



# Guide to Purchasing Services Management Advisory Services Panel

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## Purpose of this guide

This guide helps entities buy services through the Management Advisory Services Panel (the Panel). It explains key things to consider when issuing a Request for Quote (RFQ) and placing an Order for Services.

The guide does not replace the Head Agreement or entity policies. Entities should refer to the Head Agreement and seek internal advice where needed.

## Issuing a Request for Quote (RFQ)

When using the Panel, entities can ask for one or more quotes. Service Providers must be listed in the relevant Service Subcategory. Finance recommends approaching more than one Service Provider. This increases competition and helps achieve value for money. Competition is a key element of the Commonwealth Procurement Framework.

The [Panel webpage](#) includes a [Search Tool](#). It helps entities find suppliers by:

- service category
- subcategory and
- small-and medium (SME) and First Nations business status.

## Selecting Service Providers

When deciding which Services Providers to approach, and how many to approach, entities should ensure the approach is:

- appropriate to the scale, scope and risk of the procurement
- consistent with the entity's procurement requirements
- recording in writing, including:
  - why the approach to market
  - how many quotes were requested and
  - how value for money will be assessed.

## RFQ documentation

Entities should use the RFQ template. The template is available on the MAS Panel webpage under the 'Documents' drop down menu. The template provides a streamlined and consistent

approach to using the Panel. A Word version of the RFQ template is also available in Dynamic Sourcing for Panels (DS4P).

Service Providers are assessed at the organisational level under the Panel. However, the RFQ template allows entities to specify:

- required skills or experience
- qualifications or professional recognition
- any specific personnel requirements.

Entities may request curricula vitae (CVs) where relevant to the procurement.

## Pricing and quotes

Entities may invite Service Providers to submit quotes that:

- are more competitive than the Panel rates or
- use different pricing models that represent better value for money, such as fixed pricing.

Entities should give Service Providers enough time to prepare and submit a response.

## Subcontracting

When issuing an RFQ, entities may indicate whether subcontractors are permitted to undertake any or all of the Services. If a quotation includes subcontractors, the subcontractor fees must not exceed the Service Provider's fees under the Head Agreement.

## Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) participation requirements

When seeking quotations from Service Providers:

- for procurements under \$125,000 (including GST), only SMEs can be approached. Paragraph 5.5 of the CRPs provides additional guidance on this requirement.
- for procurements of \$125,000 (including GST) or more, entities must include at least one SME in the RFQ. Entities must document reasons if:
  - no suitable SME is available or
  - an SME confirms it cannot deliver the work.

These requirements help SMEs compete for government work.

Entities can use the MAS Panel Search Tool to find SME Providers.

Entities are responsible for meeting these requirements. Finance will conduct compliance checks to confirm they are being followed.

## Issuing an Order for Services

Entities must issue an Order for Services to engage the selected Service Provider.

## Order for Services template

The Order for Services template is available on the MAS Panel webpage under the 'Documents' drop down menu. A Word version of the template is available in DS4P.

The template:

- ensures the terms and conditions of the Head Agreement apply to individual procurements
- provides a consistent structure across entities
- prompts the use of milestone payments as best practice
- supports efficient engagement between entities and Service Providers.

Only templates developed for the Panel may be used. The Commonwealth Contracting Suite templates must not be used. These templates may contain terms that differ from the Head Agreement.

## Contract information and pricing

When an Order for Services is issued, a separate contract is formed between the entity and the Service Provider. The contract will be at the rates specified in the Head Agreement unless:

- lower rates have been negotiated, or
- alternative pricing (such as fixed pricing) has been agreed and recorded in the Order for Services.

Identifiable rates can be accessed through the [Strategic Contracting – Panel Info & Pricing GovTeams Community](#).

## Correct service subcategory

Entities must ensure the Order for Services reflects the correct service subcategory under which the Service Provider is listed. If a Service Provider accepts an Order for Services for a subcategory for which it is not listed, this constitutes a breach of the Head Agreement and must be reported to Finance.

## Further guidance and support

Guidance on issuing RFQs is in the [Best Practice Guide for Approaching the Market](#).

### Contact us

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