



هيئة الحكومة الرقمية
Digital Government Authority

Guideline of Digital Projects RFPs

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1. Introduction

Across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, procuring assets of Information and Communication Technology is central in transforming the country to become a nation with a thriving digital economy, a vibrant society for an ambition nation, as outlined in Vision 2030. Standardized procurement processes and a forward-looking digital acquisition plan across all government entities will maximize Digital procurement efficiency with the goal of serving all the beneficiaries. It is therefore essential to have a consistent approach to digital acquisitions to achieve procurement effectiveness and deliver sustainable investments. The Digital Government Authority (DGA) is placed at the center of this digital procurement transformation to drive industry and local contribution into the KSA economy.

This Guideline is intended to provide guidance and expertise on new government Digital procurement activities to ensure best-in-class and consistent approaches are undertaken across KSA. In the Guideline, several detailed guidance, technical considerations, and legal requirements are discussed. This provides support for government entities to source the correct digital products and services, create the most effective request for proposals and select the vendors for the entity's requirements.

This document intends to provide best practice guidance to government entities in the creation of Request for Proposals (RFPs) for Digital procurements. Following these guidelines will lead to increased efficiency and consistency across the entities in how RFPs are created.

As the guidelines are underpinned by KSA regulatory frameworks and policies, it will foster compliance, ensure consistency across entities and secure value for money when creating Digital RFPs. The Digital RFP Guidelines will be continually edited and updated to signpost to the most recent policy or regulation changes across the KSA, providing up to date information and support for government entities.

2. Table of Definitions

Term	Definition
DGA	Digital Government Authority
Digital Transformation	Digitally and strategically transforming and developing business standards and models that would rely on data, technologies, and ICT
Digital Government	Promotes administrative, organizational and operational processes between the various government entities in their transitioning to a comprehensive digital transformation to allow easy and effective access to government digital information and services..
Government Entity	Ministries, authorities, public institutions, councils, national centers including any additional form of a public entity.
Accessibility	Ease of access to ensures that the services are used by all users, and covering inclusiveness, equality, and accessibility guidelines (W3C).
Digital Category Taxonomy	A hierarchical and agreed upon classification of the different Digital goods and service into a specific sequence starting from five main categories.
Commercial Terms	Represent the terms on which entities and suppliers establish their procurement and commercial engagements by defining precise rights and obligations and by complying with any relevant legislation.
Contracting Approach	Type of contract to approach the market with; typically, a singular source contracting approach is where one supplier is selected versus a multi-source approach where multiple suppliers provide a service.
Delivery Mode	The defined and utilized approach to deliver each government entity administrative and business support to achieve each entity's own mission.
Digital Economy	Economic activity enabled by information and communication technologies to deliver economic activities, commercial transactions, and professional interactions by connecting people, business, devices, data, and process at worldwide level.
Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)	3 key areas to measure sustainability against and a particular focus of ethical investing. Environmental deals with emissions; social deals with labour standards and is people focused; governance deals with standards for running an organization to emphasise ethical objectives.
Etimad	The platform provides a wide range of services for Government Entities, Private Sector and Individuals to sustain mutual partnership and accomplish nationwide economic objectives by promoting digital transformation, uplifting transparency and effectiveness, and ensuring more procedural smoothness

2. Table of Definitions

Term	Definition
Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Measures in numerical form a vendor's performance against agreed upon set targets. This forms part of the SLA document.
Local content	The total spends in the KSA on Saudi components (labour, goods, services, assets and technology). Local content requirements are a set of guidelines entities must comply with to ensure local businesses are prioritised.
Framework Agreements	An agreement between one or more government entities and one or more suppliers, contractors, including the terms and conditions of contracts to be awarded during a specific period.
Personal Data	Any element of data, regardless of source or form whatsoever, which independently or when combined with other available information could lead to the identification of a person including but not limited to: First Name and Last Name, Saudi National Identity ID Number, addresses, Phone Number, bank account number, credit card number, health data, images, or videos of the person.
Pre-qualification	The government entity verifies that the competitors have the qualifications and capabilities necessary to carry out business and secure purchases before submitting bids
Procurement Pipeline	A pipeline that contains the details of contracts expected to be re-procured or new procurement projects that are expected to be undertaken within give time frame (usually pipeline is published 12 months in advance).
Procurement Strategy	A long-term plan and cost objectives for effectively procuring required goods and services to meet the demand of government entity.
Return on Investment (ROI)	ROI is a performance measurement used to evaluate and understand the efficiency or profitability of an investment. Similarly, it is possible to compare the efficiency of a number of different investments against their costs.
Service Level Agreement (SLA)	Contractual obligation between a government entity and a service provider documenting the level and quality of services expected to be provided by the vendor in fulfilling the agreed upon objectives by evaluating the performance on metrics. Remedies and penalties are also agreed within the SLA for service breaches.
Small and medium enterprises (SMEs)	Smaller local (KSA based) businesses that specialize in their field. A price preference of 10% is given to SMEs.
Statement of Work (SOW)	Document providing a description of given procurement requirements by defining the scope of work being provided, project deliverables, timelines, work location, payment terms, conditions, and success criteria. It further defines liabilities, responsibilities between government entities and suppliers.
Tendering Package	Document consisting of all the mandatory, necessary, and useful information to successfully engage prospective suppliers within and RFP process. A tendering package should include definitions, general provisions, proposal details, proposal submission details, bid evaluation criteria, scope of work and any other requirements. Moreover, annexes should be included such as, clarification question form, qualification templates, technical and financial bid sheets, regulatory and any other relevant body of documentation.
Total Cost of Ownership (TCO)	TCO captures all associated costs incurred by a buying organization when purchasing from external providers goods or services together with operational costs across the asset entire lifecycle.
SDIF	Digital Procurement Program launched by Digital Government Authority.

3. Guideline Objectives

1. Embed consistency in procurement practices across government entities by providing RFP Guidelines
2. Define guidance to government entities in the development of Digital specifications
3. Drive product and services standardization to enable the consolidation of spend
4. Steer the adoption of using Framework Agreements as a procurement way
5. Propel the Digital Government strategy of the KSA in collaboration with all Government Entities
6. Drive transparency and compliance with regulatory frameworks and KSA policies and procurement legislations and regulations
7. Obtain value for money, efficiency, and effectiveness from the digital procurement process
8. Increase the spending from asset to services-based solutions

4. Guideline Scope

This document aims to provide government entities with:

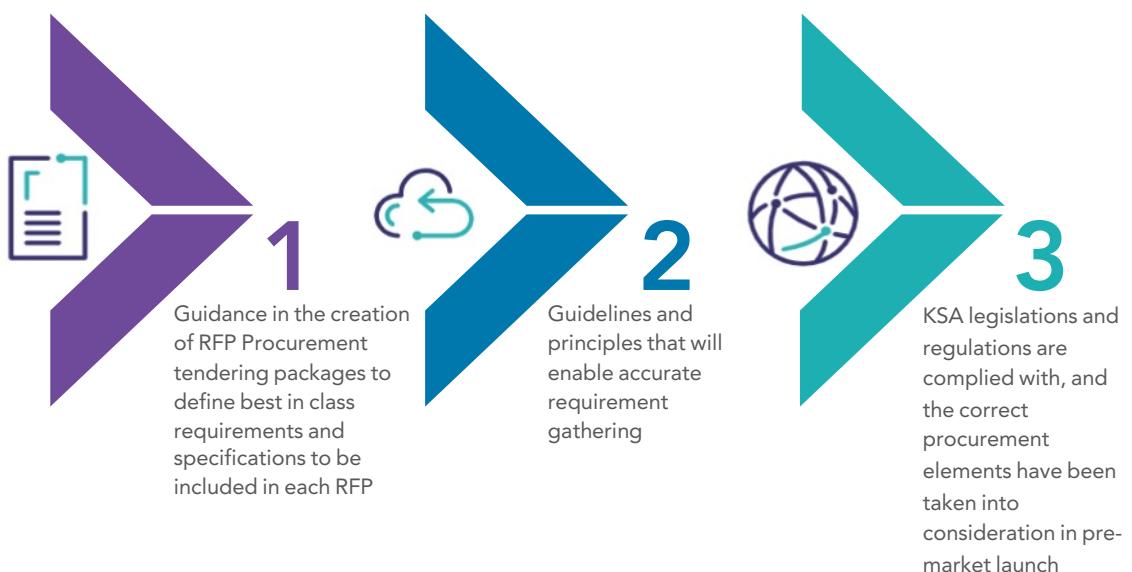


Figure 1: Types of guidance provided by the Digital RFPs Guidelines

5. Target Audience

applies to government entities and Procurement officials for the digital projects at the government entities to implement the best practices in developing the requests for proposals.

6. The Guideline

6.1 Procurement Strategy

Defining a clear procurement strategy will enable entities to assess what components, resources, support, and delivery mechanisms specified in the RFP documentation. The entities' procurement team collaborating closely with SDIF program to create a procurement pipeline, joint understanding of the RFP objectives, determine the entity requirements and assess the market capability and risk. All Procurement activity take place through the Etimad system and follow the official contracting methods as identified across the [Tender and Procurement Law](#).

For this purpose, the procurement team in each government entity must cooperate closely with the Digital Government Investment and Procurement Program "SDIF" to support and advise on planned digital procurement, form a common understanding of the objectives of requests for proposals, accurately define the requirements of the government entity, and evaluate the market's capabilities to meet These requirements, and identify the risks that may face the procurement process.

All procurement activities must be carried out through Etimad platform and follow the official contracting methods as specified in the government competition and procurement system approved by Royal Decree No. (M/128) dated 11/13/1440 AH and its executive regulations approved by Ministerial Resolution No. 1242 dated 21/03/ 1441 AH.

6.1.1 Framework Agreement

Before opting to create a new RFP for a new product or specific service, government procurement professionals investigate whether an existing Framework Agreement is in place for those products or services or raise a request for Government Digital Procurement & Investment "SDIF" in creating one.

Procuring goods and services through a Framework Agreement rather than an RFP will provide Government Entities with several benefits:

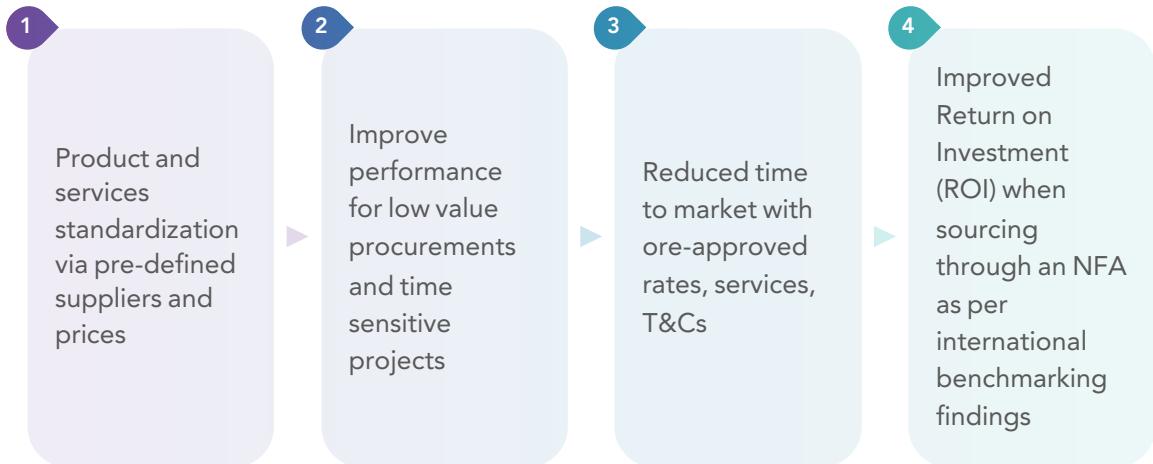


Figure 2: Benefit of procurement through Framework Agreements

6.2 RFP Checklist

This section of the guidelines provides a content checklist for entities to ensure RFPs are and ensure all areas have been included or considered. To increase the effectiveness of digital procurement activities, the DGA provides advisory support to Government Entities in relation to scope of work definition, revisions, and recommendations.

Sequence	RFP Checklist
1	Specification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement of Work Technical Specifications Fostering Service vs. Asset based delivery model Digital Category Taxonomy Understanding User Needs Accessibility User Privacy
2	Vendor Selection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vendor Pre-qualification Criteria Vendor Pre-qualification Assessment Vendor Pre-qualification Selection Criteria
3	Cyber Security Standards
4	RFP Response Evaluation Criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining RFP Evaluation Criteria Technical and Financial Evaluation Financial Risk Management
5	Definition and Creation of KPIs and SLAs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Level Agreements (SLA) Considerations Key Performance Indicators Considerations
6	Clarification Question Form
7	Vendor Technical and Financial Bid Sheets

Table 1: RFP Checklist

6.2.1 Specification

These are considerations to ensure the specifications included within RFP documentation are created in line with best practices to ensure high-quality requirements are sent to suppliers in the market.

6.2.1.1 Statement of Work

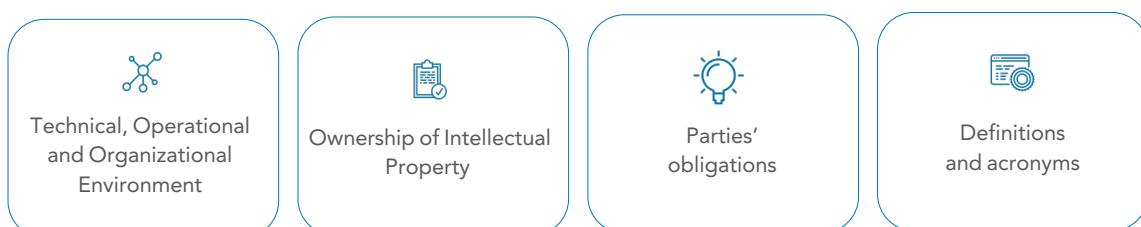
A Statement of Work (SoW) is a key element of the RFP tender documentation set. The SoW stipulates the deliverables or services required to fulfil the contract, it outlines the type, level, and quality of the services, as well as timescale.

The SoW clear, comprehensive, and concise to mitigate risks of poor performance arising from lack of understanding of the scope and tenderer obligations. A Statement of Work is composed of several sections. A comprehensive statement of work contains the following information:



Figure 3: Statement of work components

Further information may be provided depending on the requirement. Examples of additional sections are provided below:



6.2.1.2 Technical Specifications

When creating a specification document within a Digital RFP, a list with clear technical details and configurations is needed as different requirements interpretations could lead to differences in prices and outputs. Ensuring industry standard specifications are communicated to suppliers would also allow for a larger number of suppliers to participate in the proposal.

Depending on the complexity of the contracting requirements, it is recommended to include in the RFP a summary of the required solutions clearly detailing each specification and configuration in a separate annex. Furthermore, the technical specifications incorporated into the Technical and Financial bid sheets allowing the entities to compare supplier proposals.

When defining the technical specifications consider the following options:

- List the specific solutions required subdivided in their components and features (i.e., a key processor capability or a specific screen resolution)
- Specify which might be the minimum requirements sought after (i.e., minimum software version installed or minimum memory size) for the supplier to tailor an innovative solution based on its own business offerings
- Define the desired output or function for the new solution by focusing on what can be achieved (i.e., the number of pages to be printed in a given period or multi-language software support)

Together with clear specification and configuration requirements each entity could present the opportunity to prospective suppliers to propose alternative or innovative solutions and the related.

Besides the clear technical specifications and requirements, each government entity can provide an opportunity for potential suppliers to suggest alternative or innovative solutions, and to clarify the rationale behind the alternative solutions, in addition to the opportunity to express their basic requirements. In such a case, the government entity must conduct a detailed review of the proposed alternative solutions to reduce the risks arising from customized or tailored solutions because such solutions may affect the final cost, outputs, and delivery times and increase dependency on a particular supplier.

6.2.1.3 Fostering Service vs Asset Based Delivery Model

Entities need to consider service-based solution models and identify delivery model alternatives that reduce the need for solutions that require substantial investment in assets and physical infrastructure to deliver technology solutions. Entities should place emphasis on service-based solutions and suppliers over an asset intensive delivery model. This means relationships with suppliers move away from being transactional based purely on purchasing goods to procuring services from integrated service providers who are supporting entities to meet their objectives. Service providers can therefore offer a fully managed service without entities having to invest in assets or asset support resources. To foster business delivery models based on services rather than on assets, cloud technologies might be a prime solution however in line with the relevant policies and regulations in place within KSA.

6.2.1.4 Digital Category Taxonomy

Entities ensure new RFPs for any Digital goods or services are aligned to the category taxonomy to drive standardization across procurement.

The Digital Category Taxonomy should be followed when building a Bill of Quantities (BoQ) and included in the RFP.

During the purchasing phase each entity should strive to classify in the BoQ each good and service in line with the entries of the Digital Category Taxonomy. Each product must be classified at the most exhaustive and detailed level of the Category Taxonomy by utilizing, as feasible, all 4 levels.

Since the Digital Category Taxonomy has been widely agreed to be exhaustive in nature, each category entry has its own specific definition therefore allowing government entities to understand and select the most appropriate service or good categorization during the BoQ creation.

By adopting a consistent categorization, each entity will be able to communicate to prospective vendors clear procurement needs; it will be further possible to benchmark and compare similar RFPs to drive insights regarding data, pricing and quality achieved when procuring the same solutions. By striving to adopt in the BoQ a consistent categorization, it will avoid miscategorized products and services therefore reducing misunderstandings and disputes with suppliers.

As an illustrative example, below the classification journey to be undertaken by each Government Entity professional to correctly classify each Bill of Quantities entry against the most exhaustive Digital Category Taxonomy classification.

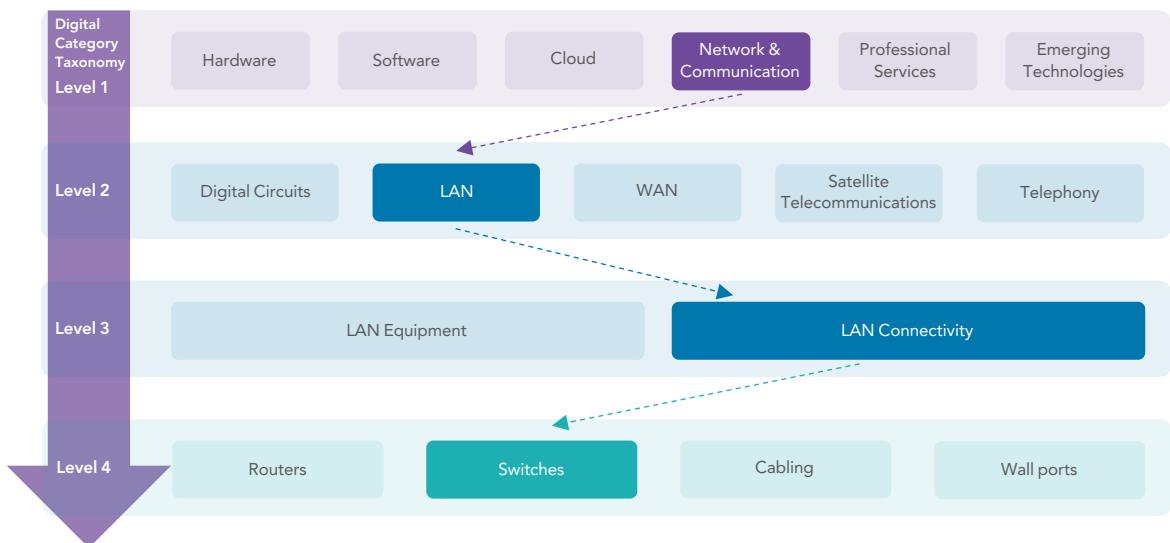


Figure 4: Illustrative BoQ classification journey

6.2.1.5 Understanding User Needs

Entities work closely with a wide variety of stakeholders to best understand what type of product or service is required and what problem they are trying to resolve. This incorporate not just 'typical users' but a wide variety of stakeholders.



It is important for Procurement professionals to understand the following during the user research:

- Who end-users currently are or who the most likely users are expected to be
- What the users need from the service to achieve their goals
- How users are carrying out tasks currently
- How users experience existing services and which problems are encountered

Working collaboratively with end-users can help to identify:

- Key risks to introducing or changing new technology
- Skills required to deliver the new technology
- Commercial and operational needs
- Achieve the right outcome from the service in line with users' expectations

This can be carried out in several ways:

- Review existing evidence including process maps, job descriptions and entity organization charts to begin mapping stakeholder interactions and roles within the entity
- Interview key stakeholders from across the business to understand existing roles and pain points. This helps to create a view of different user types that can be segmented into different categories
- Discuss with a wide variety of stakeholders to ensure a wide opinion and range of views is factored into the process
- Ensure any opinions not from end-users are treated as assumptions



Once completed this can be used to create experience maps that show how users interact with existing and future services as well as creating user profiles. This then gives specific insights that can be included in the RFP for suppliers to understand different user types and their specific requirements. It is key to understand users and their needs and what this means for future technology projects and programs. Without a clear assessment it will not be clear what problem needs to be solved and which solution will best deliver the expected results to users. Poorly documented user specifications will lead to the selection of the incorrect solution, dissatisfied end-users and ultimately impacts services to the beneficiaries.

6.2.1.6 Accessibility

Any new service or product should be made as accessible to users as possible, and entities must show how technology is being made inclusive for all users.

International standards for accessibility by the [International Telecommunication Union \(ITU\)](#) should be considered. The ITU defines accessibility as 'designed to meet the needs and abilities of as many people as possible.' Further international standards can be found through [ISO/IEC Guide 71:2014](#) and [W3C](#).

Benefits of accessible technology and services include:

- Making technology solutions work for as many users across the entity as possible
- All staff members are given the tools they need to perform effectively and drive efficiency across the entity
- Ensuring there is no barrier to employing people with specific access needs
- Avoiding potential legal challenges



Any system or service should have a straightforward and clear design so that most of the workforce is able to use it without adaptation.

When procuring new technology accessibility must be considered as a primary factor. Entities should carry out research with stakeholders and decide on accessibility requirements which should be clearly stated in the RFP documentation.

When purchasing any new technology, The following factors are considered:

- Space in the existing office or server room
- Hardware is compatible with existing assistive technology
- Software interfaces with existing assistive technology
- Assess whether testing solutions to trial compatibility is required

When purchasing any technology to provide a service over the web, accessibility to the public also be considered within the design principles. Consider the style, format, and compatibility with assistive technologies. Include disabled people in end user research.

Similarly, within the RFP document, ensured that any specific language or acronyms are made clear, and language is made accessible to all suppliers. All suppliers must receive the same entity information and no clear advantage is given to any supplier.

6.2.1.7 User Privacy

When developing an RFP, include user privacy considerations in the RFP documentation and ultimately when selecting technology products and services.

[The Personal Data Protection Law](#) (PDPL) marks the introduction of Saudi Arabia's first data protection law by entering into effect on March 17th, 2023.

The aim of the PDPL is to ensure the privacy of personal data, regulate data sharing, and prevent the misuse of personal data.



In the meantime, the National Data Management Office (NDMO) has developed the [National Data Governance Interim Regulations](#) covering key principles such as:

- Accountability
- Transparency
- Data disclosure
- Data subject rights
- Data security
- Legal basis
- Ethical data use

As a consequence of the legislation and regulations, there is a legal requirement to include the protection of citizens' data into procurement decisions.

To address privacy concerns the following best practices considerations should clarify how to best approach the new requirements:

- Will the procurement project involve the collection of new information about individuals?
- Will individuals have to provide information about themselves to the program?
- Will information about individuals be disclosed to entities, organizations or people who have not previously had routine access to the information?
- Is the information about individuals to be used for a purpose other than the expected and identified?
- Does the project involve the use of new technology that might be perceived as being privacy intrusive? (i.e., biometrics or facial recognition)
- Will the procurement project result in making decisions or taking action against individuals in ways that can have a significant impact on them?
- Is the information about individuals of a kind particularly likely to raise privacy concerns or expectations? (i.e., health records, criminal records, or other information that people would consider to be private)
- Will the project need to contact individuals in ways that might be found intrusive?



RFPs should be written with privacy as a key requirement and ensure suppliers account for privacy and data matters within their proposed solutions. Each entity should perform its own due diligence to keep abreast with the latest regulatory requirements.

6.2.2 Vendor Selection

consider what vendors are available in the market, which vendors are already approved by CITC to be selected and what the process is to onboard a new supplier to ensure they are fully compliant with Government regulations and standards. Moreover, Government Entities need to check whether prospective vendors are also registered on Etimad.

6.2.2.1 Vendor Pre-Qualification Criteria

Following chapter 8 of the [Tenders and Procurement Law](#), entities can issue pre-qualification criteria for RFP and said criteria "shall be objective and measurable, and shall be inclusive of the bidders' technical, financial, and administrative capabilities as well as the amount of their contractual obligations".

Purchases below 20,000,000 SAR	Purchases above 20,000,000 SAR
Pre-qualification procedure is at entity discretion	Pre-qualification procedure is essential

Table 2: Pre-qualification thresholds

6.2.2.2 Vendor Pre-Qualification Assessment

To deliver the best selection output, a comprehensive selection process needs to be undertaken by assessing suppliers against both quantitative and qualitative criteria. Quantitative methods involve the gathering of data in numerical form to assess the supplier statistically whereas qualitative methods leverage explanations to develop a clear understanding of the supplier capability to fit into the procurement selection."

6.2.2.3 Vendor Pre-Qualification Selection Criteria

Inputs into a best-in-class vendor selection criteria to be considered are:



Figure 5: Best in class vendor selection criteria

Pre-qualification criteria might be tailored depending on the complexity, risk, and value of the procurement project. Furthermore, in line with the bid evaluation criteria it might be possible to divide the pre-qualification requirements into technical and financial.

A pre-qualification template might be appropriate for entities to use to achieve consistency, ease of communication, and secure the targeted pre-qualification responses.

6.2.3 Cyber Security Standards

To sustain the targets set in Vision 2030 of continued transformation towards digitalization, it has become of prominent importance to regulate and strengthen Digital security therefore Government Entities and vendors must comply with all the relevant cyber security regulations and controls.

6.2.4 RFP Response Evaluation Criteria

Entities define clearly defined criteria to evaluate vendor responses to RFPs. Evaluation criteria are set of standards that guide the scoring of vendor proposals therefore delivering objectivity during a vendor selection process. It should be made clear to vendors what the assessment criteria are and how they will be assessed.

6.2.4.1 Defining RFP Evaluation Criteria

By defining evaluation criteria that was set by Government Entities, it is possible to determine the most economically advantageous bidders based on the fulfilment of the published award criteria. The scoring mechanism into the RFP proposal as the definitions might instruct prospective bidders on how to better adjust their bid based on the entity's priorities.

The evaluation criteria and model reflect the desired business objectives, outcomes and expected results of the tender process. The evaluation criteria balance the importance of price versus quality and clarify how quality and price will be evaluated.



6.2.4.2 Technical and Financial Evaluation

Evaluation criteria are a key component of any RFP, and they support Government Entities to assess each proposed vendor solution technical and financial effectiveness:



Figure 6: Technical and financial evaluation criteria

When assessing vendors, different weightings can be given to different criteria within the Technical and Financial evaluation sections of the RFP following the [Proposal Evaluation Criteria Guide](#) prepared by EXPRO.

An evaluation assessment table might contain not only the criteria against which the vendor proposal is going to be scored and weighted against but also any additional information such as sub-criteria, descriptions, exclusion scenarios, minimum requirements and application mechanisms.

As an illustrative example, the table below might represent an evaluation criteria template to be included into the RFP documents:

Aspects	Evaluation Criteria	Sub-Criteria	Relative Percentage Weight	Criteria Description	Application Mechanisms
Technical evaluation					
Evaluation aspect (40%) minimum to exceed the technical evaluation is (25%)	Technical Specification 1 (i.e., technical specifications)	Sub-Technical Criteria 1 (i.e., maximum user access)	5%	Description to foster understanding of criteria	Any exclusions, requirements, and guidance
		Sub-Technical Criteria 2 (i.e., storage)	15%	Description to foster understanding of criteria	Any exclusions, requirements, and guidance
	Technical Specification 2 (i.e., product performance)	Sub-Technical Criteria (i.e., bandwidth)	20%	Description to foster understanding of criteria	Any exclusions, requirements, and guidance
Financial Evaluation					
Evaluation aspect (60%) Minimum to exceed the overall evaluation is (30%)	Financial Specification 3 (i.e., total cost of ownership)	Sub-Financial Criteria (i.e., warranty prices)	30%	Description to foster understanding of criteria	Any exclusions, requirements, and guidance
	Financial Specification 4 (i.e., local content)	Sub-Financial Criteria (i.e., baseline)	10%	Description to foster understanding of criteria	Any exclusions, requirements, and guidance
	Financial Specification 5 (i.e., quantity discounts)	Sub-Financial Criteria (i.e., yearly discounts)	20%	Description to foster understanding of criteria	Any exclusions, requirements, and guidance

Table 3: Illustrative example of an evaluation criteria assessment table



After defining the technical and financial criteria and sharing them with the RFP documentation, vendors given the opportunity to ask any questions about the process and evaluation criteria. Upon outlining and clarifying the selection criteria, each entity specify any procedures and requirements in relation to bidders' submissions mechanisms, submissions schedules, any potential extensions, and the competition related milestone dates.

Entities need to ensure compliance with Part III "Proposals and Awards", Chapter 4 "Review of Proposals and Power to Contract" of [Government Tenders and the Procurement Law](#). These detail the review and award process and state the following key points:

- One or more committee can be formed to review proposals and the Unified Procurement agency may participate in these meetings
- The proposal review committee will review the technical and financial submissions
- Announcing the tender results in accordance with the regulations

Best practice when providing feedback to all bidders regarding the outcome of the RFP should include the following:

- The winning vendor(s)
- Detail of the competition
- Results of the proposal evaluation criteria
- Inform other bidders and the reason for their exclusion

6.2.4.3 Financial Risk Management

Financial risk management take place to evaluate the supplier's current financial standings and outline any risks. The RFP is a response section on high-level financial detail. This is to mitigate any issues with financial solvency that could affect supplier performance.

Additionally, risk management is carried out to assess supplier contingency planning and how a continuity of business can be assured under a variety of circumstances that may impact the supplier.

6.2.5 Definition and Creation of KPIs and SLAs

Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are essential RFP components. Each entity establish a clear performance indicators and service level agreements to secure the expected procurement goals and to best measure the performance of vendors.

6.2.5.1 Service Level Agreements (SLA) Considerations

SLAs define the detail and level of service expected from a potential vendor. The RFPs clearly define the expected SLAs, its acceptance criteria and any penalties resulted from not meeting the agreed targets by the suppliers.

Any contract without agreed SLAs is open to deliberate or inadvertent misinterpretation which could impact the supplier's performance and service delivery.

The entity consider the level of service required from a supplier and how these can be broken down into metrics to assess the supplier. The SLAs detail what services are being provided and the acceptability levels of the services. Effective SLAs can require prospective suppliers to adjust their offering and pricing before entering an official tendering process.

The SLAs attached to the appendix of the RFP and the relationship between entity and supplier.

Suggested contents and areas to include within the SLAs document are:

- Scope of the service agreement
- Definition of key terms, acronyms, and any excluded service
- Overview of contract and what is the basic level of service being provided
- Roles and responsibilities between parties and related escalation procedures
- Service level metrics, acceptance criteria, and targets. i.e., for any given system what is the acceptable response time if there is an outage, targets are a percentage of when the metric is reached (i.e., 99%)
- Force mechanism penalties or credit solutions for breaches and related remedies
- Contractual parameters such as contract renewal date, contract management and change control
- Detail of version history, document change history and document approvals

6.2.5.2 Key Performance Indicators Considerations

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are measures to assess a vendor's performance against set targets in the SLA and these should align with the overall strategic objectives of the contract. KPIs will form an important part of any SLA document. An example KPI may be "response times" for any technical issues and the vendor would be expected to respond within 30 minutes. The KPI may be worded 'Response time of vendor within 30 minutes and it will measure what share of incidents are responded to, within the 30 minutes time frame. The target would then be set, for example, at 98% and agreed upon in the SLA document.

The most frequent metrics and KPIs monitored within SLAs are:

Service Availability

Response Time

Defects Rates

Technical Quality

Security

Figure 7: Most frequent KPIs



The SLAs to be monitored represent a proportionate and equal incorporation of best practice and requirements to continuously depend on the expected output without adding extra running costs. The metrics foster an appropriate behavior from the supplier to leverage the business partnership; moreover, they should be easily collected and reported to maximize and facilitate their use.

Within the SLA, entities develop a set of well-structured KPIs that are relevant and proportionate to the size and scope of the contract. Having an excessive amount of KPIs that is difficult to measure, will lead to an overcomplicated contract and ambiguity. KPIs aligned to the intended benefit of the contract, for example:

- Delivering value for money within the cost thresholds
- Ensure achieving contract output
- Raise the end user / customer satisfaction

An important factor to ensure KPIs are a success, is by making sure suppliers know how they are measured and reviewed. Therefore, the RFP documentation explicit about this topic.

KPIs linked to softer metrics may also be used in assessing supplier performance including on sustainability and how the supplier employs SMEs and promotes businesses in the KSA within their own supply chain. The entities' own objectives and strategy should be considered when creating supplier's KPIs as supplier's performance and outcome ultimately be helping to reach these goals.

The RFP make it clear that the entity is looking for an integrated service provider to align with the overall strategy and objectives. A section could be included on 'ways of working' to explicitly state how the entity expects day-to-day interactions with the supplier.

6.2.6 Clarification Question Form

A clarification form part of the RFP documentation to ensure suppliers can request further information or clarify elements of the RFP scope. To better identify and propose appropriate solutions, each prospective bidder might seek clarifications on the requirements, services or terms needed within the proposed RFP.

Clarifications not cause material changes in RFPs but are aimed at removing ambiguity or uncertainty within any of the RFP contents.

Clarifications ensure bidders gain a correct interpretation of entity requirements. These questions and answers published to all vendors as part of the tender process to help them gain a better understanding and tailor their proposals. Privacy and due diligence considered to avoid creating any competition disadvantages upon publishing.

It is best practice to track and record all communications with potential bidders to secure an adequate audit trail.

A clarification template might be appropriate to be used to achieve consistency, ease of communication, and deliver the targeted questions and clarifications.

6.2.7 Vendor Technical and Financial Bid Sheets

A template for technical and financial information provided in each RFP detailing the required specifications for bidders to detail their proposal.

Such templates included as additional documents within the RFP. Instructions provided to bidders to ensure documents are completed as required. The use of templates will facilitate the evaluation and will ensure the supplier selection process is conducted in an objective and fair manner.

The bid sheets should therefore include the detailed scope of work and the list of required products and services that the bidder provide or meet. In this regard, the annexes might function as additional explanatory documentation of the required specifications mentioned in the RFP.



The technical bid sheet address and require the prospective bidder to:

- Provide information about the company
- Provide information on the provision of services and products specified in the scope of work
- Provide the extent of compliance with the specifications to be supplied
- Provide relevant regional support capabilities

The financial bid sheets address and require the prospective bidder to:

- Provide reference prices for goods and services with required specifications
- Provide discounts proposal based on the quantity in the purchase order or payment term
- Provide baseline percentage and target percentage of local content

An accompanying letter signed by the legal representative of the supplier, or an authorized representative might be requested and stating the submission of the financial and technical proposals. In the letter it might also be asked to state that the bidder has reviewed the terms and condition of the tender.

Vendor bid sheets templates might be appropriate to be used to achieve consistency, ease of communication, and deliver the targeted questions and clarifications.

6.3 Sustainable Procurement

Sustainable procurement define considered across all Digital procurements and the below provides considerations to assess potential vendors.

The DGA will publish the Sustainable Digital Investment Framework to help government entities to address key strategic investment questions and choose effective, scalable technology-based solutions to deliver reusable digital services across the KSA. The SDIF details a methodology composed of 8 Digital Sustainability Dimensions and 40 Measurement and Monitoring sub-dimensions to guide and drive government entities to achieve sustainable digital investments.

Entities should ensure any supplier is working towards sustainable practice and consider ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) factors when selecting suppliers. Best practice procurement embeds sustainability metrics when assessing suppliers and 'Achieving Environmental Sustainability' is furthermore highlighted as one of the aspirations of Vision 2030.

6.4 RFP Checklist Questions

This checklist provides a sense check for entities to review an RFP against the questions in each section. The questions are used as prompts to ensure compliance with Procurement Law, ensure best practice are being followed and ensure overall alignment with objectives and strategy of the DGA and Government Digital Procurement across the KSA. This list is not exhaustive; it is an evolving set of questions which will adapt as required. Not every question is applicable to all RFPs and considered on a case-by-case basis.

Questions #	Criteria Questions
Specification Section	
1	Has the entity included a statement of work (SOW) in the RFP?
2	Is the SOW relevant for the objectives of the RFP?
3	Is the SOW stating the necessary information for prospective bidders to understand the RFP objectives?
4	Has the entity provided enough details in the content of the SOW?
5	Does the RFP provide clear product specification, quantity and acceptance criteria?
6	Are the RFP specifications using standardize terminology allowing for the full market to participate?
7	Are the technical specifications included as a separate annex?
8	Has the entity provided the opportunity to suppliers to provide alternative solutions by meeting the technical requirements?
9	Has the entity opted for standardised or bespoke products and services with an explanatory rationale?
10	Has the entity specified the necessary local content, national and mandatory products requirements?
11	Are the RFP objectives linking back to entity's strategy and KPIs?
12	Are intellectual property rights and criteria been defined?
13	Which criteria are needed to seek stakeholder engagement?
14	Are criteria fulfilled to seek the correct approval?
15	Are commercial standards required and defined in the RFP?
16	Has a standardised specification been used as functionally feasible?
17	Has the entity accounted for the latest data and privacy guidelines?
18	Has the entity opted for accessible technologies?
19	Has the Entity prioritised a Service based delivery model?
20	Are acronyms defined and with accessible language through the RFP?
21	Is the RFP advising to liaise with already approved providers?
22	Has the entity clarified the upcoming project requirements, challenges, and goals?
23	Is the entity using approved and vetted suppliers?
24	Is the RFP above the 20,000,000 SAR pre-qualification threshold?
25	Is the entity requiring pre-qualification criteria?
26	Has the entity assessed the suppliers in a comprehensive manner?
27	Is the entity assessing the vendor using relevant pre-qualification criteria?

Questions #	Criteria Questions
Specification Section	
28	Is the entity assessing the vendor based on the requested criteria?
29	Is the entity using a standardized pre-qualification template?
30	Has the entity included the pre-qualification template in the RFP and clarified its usage?
31	Does the RFP require suppliers to complete a questionnaire?
32	When questionnaire need to be shared, are they of a consistent nature and easy to use?
33	When questionnaire need to be shared, are instructions available?
34	Is the entity keeping proper documentation regarding vendors selection?
Mandatory Security Considerations Across Digital Categories Section	
35	Is the entity clarifying in the RFP any security measures and regulations to be followed or implemented?
36	Has the vendor confirmed its capability to comply with all the relevant cybersecurity regulations and controls?
RFP Response Evaluation Criteria Section	
37	Has the entity clarified the assessment criteria in the RFP?
38	Has the entity stated exclusion criteria in the RFP?
39	Has the entity stated the requirements for any mandatory documentation from bidders?
40	Has the Entity clarified scoring mechanisms?
41	Has the entity clarified scoring weightings?
42	Is key tender information provided to allow the full understanding of the assessment criteria? (Objectives, background, dependencies etc.)
43	Is the entity using relevant assessment criteria to realize the RFP objectives?
44	Has the entity clarified whether there is one stage or two selection stages?
45	Has it made clear in the RFP how bidders can and should submit proposal and related timeframes?
46	Are competition milestone dates outlined in the RFP?
47	Has the entity outlined in the RFP the winning procedures process?
48	Has the entity performed a financial risk assessment?

Questions #	Criteria Questions
Definition and Creation of KPIs and SLAs Section	
49	Has the Entity included an SLA in the RFP and clarified its purpose?
50	Is the SLA relevant to the scope of the RFP?
51	Does the SLA include an outline of the product or service and acceptance levels?
52	Does the SLA include Roles and Responsibilities?
53	Does the SLA include Service level metrics?
54	Does the SLA include KPIs?
55	Does the SLA include penalties or fines?
56	Does the SLA include change management and revision processes?
57	Does the SLA clarify the reporting methods, structure, and cadence?
58	Are KPIs proportionate to the size of the contract?
59	Does the RFP clarify how vendors will be monitored and measured through the KPIs?
Clarification Questions Form Section	
60	Is a clarification question form added into the annexes?
61	Is the entity employing a standardised clarification form?
62	Is all communication with potential vendors being tracked and recorded?
63	Are there provisions in the RFP whether to publish clarification questions and answers?
Vendor Technical and Financial Bid Sheets Section	
64	Is a template for Vendor Technical and Financial information provided?
65	Are the utilized vendor bid sheets relevant to achieve the objectives of the RFP?
66	Are all the necessary technical and quantity details of the RFP clarified into the bid sheets?
67	Are all the necessary financial and pricing details of the RFP clarified into the bid sheets?
68	Are guidelines included in the bid sheets regarding on how to utilize the same tools?
69	Are any additional requirements stated in the RFP regarding bid sheets? (i.e., accompanying letter requirements)

6.5 Additional Consideration Checklist Questions

Questions #	Additional Consideration Questions
Procurement Strategy Section	
1	Can the requirement be sourced using an existing Framework Agreement?
2	Has the entity requested a Framework Agreement creation?
3	Is the entity applying official contracting methods?
4	Is the entity applying the correct contracting methods as per Procurement Law?
5	Has the entity considered alignment with other departments or other entities?
6	Is the RFP objective achievable through a Framework Agreement already in existence?
7	Has the entity defined users and their needs?
Digital Category Taxonomy Section	
8	Has the Digital Taxonomy been clarified in the RFP?
9	Has the entity applied the correct Taxonomy categorization?
10	Has the entity utilized the Category Taxonomy to create the Bill of Quantity?
Sustainable Procurement Section	
11	Has the entity clarified whether the vendors are required to abide to sustainable procurement practice?

7. References and relevant legislation

7.1 Key Relevant Documents and Resources

Resource Type	Document/ Resource
Saudi Vision	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Vision 2030
Legislation	Government Tenders and Procurement Law
Legislation	The Personal Data Protection Law (Arabic)
Legislation	Regulations on Preference for Local Content and Local SMEs and Companies Listed on the Capital Market in Business and Procurement Transactions
Policy	KSA Cloud First Policy
Policy	National Cybersecurity Strategy
Policy	National Data Governance Interim Regulations
Policy	National Products Mandatory List
Strategic Direction	Strategic Direction – Digital Government Authority
Controls	Essential Cybersecurity Controls (ECC-1:2018)
Controls	Cybersecurity Regulatory Framework (CRF)
Controls	Cloud Cybersecurity Controls (CCC-1:2020)
Procedures and standards	Critical Systems Cybersecurity Controls (CSCC-1:2019)
Guidelines	Open-Data Handbook (Arabic)
Forms	ECC-1:2018 Assessment and Compliance Tool
Forms	Technology Commission form
Forms	National Cyber Authority form
Useful Resources	Masdar website
Useful Resources	World Wide Web Consortium
Useful Resources	Etimad Portal
Useful Resources	MOF Knowledge Repository
Useful Resources	Manassa Tech Portal
Useful Resources	CITC Portal
Useful Resources	International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
Useful Resources	ISO/IEC Guide 71:2014
Useful Resources	Small and Medium Enterprises General Authority website
Useful Resources	National Cybersecurity Authority

8. Table of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
BOQ	Bill of Quantities
CITC	Communication and Information Technologies Commission
DGA	Digital Government Authority
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
ET	Emerging Technologies
EXPRO	Expenditure & Projects Efficiency Authority
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LCGPA	Local Content and Government Procurement Authority
MCIT	Ministry of Communication and Information Technology
NCA	National Cybersecurity Authority
NDMO	National Data Management Office
NFA	National Framework Agreement
PDPL	The Personal Data Protection Law
RFP	Request for Proposal
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SOW	Statement of Work
TOC	Total Cost of Ownership
T&C	Terms and Conditions

9. Appendix

#	Document/ Resource
1	 Initial version of the Digital taxonomy



هيئة الحكومة الرقمية
Digital Government Authority