Electronic Records Management (ERM)

Acquisition Working Group

This working group is an industry and inter-agency collaboration dedicated to improving the buying experience of ERM solutions. The group is currently working to identify best practices for overcoming common challenges across typical phases of an ERM procurement. [Click here for more info,](#) and email recordsmanagement@gsa.gov to join.

Market Research and RFI Best Practices for ERM Acquisition

Phases 3 & 4 of ERM Acquisition Working Group's Mock Procurement

August 2023

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Challenges Unique to ERM

Market Research Challenges

Market Research definition for this resource: How to find capable vendors to meet an agency's needs/technical requirements.

- ERM often impacts multiple departments within a single agency. Open communications and participation from all stakeholders will help to eliminate surprises as the planning process evolves
  - Involve IT from the beginning! Not just program office
    - IT Architecture, IT Security, OCIO office stakeholders
    - CDO
    - Policy
    - Office of Privacy
    - SAORM (not necessarily tied in at beginning, but their approval comes afterwards)
  - Contracting (COs, CORs)
  - Records Officers
  - For capstone users, need to include mobility team. (If ERM is all-encompassing.. Capstone includes text messages.)
  - Clearly identify the agency need, and how ERM is beneficial to stakeholders (refer to Phase 1 regarding Buy-in
- Establish a nomenclature so everyone is on the same page. E.g., so when office of privacy talks with SAORM about ERM they are speaking the same language.
  - Be mindful of a term's intended scope. For example, some terms may apply to Permanent Records, but not apply to Temporary recs.
  - Can use NARA's glossary of terms as a starting point: https://www.archives.gov/files/records-mgmt/rm-glossary-of-terms.pdf
  - For digitization terms, see NARA's digitization regs:
    - 36 CFR 1236 Subpart D, Regulations on Digitizing Temporary Records
    - 36 CFR 1236 Subpart E, Regulations for Digitizing Permanent Records
    - NARA's Digitization of Federal Records Webpage for additional reference
- Getting on the same page about the real scope of your ERM requirements.
  - Understanding the total portfolio of systems and processes that create and house records (see Phase 2 needs assessment), e.g. Microsoft Teams creates
  - Understanding that day forward approaches are different than the backfile approaches. Two different perspectives for how to approach different aspects of ERM. Be clear about the scope of your ERM need. Is this only a day forward requirement, or is backfile part of this (see Phase 2 needs assessment)

- - ○ Financial/funding aspect: May be more feasible to break down the ERM requirement into separate phases. Example: Phase 1 Day Forward; Phase 2 Backfile
    - ○ Enterprise-wide, just specific program offices, pilot first then expansion after, etc. etc.
  - Understanding the projected growth of volume of records at your organization

RFI Challenges
- Industry perspective
  - ○ What is the purpose of your RFI?
  - ○ RFI's not specific enough, so yields responses from industry as all "yes" answers, so does not differentiate vendors capabilities.
  - ○ Itemization and comparison rather than narrative based
  - ○ Important for the RFI to ask vendors to provide a ROM so the agency can confirm they have (or ask for) the proper funding.
  - ○ Format: Questionnaire vs SOW. Which is better?
  - ○ Helpful to separate legacy document scanning or digital media conversion services from the ERM software solution requirements
- Government perspective
  - ○ Scope isn't clear at RFI stage
  - ○ Not having the right stakeholders in the loop in order to develop questions/ technical questions

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Questions Agencies Should Ask Themselves Before Drafting Their RFI

Best Practice: Agencies to provide key information in draft ERM requirements document in order to provide industry with enough context to answer the questions in your RFI. Taking the time to gather and provide this additional context will yield more useful responses from ERM vendors!

ERM Questions
1. What is the history of the Agency and how does Records Management play a part in that mission?
2. What is the business driver of the records management initiative:
   a. M-19-21/M-23-07 compliance
   b. Agency consolidation/footprint
   c. FOIA/Lawsuit avoidance
   d. Streamlined access to Agency information to provide better internal search as well as customer service to constituents

3. Does your Agency have a NARA approved RM Plan and/or RIM plan? If not, when will that be completed?
    a. Do you want assistance to finalize your RM/Information Governance Plan?
4. Does your agency have analog records?
    a. Volume of records by type (paper, fiche, film, audio, etc)
    b. Do all the records reside within HQ or are some located in offices across the country (or
    c. world)? If so, discuss.
    d. Is there an electronic records inventory? If yes, in what system?
5. Has your Agency identified the volume and source of all records to be ingested and managed for the solicitation?
    a. Source or electronic record
    b. Volume of records within each source (e.g., Service Now, Share drives, File shares, legacy applications, etc.)
    c. Do all the records reside within HQ or are some located in offices across the country (or world)? If so, discuss.
6. Has your agency performed an exercise to identify redundant, outdated and trivial (ROT) records? If not, would you like assistance before ingesting into the ERM?
    a. Answer for analog records
    b. Answer for electronic records
7. Has the Agency determined cloud hosting requirements:
    a. Does the solution need to be a Saas solution?
    b. Does the solution need to be located in either AWS, MS, Google or vendor cloud?
    c. Does the Agency have an ATO or gov cloud instance that the vendor solution can upload and deploy their app to?
    d. If yes to any answers from above, what are the security requirements
        i. Commercial cloud
        ii. Gov cloud
        iii. FedRAMP moderate, high, etc.
    e. Will the Agency be willing to sponsor the vendor for an ATO of one doesn't exist?
8. Has your agency already implemented an electronic retention governance and repository for emails?
    a. If yes, provide some specifics
    b. Do you plan to ingest emails into the new ERMS or track them separately?
9. If your agency has an existing ERM system(s), do you plan to maintain it (them) or convert to new solution?
10. If your agency has multiple records management systems, do you plan to centralize it going forward?

11. Are there any security considerations or accreditations needs for the company or employees.
12. Has a business classification been determined (SB, LB, SWOB, SDVOSM, HUBZone, etc.)?
13. Has the agency considered working with vendors to fund an analysis/pilot with same content as part of a validation process? If so, what is that budget and timeframe?
14. Has funding been provided for the project? If not, will the ROM that results from this effort create the budget for a FY____ purchase. If not, what information do you need in order to develop a budget?   Can industry help?
15. Has the Agency identified a target number of FTE's or professional services are expected or would the Agency like the vendor to propose?
16. Has a draft SOW been developed?
17. Has a committee been established within the Agency including members of the contract staff, OCIO, security/cloud staff, etc.?
18. Would the Agency require the same winning team to help implement a records digitization solution as a contract option down the road?
19. What type of contract do you anticipate awarding, IDIQ, BPA, T&M, Firm-Fixed Price?
20. Is the initial term of the contract one-year with 4 one-year options?

Digitization questions
1. What type of information needs to be digitized? (E.g., financial records, employee records, case notes, etc.)
2. What type of media needs to be digitized? Paper office documents (8.5" X 11" up to 11" X 17"), oversize maps/drawings, bound books, microforms, audio tapes, video cassettes, photographic media."
   a. What type of records — Temporary or Permanent?
   b. What is the estimated amount of each type of record?
3. What is the size and scale of the project, i.e. how many boxes of documents, how many file cabinet drawers, how many file shelves, etc.?
4. What is the estimated number of files (not individual sheets of paper, rather how many ?
5. How do you want the documents indexed, i.e. by last name, first name, by date, by account number, etc.?
6. What type of file do you want the resulting data, i.e. PDF, TIFF, JPEG, etc.?

Document Management questions
1. How do you want to host and/or access your digitized files, i.e. SharePoint, Document Management System, etc.?
2. How many individuals need to access the digitized files?
3. How will you manage the capture of "day forward" paper documents and emails?

4.   Do you require Cloud, On Premise, or a hybrid document management system?

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Example RFI Questions

Tip from Industry: Allow ample time for responses – 3 to 4 weeks if possible

General

1. Is there any aspect of this requirement that may limit or restrict your ability to bid?
2. Are there other considerations for the ERM solution that have not been covered that the Government should be aware of when evaluating, selecting, deploying, and operating the solution?
3. What are the common risks and issues encountered when implementing the ERM solution?
4. What technical information does the Government need to provide to support accurate proposals (e.g., cost, performance, schedule) for any future solicitations?
5. Do you currently have all the labor categories that would satisfy the requirement awarded on your contract price list?
6. If any required products or services are not currently on your contract, are you willing to modify your contract to add those line items?
7. Would your company require subcontractors to satisfy all of the requirements?
8. Does your company have a [SECRET / TOP SECRET] facility clearance?
   a. How many cleared records management personnel does your company have (public trust, Secret and Top Secret)?
9. Identify which NAICS code(s) your company would use to best satisfy the scope of this specific requirement (if different from your primary NAICS code of operation).
10. What contract type do you recommend (T&M, FUP, FFP), and why?
11. Based on the scope, recommend the contract period of performance.
12. Ask for a Rough Order Magnitude (ROM) for budgeting purposes (refer to ROM section below)

Technical Capabilities

Assumption: This assumes your RFI includes a copy of a draft requirements document like a Statement of Work (SOW) or Statement of Objectives (SOO).

1. If your proposal includes a Cloud Service Offering (CSO), does it have a FedRAMP authorization? [No, LI-SaaS, Low, Moderate, High]
2. If software is included in your proposal, are there any software-infrastructure dependencies or specialized integration software required for the installation / deployment of the ERM Solution (e.g., Operating System)?
3. How many years of experience does your company have providing federal ERM services support?
4. Please estimate what percentage of your company's annual revenues are derived from contracts for federal Electronic Records Management (ERM) services support [vendor selects from percentage range list]
5. Is your company currently providing federal ERM services support to federal agencies? [if yes, list agencies and points of contact]
6. Has your company provided federal ERM services support to federal government agencies within the past 3 years? [if yes, list agencies and points of contact]
7. Describe your company's experience implementing a solution compliant with National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) universal ERM requirements
8. Provide your company's methodology and tools to convert records from legacy system(s) to new solution.
9. Does your company maintain in-house staff with pertinent certifications, training or qualifications to provide federal ERM services support?
10. Based on the draft SOO, what additional information must be included in a solicitation to enable the preparation of a competitive price proposal?
11. Based on the draft SOO and industry standard practice, what are the primary cost drivers that must be factored into a competitive price proposal?
12. Based on industry standard practice, what are the attributes and capabilities that separate an average federal ERM solution from an exceptional solution?
13. Describe your company's management approach to ERM projects.
14. Based on the scope in the SOO, what would be the recommended implementation period.
15. Based on your understanding of the Government's requirement and the specific labor categories required to meet it, is there any labor category essential to the successful performance of the work (i.e. key personnel)? If yes, please identify the relevant labor categories
16. Would your company submit a proposal/quote for a Firm-Fixed-Price contract on a future solicitation for this requirement?

Rough Order Magnitude (ROM): Commonly Overlooked ERM Inputs

Note: This section highlights common inputs that get overlooked

ERM inputs
- List of existing ERMS solution(s) and if it is centralized or decentralized

- Is new ERM system in scope? If yes, cloud vs on premise and technology preference.
- Current inventory of permanent and temporary records by format type (paper, fiche, film, pdf, etc.). If this does not exist, is this in scope of the RFI.
- Current records classification level with volumes: PII, PIH, Secret, TS. Etc.
- Location of records
- Timeline for key tasks in proposed program scope
- Indicate if agency has performed a recent ROT (redundant, obsolete and trivial) exercise has been performed
- Email, text and social media records retention implementation (tools used)

Digitization inputs
- Supply volumes by record type (paper, fiche, film, pdf, etc.) in pages or documents with average pages per document
- Condition of records (provide dates of records by type)
- Do only permanent records need to meet NARA CFR FADGI levels
- Provide index and data capture requirements (how many fields with how many characters
- Provide where digital records and data will be stored. Vendors tool or agency application
- Accuracy levels with QC/QA percentages: Image and Data

Glossary
Note: this is a list of records management and digitization terms that get commonly misconstrued in requirements docs.

Please also refer to NARA's Glossary:
https://www.archives.gov/files/records-mgmt/rm-glossary-of-terms.pdf

Active Records: Records which are used in an office at least once per month.

Archives: An area utilized for storage of inactive records, manuscripts, papers, and memorabilia which are retained permanently for historical, legal, research, or social reasons. Also, the agency responsible for selecting, preserving, and making available non-current records with long-term value

Disposition:. The final state in a record's life cycle, involving either:

- destruction
- transfer to inactive storage with destruction at a specified later date

- transfer to the NARA for permanent preservation

Document: Recorded information regardless of form or medium.

Evidential Value: The usefulness of records as the primary or legal evidence of an organization's authority, functions, operations, transactions, and basic decisions and procedures.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act: Also known as FERPA or the Buckley Amendment. The Act provides students with the right to inspect and review their education records; insures that in most instances the contents of education records may not be disclosed without the student's consent; and permits students to request the modification of inaccurate or otherwise inappropriate education records.

Historical Value: The usefulness of records for historical research concerning an organization's functions and development, or for information about persons, places, or events.

Inactive Records: Records used in an office less than once a year.

Informational Value: Factual data about the persons, events, problems, and conditions of the record creator, and which may be useful for historical research or other studies.

Legal Value: The usefulness of records to contain evidence of legally enforceable rights or obligations of the government or private persons.

Lifecycle: The theory that the paperwork of an institution goes through distinct phases: records are created, used for some purpose, stored or filed for future reference, evaluated, and eventually disposed of or transferred to an archives for permanent retention.

Non-record: Stocks of printed or reproduced documents kept for supply purposes where file copies have been retained for record purposes;

- books, periodicals, newspapers, or other library materials preserved solely for reference purposes;
- preliminary drafts or computations, worksheets, and informal notes which do not represent significant steps in the preparation of a record document;
- duplicate copies of documents preserved only for convenience; materials not filed as evidence of departmental operations or for their informational value;

- or personal materials which are the property of the custodian and which have no relation to official duties.

Office of Origin: The office in which a given record or record series was originally created or accumulated.

Official Copy: A record which is not duplicated elsewhere, or the designated record copy of duplicated and dispersed materials.

Records Inventory: An identification and evaluation of the records possessed by an office for the purpose of creating a retention schedule

Records Retention/Disposition Authorization (RDA) : The RDA is the form used to secure approval for the disposition of all public records. It outlines how long records are to be maintained and their disposition after a retention period has ended.

Records Schedule: The timetable and description of a records series' lifecycle, including instructions for disposition. In Wisconsin State government, the retention schedule takes the form of the Records Retention/Disposition Authorization (RDA).

Records Series: A group of related records or documents that are normally used and filed as a unit because they result from the same activity or function or have some relationship arising from their creation, receipt, etc.; and that permit evaluation as a unit for retention scheduling purposes.

Research Value: The usefulness of records for research by the government, business, private organizations, individuals, and scholars

Retention: The process of holding documents for use.

Retention Period: The length of time an office must keep particular records. This is usually expressed in terms of years, months, days and may be contingent upon an event or specification.

Retrieval. The process of locating and withdrawing documents and delivering them for use

Scheduling: The process of analyzing and appraising the value of a given set of records, and then preparing a retention schedule showing the disposition of the records

Transfer: The movement of records from one custodian to another. Usually moving records from active or semi-active office files to off-site storage or NARA

List of Acronyms

AI – Artificial Intelligence

ARCIS - Archives Records Center Information System*

ARO - Agency Records Officer

BIA - Business Impact Analysis

BPA - Business Process Analysis

CIO - Chief Information Officer

CBA - Cost Benefit Analysis

DMA - Document Management Application

eFRC - Electronic Federal Records Center*

EDMS - Electronic Document Management System

EIS - Electronic Information System*

EMS - Electronic Media Storage

ERA - Electronic Records Archives

ERKS - Electronic Recordkeeping System

ERM - Electronic Records Management

ERMS - Electronic Records Management System

ERPWG - Electronic Records Policy Working Group

FADGI - Federal Agencies Digital Guidelines Initiative

FEA - Federal Enterprise Architecture

FedRAMP - Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program

FRC - Federal Records Center

FRCP - Federal Records Center Program

GRS - General Records Schedule

ICR – Intelligent Character Recognition

IDP – Intelligent Document Processing

InterPARES - The International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems

IRM- Information Resource Management

ISO - International Organization for Standardization

IT - Information Technology

LS - Legacy Schedule

LTI - Legal Transfer Instrument

ML – Machine Learning

NIST - National Institute of Standards and Technology

NRMP - National Records Management Program

OCR – Optical Character Recognition

PDA- Personal Digital Assistant

PM - Program Manager

RC - Records Custodian

RM - Records Management

RMA - Records Management Application

SAO - Senior Agency Official

SDLC - Systems Development Life Cycle

SF - Standard Form