaaS that hosts other SaaS solutions with demand from the Government)	Demonstrates that the CSP product will provide an underlying service that other CSP products can leverage that meets the needs of the Government.

3. THE FEDRAMP BUSINESS CASE:

To ensure the evaluation of CSPs is as fair and accurate as possible, the FedRAMP PMO has provided the below guidance on what CSPs must provide as their FedRAMP Business Case. Please review these requirements in its entirety before you begin your submission.

Vendors will need to submit two components to have a complete Business Case submission: 1) FedRAMP Business Case for JAB Prioritization Information Form and 2) Proof of Demand Worksheet. CSPs also have the option of submitting a collection of written proof of potential demand (i.e. demand verification letters or communications).

3.1. JAB Prioritization Information Form

CSPs will need to fill out a simple PDF form that gathers basic information about the CSO being submitted for JAB prioritization. The form will require mostly multiple choice and short answers and will gather some of the information outlined in the JAB P-ATO Prioritization Criteria.

The Business Case form will also require CSPs to provide a brief service description. This description should provide evaluators with an understanding of the value of the CSO to the Federal Government. Questions this write-up should address include:

 How does an Agency use and experience your offering?

- You should think about the customer journey of using your system - think of an Agency employee logging into your system and achieving some action or helping them deliver on their Agency's mission.

How is your CSO broadly applicable across the Federal Government?

- For example, how could Agencies with vastly different missions all use your service - from National Institutes of Health to the Department of Energy to Census?

Does your CSO provide a new and innovative service?

- This doesn't mean simply modernizing, but creating a new ability that an Agency or customer doesn't have currently.

Why should the JAB authorize your service over similar offerings?

- What makes your service offering have enough demand to be considered a truly government-wide offering?

3.2. Proof of Demand Worksheet

In order to accurately evaluate demand, the FedRAMP PMO has developed an underline excel worksheet for CSPs to complete in order to show proof of current Federal customers, indirect customers, State, Local, Tribal, etc. customers, and potential demand via RFIs, RFPs, and RFQs. Information gathered in this worksheet includes:

3.2.1.   Current Federal Customers

In order to gather information on what Federal Agencies are currently using the vendor's service, the FedRAMP PMO developed an excel worksheet for CSPs to complete in order to show proof of current demand. This list should NOT include all customers of the CSP. For example, if an Agency is using an on premise version of your offering, or is using another offering, then they are not considered current demand in this category. Similarly, if an Agency is using a commercial version of your offering, but you are proposing a government version of your offering for this ATO, this would not be a current customer.

Information gathered in this worksheet includes:

- Federal Customer Name (i.e. Health and Human Service)
- Customer Point of Contact Information
- Government Contract Number
- Period of Performance
- ATO status

3.2.2.   Indirect Customers

In order to accurately evaluate demand from indirect customers, the FedRAMP PMO requires information on what FedRAMP authorized cloud services use your service (i.e. external services). The FedRAMP PMO has developed an excel worksheet for CSPs to complete in order to show proof of indirect demand. Information gathered in this worksheet includes:

- Name of the FedRAMP-Authorized CSP Customer Using your Service
- Point of Contact Information for the FedRAMP CSO
- FedRAMP Package ID Number for FedRAMP CSO
- Number of FedRAMP ATOs issued for the FedRAMP CSO

The FedRAMP PMO will use the above information to validate demand via the referenced CSOs' System Architecture Diagrams. This list should NOT include resellers, CSOs that use your service having only the FedRAMP Ready designation, or CSOs that use your service that are not FedRAMP Authorized.

3.2.3. Current State, Local, Tribal, Territorial, Federally Funding Research Centers, or Lab Customers

As part of evaluating potential demand, the FedRAMP PMO requires validation of what non-Federal government bodies are using your service. If your CSO has current customers in the above categories, the FedRAMP PMO considers this proof of potential demand in the Federal Government. CSPs with these customers may complete this worksheet to provide the following information:

- Customer Name (i.e. Maryland Department of Transportation)
- Customer Point of Contact Information
- Contract Number
- Period of Performance.

3.2.4. Federal Agencies' RFIs, RFPs, and RFQs

An additional way of showing proof of potential demand from the Federal Government, is providing information on what Federal Agencies have issued an RFI, RFP, or RFQ in the last 18 months that relates to your service offering. CSPs that have responded to any of these requests may complete this worksheet to provide the following information:

- Federal Agency Name
- Name of RFI, RFP, or RFQ
- RFI, RFP, or RFQ Number
- Contract Point of Contact
- Submission Date

The FedRAMP PMO reserves the right to request a copy of the RFI, RFP, or RFQ submission for validation purposes.

3.3. Potential Demand Validation Letters/Communications (Optional)

CSPs also have the option of providing a single PDF of letters/communications that provide proof of potential demand from new Federal customers or current Federal customers interested in moving to

your cloud version or government instance. The FedRAMP PMO has developed sample demand verification letters for CSPs to use (see Appendix A), but any communication showing proof of demand will be accepted. CSPs and Agencies should note that a demand verification letter or communication from an Agency representative expressing interest in a CSO does not indicate a commitment to procure the CSP's service, but it does verify that the Agency is potentially interested in the cloud offering being proposed for a JAB P-ATO.

The FedRAMP PMO defines these potential customers as follows:

1. **Federal Agencies that are actively interested in using your CSO:** This includes Federal Agencies that have continuously been in contact with you about using your CSO and/or are currently piloting or doing a trial run of your product. This does not include Agencies you have only cold called or met at a conference.

2. **Proof of interest from current Federal Agency customers using an on premise version or commercial version of the CSO you're are proposing to be authorized by the JAB:** If you have an on premise version or commercial version of the CSO you are proposing for a JAB P-ATO, a Federal Agency representative can provide a letter or communication expressing their interest in moving to the cloud or government-only version of the offering you are proposing.

This optional component of the Business Case should be consolidated into one PDF and submitted with the other elements of the Business Case. However, if your customer point of contact would prefer to email the PMO directly, they are welcome to directly submit their proof of demand to info@fedramp.gov with the subject line: Demand Verification for [CSO].

4. BUSINESS CASE EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

4.1. Evaluation of the Criteria

The FedRAMP PMO's initial down-selection of CSPs is based on Demand and FedRAMP Ready status. The relative value of the criteria is: Demand from current Federal customers is more valuable than demand from non-Federal customers and potential customers; demand is more important than a CSP being FedRAMP Ready. When Business Cases are evaluated and considered equal in Demand and FedRAMP Ready status, the JAB Preferences will become a major consideration in selecting the successful vendors.

4.2. Demand Scoring Rubric

Below are the relative values for each validated proof of demand a CSP can provide:

- Current Demand = 1

- Indirect Demand = .5

- Potential Demand = .25

In order for a CSP to pass the demand go / no-go criteria for prioritization, a CSP is required to provide verification of current, indirect, and/or potential demand from the equivalent of six customers.

4.3. Evaluation Phases

In order to be prioritized to work with the JAB toward a P-ATO, vendors must go through three stages of evaluation.

4.3.1. Phase One: Down Select

- The FedRAMP PMO evaluates all of the Business Cases and may conducs calls with any CSPs that we need further information or clarification from.
- The FedRAMP PMO presents to the JAB our scoring analysis and recommendation for down selection based on Demand and FedRAMP Ready status.
- The JAB reviews the recommendation and makes changes or additions based on their experience and insight at their Agencies.

4.3.2. Phase Two: JAB Prioritization Criteria Validation

- Selected CSPs from Phase One present to representatives from the PMO and the JAB on their FedRAMP Ready status, or ability to become FedRAMP Ready, and other preferential criteria.
- PMO and JAB evaluate the CSP's qualifications for the JAB.
- **OPTIONAL:** The FedRAMP PMO holds an event with the CIO Council and JAB representatives for the CSPs to present their Business Case, if needed.

4.3.3. Phase Three: Final Selection

- The FedRAMP PMO consolidates the evaluations and presents a recommendation to the JAB and CIO Council.
- The JAB reviews recommendation and makes a final determination for the prioritized vendors.

APPENDIX A   EXAMPLE DEMAND VERIFICATION LETTERS

Example Demand Verification Letter for the FedRAMP JAB P-ATO Prioritization Process

Current On Premise or Commercial Customers

This letter is to be completed by current customers of [Cloud Service Provider's (CSP) Name] to provide proof of current use for their on premise or commercial cloud service, [Service Offering Name], and express interest in potentially moving to [CSP Name] cloud service, [Cloud Service Offering (CSO) Name] if they were to receive a JAB P-ATO.

Customer Point of Contact Information:

Agency: _____

Agency Representative Name: _____

Title: _____

E-mail: _____

Telephone: _____

Dear FedRAMP PMO and JAB,

[Name of Customer Organization] is currently using [CSP's Name] [on premise or commercial] service, [Service Offering Name]. We have been using [Service Offering Name] for [Period of Performance] and plan to continue using this service until [Date]. If [CSP's Name] was to receive a JAB P-ATO from FedRAMP for the [cloud or government-only] version of the offering we are currently using, we would be interested in moving to this new CSO.

I understand that this letter **does not** bind my organization in any way to move to [CSP's Name] cloud or government-only offering and is merely a demonstration of active interest in [CSP's Name] cloud service offering and a potential move if it was to receive a JAB P-ATO.

Best,

_____
Signature

Example Demand Verification Letter for the FedRAMP JAB P-ATO Prioritization Process

Potential Cloud Customers

This letter is to be completed by potential customers of [Cloud Service Provider's (CSP) Name] to provide proof of potential demand for their Cloud Service Offering (CSO), [CSO Name]. This letter should be completed by Federal Agencies that have been in contact with the CSP about using their CSO and/or are currently piloting or doing a trial run of the product.

Customer Point of Contact Information:

Agency: _____

Agency Representative Name: _____

Title: _____

E-mail: _____

Telephone: _____

Dear FedRAMP PMO and JAB,

[Name of Customer Organization] is actively interested in using [CSP's Name] CSO, [CSO Name] and would consider procuring their services if the CSO was to obtain a JAB P-ATO.

[Insert content that details your current communications or work with CSP.]

I understand that this letter **does not** bind my organization in any way to procure [CSP's Name] CSO and is merely a demonstration of active interest in [CSP's Name] service and a potential procurement if the CSO was to receive a JAB P-ATO.

Best,

_____
Signature