

User Guide – People Panel

Phase 1: Recruitment and Search Services (SON3897769)



Contents

Introduction		6
1.	About the Panel	6
2.	Purpose of this User Guide	6
3.	Eligibility to use the Panel	6
4.	Establishment of the Panel	7
5.	Benefits of the Panel	7
6.	Term of the Panel	7
7.	Transitioning to the new Panel	8
8.	How to opt-in to use the Panel	8
9.	Panel Scope of Services	8
10.	Services not in scope of the Panel	9
11.	Flexibility Framework	9
Purchase Services from the Panel		
12.	Issuing a Request for Quote (RFQ)	9
13.	Issuing an Order for Services	10
14.	Dynamic Sourcing for Panels (DS4P) Training	11
15.	Value for money	11
16.	Arrangements across multiple Service Categories	12
17.	AusTender Reporting	12
18.	Head Agreement Provisions	13
19.	Entity Additional Requirements	13
20.	Insurance requirements	14
Invoicing and Acquittal		14
21.	Panel Administration Fee	14
Performance Management Framework		14
22.	Service Levels	14
23.	Performance Measures	15
24.	Responsibilities of the Service Provider	16

User Guide – People Panel (Phase 1: Recruitment and Search Services)



25.	Responsibilities of the Entity	16
26.	Process for determining a Service Level Failure	16
27.	Service Provider Suspension	16
Compliance with Procurement Policies and Legislation		17
28.	Security	17
29.	Confidential Information not to be disclosed	17
30.	Procurement Connected Policies	17
31.	Other Relevant legislation, policies and guidance	17
32.	Useful links	17





About the Panel

The People Panel – Recruitment and Search Services Panel (SON3897769) (the Panel) is a subset of the broader People Panel. The People Panel will be comprised of a series of panels which are being established to improve the quality, consistency and efficiency of the procurement of Recruitment and Search Services, Labour Hire Services and Contractor Services by Commonwealth entities (Entities). Each Panel under the People Panel will have its own Standing Offer Notice, Head Agreement and User Guide.

2. Purpose of this User Guide

This User Guide provides information to Entities on how to access and use the Panel.

This User Guide must be read in conjunction with the relevant Commonwealth Frameworks and policies, as outlined in the Head Agreement. In the event of any inconsistency between the User Guide and the Head Agreement or the Deed of Participation, the terms of the Head Agreement will prevail. Clause 1 of the Head Agreement contains definitions and interpretations of terms used in the User Guide.

Entities may have additional internal procedures/operational guidelines that will need to be considered when undertaking a procurement. Officials are encouraged to consult internally within their Entity on any additional requirements.

3. Eligibility to use the Panel

As a coordinated procurement, use of the Panel is:

- **Mandatory** for non-corporate Commonwealth entities (NCEs) that are subject to the *Public Governance*, *Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).
- **Optional** for corporate Commonwealth entities (CCEs) and Commonwealth companies (CCs), including Government Business Enterprises (GBEs), authorised by the Department of Finance (Finance) to use the Panel.

Whilst the Panel is optional for CCEs, CCEs are strongly encouraged to participate in the arrangement through a Deed of Participation.

The PGPA Act Flipchart and List available on the Finance website identifies NCEs, CCEs and CCs.



4. Establishment of the Panel

The Panel has been established as a coordinated procurement, also referred to as a Whole of Australian Government (WoAG) arrangement.

The Panel replaces all:

- Recruitment and Search Services related panels
- Recruitment and Search Services related categories on existing panels and
- Non-panel approaches to procuring Recruitment and Search services.

5. Benefits of the Panel

The Panel provides a range of benefits, including:

- improved quality, consistency and efficiency of purchasing Recruitment and Search Services with standard terms and conditions and a Performance Management Framework
- cost savings and efficiencies for Service Providers by reducing administration and tendering efforts
- reduction in the time and effort for Entities and for Service Providers to establish contracts
- replacing multiple panel arrangements across Government with a single panel arrangement, and
- providing standardised rate structures for Entities, noting that Service Providers' rates vary significantly across other panels for the same types of Services.

Finance will administer the Panel for the benefit of participating Entities, including:

- managing the Head Agreements between Service Providers and Finance, on behalf of the Commonwealth
- monitoring the Panel to implement efficiencies for the Commonwealth
- hosting and maintaining the People Panel webpages on the Finance website which provides guidance and tools to assist Entities using the Panel
- overseeing a Performance Management Framework for Service Providers and addressing performance issues
- providing internal reporting and strategic advice to support WoAG decision making, planning and delivery across the Commonwealth
- reviewing and refreshing the Panel, and
- monitoring the Flexibility Framework.

6. Term of the Panel

The Panel commenced on 19 October 2022, and will expire on 30 September 2026. Finance may, at its sole discretion, extend the Panel for a further period (or periods) of up to four years in total, which may be taken in whole or in part, and in any number or combination of time periods.

Finance will determine the process for refreshing the Panel during the Panel term. This may include adding or removing Service Categories or Service Providers to the Panel in one or more Service Categories.



7. Transitioning to the new Panel

Services available through the Panel are mandatory for NCEs to use, except for Services engaged under the Flexibility Framework outlined below. Entities are expected to use the Panel from 31 March 2023, and should contact Finance at PeoplePanelContract@finance.gov.au if they are unsure of whether they are required to use the Panel for a particular procurement.

Contracts entered into prior to the commencement of the Panel may be completed. However, consideration should be given to entering into a new contract under the Panel rather than exercising any extension options available through existing contracts. Further information on transition arrangements can be found on the People Panel website.

8. How to opt-in to use the Panel

NCEs are able to manage Panel access for their staff through AusTender's Dynamic Sourcing for Panels (DS4P).

Other entities such as CCEs, CCs and GBEs who wish to access the Panel and gain procurement efficiencies when sourcing Recruitment and Search Services must first notify the People Panel Contract Management team via email: PeoplePanelContract@finance.gov.au. The People Panel Contract Management team will review your request to participate and provide you with further details including a Deed of Participation which establishes the conditions of participation for CCEs, CCs and GBEs. The Deed of Participation standardises the use of the Panel which is essential to maintain the integrity of the Panel and consistency for Service Providers.

Access will be granted once a duly approved and executed Deed of Participation is provided to Finance.

9. Panel Scope of Services

The Panel will cover the:

- recruitment of APS personnel required by a Commonwealth Entity for ongoing or non-ongoing positions;
 and
- search activities relating to board positions.

The service categories for the panel include:

- General Recruitment (APS1 EL2 and equivalent)
- Executive Recruitment (SES Band 1 to Band 3 and equivalent and statutory appointments)
- Expert/Specialised Role Recruitment (personnel who are experts with extensive knowledge, experience, and advanced education in their field and are not generally available in the Australian Public Service)
- Candidate Sourcing Services (identifying and sourcing highly skilled candidates to fill advertised vacancies at any level)
- Board Search Services (undertaking searches to fill vacancies for potential board positions).

The Scope of Services table sets out the Services in detail (including Service Categories within the Services) and is available on the People Panel Website under Related Resources.



10. Services not in scope of the Panel

The Services available under the Panel do not include:

- services available under other Whole-of-Australian Government Arrangements such as consultancy services, legal services and property services
- independent contractors providing information and communications technology services, or other specialist services
- global search services
- labour hire services
- delivery of training and
- the engagement of an eminent person, a prominent individual appointed by an Entity to provide particular services.

11. Flexibility Framework

The Panel will allow Entities to purchase up to five per cent of their total expenditure per financial year on recruitment and search services from Service Providers not on the Panel.

The objective of the allowance is to provide Entities with additional flexibility to meet their specific business needs, and to provide opportunities for new market entrants, and other small and medium enterprises to provide services to the Government without being on the Panel.

Entities are responsible for tracking their annual expenditure on off-panel recruitment and search services to stay within the allowance. Finance will seek confirmation of compliance at the end of each financial year. In assessing compliance with the five per cent off-panel allowance, Finance will consider data sources such as AusTender reporting and panel operational reporting provided to Finance from Service Providers.

Entities must manage their own off-panel procurements, and comply with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules (CPRs).



Purchase Services from the Panel

12. Issuing a Request for Quote (RFQ)

The Panel and RFx functionality is available through Dynamic Sourcing for Panels (DS4P), in line with the DS4P mandate. Entities should submit all RFQs for the Panel through DS4P, which provides a simple, streamlined and consistent approach to using the Panel. Where an Entity is unable to access DS4P, that Entity should contact the People Panel Contract Management Team or the AusTender Help Desk (tenders@finance.gov.au).

In accordance with Clause 9.14 of the CPRs to maximise competition, Entities should, where possible, approach multiple Service Providers listed in the relevant Service Category to submit a quote. The number of quotes sought should be commensurate with the scale and scope of the business requirement (refer 4.4e of the CPRs).

The website and DS4P include a search tool to enable Entities to identify potential Service Providers by Service Category prior to approaching them for an RFQ.



Entities should consult with their internal procurement advisors as there may be Entity specific requirements in determining an approach to market or access to DS4P. It is important to document the reasons underpinning the approach to market, including the number of quotes requested and how value for money will be determined. Competition is a key element of the Commonwealth Procurement Framework.

It is strongly encouraged that Entities download the RFQ Form available on DS4P and complete it offline. Once complete, the form should be uploaded into the DS4P RFx functionality and published to the relevant Service Providers. Further information on completing the RFx process in DS4P is available on the People Panel website or on AusTender.

Entities can approach Service Providers to negotiate rates that are more competitive or represent better value for money in terms of innovative pricing structures. When doing so Entities should treat all Service Providers approached to submit a quote equitably.

When seeking quotations from Service Providers, an Entity should have regard to the reasonable time frames required to prepare and submit a quotation.

13. Issuing an Order for Services

The Order for Services Form, available through DS4P, should be used for procurements through the Panel to ensure the terms and conditions of the overarching arrangement apply to the individual procurements. The Form provides a consistent structure to Orders under the Panel and delivers efficiencies for Service Providers in their engagement with Entities.

It is strongly recommended, that only Forms developed for the Panel and made available on DS4P are used.

When issuing an Order, Entities should CC or send a copy of the order to <u>PeoplePanelReporting@finance.gov.au</u>. This allows Finance to track panel usage and deliver targeted engagement with Service Providers.

When an Entity issues an Order, a separate contract will be formed between the Service Provider and the Entity at the rates provided in the Head Agreement, unless a lower rate has been negotiated, or alternative pricing (e.g. fixed pricing) has been quoted and is stated in the Order for Services. Panel rates are available in DS4P.

Entities must ensure they only engage Service Providers approved to deliver services under the Service Category the Entity is seeking. If a Service Provider accepts an Order for Services for a Service Category for which it is not listed under the Panel, it will constitute a breach of the Head Agreement by the Service Provider and must be reported to Finance.

Please consult with your Entity's internal procurement advisers prior to issuing final documents to ensure you are acting in accordance with your Entity's internal processes and that any approvals required have been obtained.

The Service Provider must not subcontract any aspect of the Ordered Services without the prior written approval of the relevant Entity (such approval may be subject to conditions). Subcontractors specified in an Order are considered to have been approved by the Entity for the purposes of the relevant Contract.



14. Dynamic Sourcing for Panels (DS4P) Training

To support Panel Buyers, Finance has made available e-Learning Tutorials to give new users the knowledge needed to navigate DS4P, including searching for Panels, downloading documentation, creating an RFx, sending notifications and downloading Service Provider responses.

To access the e-Learning Tutorials, users simply need to register for a GovTEAMS OFFICIAL account. Once registered, users can access the tutorial suite via <u>GovTEAMS - DS4P e-Learning Tutorials</u>.

The suite contains the following:

- 1. Search for a Panel
- 2. Viewing Panels and Downloading Documents
- 3. Choosing Suppliers
- 4. Create an RFx
- 5. Amend an RFx
- 6. Clone an RFx
- 7. Resend Broadcast Email
- 8. Check Panel Access
- 9. Download Supplier Responses

If have any questions, or would like to suggest improvements to this content, please email the AusTender team at tenders@finance.gov.au.

Should you require additional information on procuring from Panels, please visit the Buying for Australian Government website: Procuring from a Panel - Panels 101.

15. Value for money

Finance has conducted a value for money assessment of each Service Provider prior to their inclusion on the Panel, including:

- the extent to which the Service Provider demonstrated its capacity and capability to provide the offered Services
- the extent to which the Service Provider demonstrated its relevant experience
- a comparative analysis of fees against other tenderers
- an assessment of risk
- the level of compliance with Commonwealth legislation and policy and
- the benefit the Service Provider provides to the Australian economy.

When requesting quotes, Entities may negotiate lower fees or request alternative pricing arrangements (e.g. fixed price) with Service Providers, particularly for larger bodies of work. A Service Provider may not charge more than the Panel rate for the Personnel Classifications. DS4P provides access to Service Providers' Panel rates to ensure compliance. If a Service Provider proposes a higher rate, the Entity should reject the rate and notify Finance via email: PeoplePanelContract@finance.gov.au or phone: (02) 6215 3080.

Entities should be aware that some Service Providers offer Order Value Discounts under the Head Agreement for lager bodies of work.

When requesting and assessing quotes, Entities are still required to achieve value for money.



Setting up milestone payments or linking milestones to a payment schedule can be a practical way to actively manage a contract and achieve value for money. Milestones help to monitor time-dependent deliverables, and control payments associated with those deliverables. Milestones facilitate timely communication with Service Providers and can help to manage the contract effectively.

A payment schedule setting out each expected stage of delivery can be included under the 'Fees' item of the RFQ or Order for Services.

It is important that contracts are managed consistently and actively throughout their life in accordance with their terms. This will ensure that Service Provider performance is satisfactory, stakeholders are well informed, and all contract requirements are met thereby ensuring that the contract delivers the anticipated value for money.

Where a Service Provider sets out any charges that are additional to the Fees, the Entity must assess whether there is a reasonable basis for any such charges when evaluating the quotation and provide an explanation for the extra expenses under the Fees item of RFQ or Order for Services. Any additional requirements must be progressed in accordance with section 19 (*Entity Additional Requirements*) below.

16. Arrangements across multiple Service Categories

Entities may procure work across multiple Service Categories with a single Service Provider. However, in such circumstances the Entity must ensure the Service Provider is listed against <u>all</u> the relevant Service Categories required by the Entity.

If a Service Provider responds to an RFQ or Order for a Service Category for which it is not listed under the Panel, it will constitute a breach of the Head Agreement for that Service Provider. This breach should be reported to Finance at PeoplePanelContract@finance.gov.au.

When undertaking an RFQ or Order for Services that crosses multiple Service Categories, Entities should select the Service Category that captures the majority of work that is to be undertaken by the Service Provider.

17. AusTender Reporting

All NCEs and prescribed CCEs must comply with the Resource Management Guide 423 Procurement Publishing and Reporting Obligations (RMG 423) which sets out the publishing and reporting obligations under the Commonwealth Procurement Framework and other government policies.

Entities are required to report, on AusTender, all contracts entered into under the Panel that are valued at or above the relevant reporting threshold in the CPRs within 42 days of entering the contract.

The contract details on AusTender must reflect the procurement method used to establish the standing offer and reference the relevant SON ID. When reporting an Order under the Panel on AusTender, remember to:

• Link your Order to SON3897769 so that your contract is correctly reported as part of the WoAG People Panel arrangement.



- Use the UNSPS code for Personnel Recruitment (80111700).
- Select the Procurement Method as "Open Tender", regardless of the number of Service Providers you
 approached (as the Panel was formulated through an open approach to market).

18. Head Agreement Provisions

The Head Agreement is a standing offer between Finance and each Service Provider setting out the manner in which the Services can be procured from the Service Provider under the Panel, and in Schedules 2-3:

- the Service Categories that the Service Provider has been approved to provide and
- the pricing for each approved Service Category.

A single Head Agreement has been developed to apply to all Service Providers. The only differences between agreements with Service Providers are:

- the contact details and address for notices
- the Service Categories they have been approved to provide and
- the Service Provider's pricing.

The Order for Services Form should be used as it ensures consistent application of the terms and conditions of the Head Agreement to individual procurements.

If the Order for Services Form is not used, there is a higher risk of Service Provider breaching the Head Agreement which must be reported to Finance at PeoplePanelContract@finance.gov.au and can lead to the suspension of the Service Provider.

Legal advice should be obtained prior to making any changes in an Order for Service which may affect or contradict the provisions contained in the Head Agreement.

19. Entity Additional Requirements

The Order for Services Form is designed so that, if necessary, Entities may add Additional Requirements¹ relating to Confidential Information, Security, Conditions/Restrictions for Personal Information, Insurance, Entity Service Levels or Software Platforms used for interacting with the Entity as allowed under the Head Agreement.

Any Additional Requirements cannot weaken the existing obligations of the Service Provider under the Head Agreement.

The "Additional Requirements" section in the Order for Services Form allows the Liability clause in the head agreement to be varied to a higher, contract-specific liability cap.



20. Insurance requirements

Under the Head Agreement the Service Provider has undertaken, prior to the commencement of an Order and for the duration of an Order, to hold:

- public liability insurance for an amount of not less than AU\$10 million per occurrence, unless specified otherwise in an Order. An Order may also specify an aggregate limit on public liability insurance
- professional indemnity insurance for an amount not less than AU\$2 million per occurrence and AU\$10 million in aggregate, unless specified otherwise in an Order
- workers' compensation insurance as required by law.

Finance will periodically monitor insurance compliance as part of contract management activities, however Entities may request additional insurance requirements if necessary. The RFQ and Order for Services Forms allow for additional requirements to be added. The Service Provider may also include the cost of obtaining any insurance, additional to the amounts stipulated in the Head Agreement, in their response to a Request for Quotation.



Invoicing and Acquittal

21. Panel Administration Fee

A Panel Administration Fee will not apply to the Panel. Instead the Panel will be funded by later phases of the People Panel.



Performance Management Framework

22. Service Levels

The Service Levels and Minimum Expected Performance requirements are outlined in Table 1 of Schedule 7 of the Head Agreement and will apply from the Commencement Date. Only Service Level 3 (SL3), 4 (SL4) and 5 (SL5) are relevant to Entities' performance reporting requirements.

SL3 falls under the Head Agreement Service Levels and relates to a Service Provider's service delivery. Finance will determine the level of compliance with this Service Level by analysing Entity reports.

SL4 falls under the Contract Service Levels and relates to a Service Provider's responsiveness to requests. An Entity will determine the level of compliance with this service level by analysing the Service Provider's responsiveness to requests against contractual timeframes for response in the Head Agreement and any Contract.



SL5 falls under the Contract Service levels and relates to governance arrangements for the contract such as management meetings and participation in contract management activities. An Entity will determine the level of compliance with this Service Level by analysing the Service Provider's attendance at, and participating in, required governance meetings.

Finance will use the Entity Satisfaction Survey as a means to collect information on the Service Provider's compliance with these Service Levels.

23. Performance Measures

Service Providers must maintain a high standard of quality and delivery of Services by its Personnel and Subcontractors, including compliance with all requirements of the Head Agreement and any additional requirements in an Order for Service. Under the Head Agreement the Service Providers acknowledge that:

- Their performance will be measured against the performance measures in clause 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 of Schedule 7 of the Head Agreement.
- Entities can provide reporting to Finance on the Service Provider's performance via the Entity Satisfaction Survey.

Quality

The following Quality performance measures apply to the Head Agreement:

- capability and availability of Personnel
- documentation provided to high standard
- Services provided met the Entity needs and requirements of the Order.

Communication

The following Communication performance measures apply to the Head Agreement:

- proactive and effective communication with the Entity
- responsiveness
- Entity reference numbers included in all correspondence

Contract Performance

The following Contract Performance measures apply to the Head Agreement:

- understanding of the Entity's needs
- effective management of timelines
- effective budget management
- service provision managed diligently
- reasonable assistance provided in respect of any inquiry concerning the Service Provider's performance of ordered Services.



24. Responsibilities of the Service Provider

The Service Provider will endeavour to meet or exceed the performance measures and Service Levels during the Head Agreement Period and will make all relevant Personnel and Subcontractors aware of the performance measures.

The Service Provider has agreed to meet the reporting requirements as set out in Schedule 4 of the Head Agreement.

25. Responsibilities of the Entity

All Entities using the Panel have a responsibility to:

- engage with and ensure their own understanding of the Head Agreement
- identify and manage any perceived or actual conflicts of interest
- ensure understanding of the performance measures provided
- keep Service Provider information confidential (such as pricing, information listed in Schedule 8 of their Head Agreement and/or described in an Order).
- not contribute to a perceived Service Provider performance failure
- take steps and work with the Service Provider to rectify an issue before reporting unsatisfactory performance to Finance
- report any unresolved performance issues to Finance via the <u>Commonwealth Entity</u>
 Satisfaction Survey
- report any suspected breaches by the Service Provider to Finance at PeoplePanelContract@finance.gov.au.

26. Process for determining a Service Level Failure

If there is an occasion where the performance of a Service Provider is not satisfactory and the parties are unable to resolve the issue, it may constitute a Service Level Failure² and must be reported to Finance using the Entity Satisfaction Survey or via email.

Once a potential Service Level Failure has been reported, Finance will work with the Service Provider on the issues.

27. Service Provider Suspension

Finance reserves the right to, at any time during the Head Agreement Period, review the operation of the Panel and suspend or remove a Service Provider from the Panel for noncompliance with the Head Agreement.³

If a Service Provider is suspended due to a Service Level Failure they will no longer be available for selection via DS4P or the People Panel website. Entities must not issue an RFQ or an Order for Service to a Service Provider that has been suspended (until that suspension is lifted) or removed from the Panel – doing so would be a breach of the CPRs.

² Service Level Failure is a term defined in the Head Agreement – see Schedule 7 of the Head Agreement

³ As described in clause 26 of the Head Agreement





Compliance with Procurement Policies and Legislation

28. Security

Service Providers agree to comply with any applicable security requirements specified in the Protective Security Policy Framework (including those provisions relevant to Commonwealth contracted Service Providers), as required by an Entity in an Order for Service.

Entities can specify additional security requirements in an Order for Service, for example, that Personnel working on the matter must have or obtain a national security clearance.⁴

29. Confidential Information not to be disclosed

Entities and Service Providers party to an Order for Service under the Head Agreement must not, without the prior written consent of the other party, disclose any Confidential Information of the other party to a third party.⁵ Entities must ensure that all Confidential Information is used or disclosed in accordance with the confidentiality provisions in clause 22 of the Head Agreement.

Entities should be aware of their responsibility to maintain confidentiality when working with secondees from a Service Provider or other contractors/consultants.

30. Procurement Connected Policies

Procurements valued over \$4 million must comply with the Procurement Connected Policies. A list of the procurement connected policies is available on <u>Finance's procurement website</u>.

31. Other Relevant legislation, policies and guidance

Each Entity should work with their internal procurement advisers to obtain advice on compliance with other relevant legislation, policies and guidance that may apply to their specific procurement.

32. Useful links

Commonwealth Procurement Rules

AusTender

DS4P

People Panel Website

Resource Management Guide 423 Procurement Publishing and Reporting Obligations (RMG 423)

⁴ Clause 23 of the Head Agreement outlines security requirements that a Service Provider must meet.

⁵ Clause 22 of the Head Agreement outlines requirements around Confidential Information. Confidential Information is a term defined in s.1.1 of the Head Agreement.



Contact Us

Email: PeoplePanelContract@finance.gov.au

Ph: (02) 6215 3080

Website: People Panel Website