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CATS+ Template 4.01 Rollout

IT Procurement Office (ITPO)
Sachin Bhatt, Cindi Duehmig
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Governor Larry Hogan | Lt Governor Boyd K. Rutherford | Acting Secretary Michael G. Leahy | Deputy Secretary Lance Schine



Department of Information Technology

Introduction – Today's Topics



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2. Detailed Template Walkthrough
3. Top Tips – Requirements
4. Expectations During Authoring & Reviews
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Introduction & Overview

A. TORFPs not previously submitted for review must use version 4.01 effective immediately

- 1) ITPO will consider exceptions on a case-by-case basis
- 2) The template is posted on CATS+ website
- 3) Documents previously submitted for review may receive updated boilerplate from ITPO reviewer.

B. Changes in this version

- 1) Align document structure to the Statewide RFP template
Expecting an updated Statewide RFP template end of year
- 2) Update language for consistency with COMAR changes, audit findings
- 3) Move standard forms to the CATS+ website
- 4) Standard text formatting to reduce document instability
- 5) Update instructions, updatable items for more consistency, easier tailoring

Introduction & Overview



- **As an oversight agency, for every IT solicitation DoIT is responsible to:**
 - 1) Ensure that State policies, regulations, laws are followed
 - 2) Ensure the State's rights are protected and enforceable
 - 3) Help agencies perform fair procurements
 - 4) Help agencies establish contracts that can be managed
 - 5) Help establish consistency among State IT contracts
- **As a result, DoIT has an:**
 - 1) Advisory role – making recommendations
 - 2) Training role – explaining, providing examples
 - 3) Directive role – requiring compliance
- **DoIT does not furnish legal sufficiency approval**

Introduction & Overview



Procurement

- Statute
- COMAR
- Policies, guidelines
- Best practices

Requirements

- Enforceable
- Logically Presented
- Complete

Consistency

- Boilerplate
- Template tailoring
- Word use (and fixes)

Detailed Template Walkthrough

A. CATS+ Template updated to 4.x early August

- Resequenced sections, some consolidation
- Standard forms used after award moved to website (work order, NTP sample, self-reporting form)

B. Primary Organization

- Section 1 Minimum Qualifications
- Section 2 TO Contractor Requirements: Scope of Work
- Section 3 TO Contractor Requirements: General
- Section 4 TORFP Instructions
- Section 5 TO Proposal Format
- Section 6 Evaluation and Selection Process
- Section 7 Attachments and Appendices

C. Formatting in Template

- Leverage Word Styles

Detailed Template Walkthrough

- **Basic Notations, Formats**

- 1) Instructions ****instructions format****
- 2) Tailoring <<tailoring format>>

Detailed Template Walkthrough - Minimum Qualifications, Downselects



- **DoIT no longer accepts minimum qualifications for most CATS+ TORFPs**
 - a) Minimum Qualifications for labor categories as set forth in Section 2.10 of the Master Contract are still allowed
 - b) All other desired characteristics should be described in a general way and evaluated
 - c) By exception only
- **For staffing TORFPs only, a downselect may be used**
 - a) Interviews and oral presentations do NOT have to be completed prior to the downselect (this is a change in policy)
 - b) The minimum number for the downselect list is 10
 - c) You should not go back and retrieve an offer that was not part of the downselect
 - d) In-person and online (e.g., WebEx, Skype) are considered equivalent (Preference is in-person. Never perform solely phone interviews)
 - e) Downselects for other solicitation types by exception only

Detailed Template Walkthrough - Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and Work Orders



- **SLAs**
 - a) Obtain commitment from the program to monitor contractor performance and assess liquidated damages / service credits (a source of audit findings)
 - b) Define only a handful of meaningful metrics to simplify monitoring
- **Work Orders**
 - a) Work Orders may be for either Fixed Price or T&M (if labor categories are proposed)
 - b) Fixed Price Work Orders provide flexibility if a labor category is omitted
 - c) Work Orders avoid change orders, but only if:
 - i. There are additional unallocated funds under the TO Agreement
 - ii. The scope of the Work Order is in alignment with the TORFP scope
 - d) Work Orders for multi-vendor award TORFPs must describe the basis for Work Order issuance in the TORFP

Detailed Template Walkthrough - Staffing in a TORFP



- For a *staffing TORFP*, you must list the maximum number of resources to be fulfilled under the TORFP before a change order is required
- Maximum of four proposed resources for making an award determination
 - This is NOT the same as total number of resources
 - Fewer proposed resources = faster evaluation process
 - Proposed resources that are not full-time Offeror personnel (e.g., subcontractor or 1099) may NOT be replaced during evaluation
- Consider whether it should be a staffing TORFP or a generic services TORFP

Top Tips – Requirements



Persnickety

per·snick·e·ty \pər-'sni-kə-tē\

fussy about small details

For speedy reviews, be persnickety with requirements and TORFP construction

- a) Use “shall” statements for Offeror, TO Contractor, or system requirements
- b) Use “will” statements for State activities
- c) **Don’t** use the word “ensure” in a requirements statement
- d) Functional Requirements Documents (FRDs) are for internal project stakeholders, not great for TORFPs/RFPs
- e) An awarded CATS+ TORFP is a **TO Agreement** – **NOT a “contract”**

Top Tips – Requirements



1. Uniquely number all requirements
 - a) Don't use paragraphs with multiple statements when they are different requirements
 - b) Use outline bullets (A.1.b), not simple bullets (•)
 - c) Don't manually number anything (use MS Word auto-number)
2. Put all requirements in the “Requirements” (SOW) section
 - Make sure you don't put requirements in the background or existing system descriptions
3. Organize requirements by topic
4. Do not repeat requirements; use instead “as defined in Section x.x”

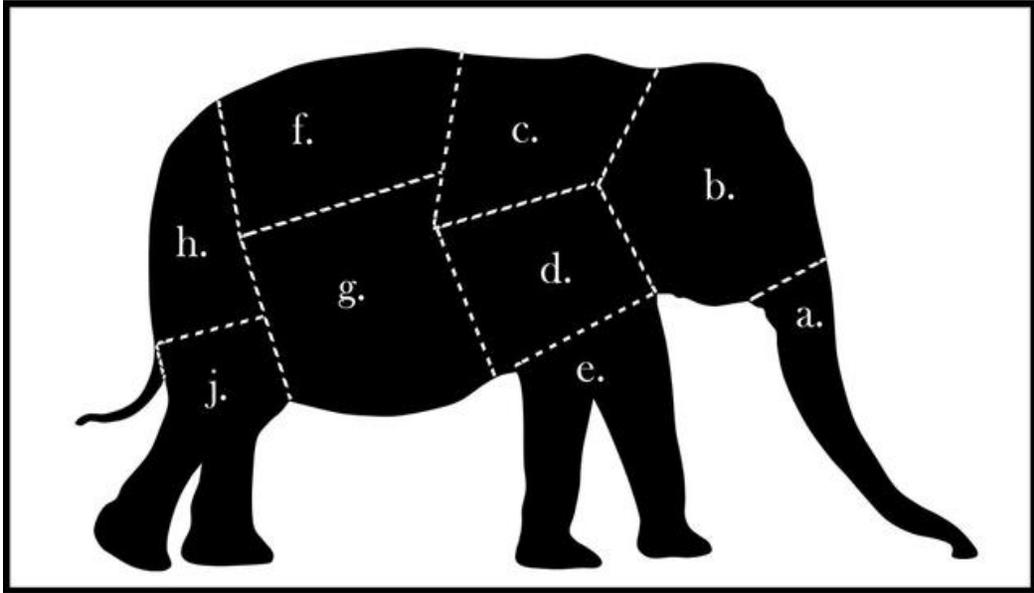
Expectations During Authoring & Reviews



Expect.....

- 1) Two DoIT reviews. Well-constructed solicitations usually take one long review and one shorter, targeted review. **Poorly constructed solicitations take more review cycles**
 - a. Expect a DoIT review cycle to take ~10 business days once received in ITPO mailbox
- 2) Solicitations with poor requirements or inadequate updates **may be returned without review**
- 3) Notices from ServiceNow after submission to ITPO
 - a. Submitter (the procurement officer) will receive an Incident update each time the Incident is reassigned
 - b. Do not cc on the submission to ITPO (replies to that email generate duplicate incidents)
 - c. SAVE a ServiceNow email for the relevant incident and REPLY to avoid new duplicate incidents

CATS+ TORFP Template Approach



- A. Leave plenty of time for the first one
- B. Read the document through before starting to tailor
 - Look for sections clearly not applicable to your solicitation
 - Use Word's comments feature to ask questions of ITPO reviewer
 - Read the boilerplate. Requirements in the boilerplate may not apply (and may even be contradictory to each other)
- C. Keep a the untailed template around in case decisions change

Tools and Assistance



A. Read the guidance in the template

B. Use the old-to-new mapping tables

C. Use the Procurement Planning Form (PPF)

- 1) Confirm the procurement approach prior to authoring
- 2) Confirm the authoring/review timeline with ITPO

D. Coordinate with your Procurement Officer to:

- 1) Ask questions from ITPO as they come up
- 2) Attend **authoring office hours** Tuesdays 11-12 online (and in-person if desired). Procurement Officer should send topics to Cindi Duehmig in advance.
- 3) Automation pilot planned for November
- 4) Schedule a review session ~15 business days after confirmation the document was submitted to DoIT (Don't wait for review response)



References

- **CATS+ TORFP Template**
<http://doit.maryland.gov/contracts/Documents/CATSPplusGuidance/TORFPTemplate-version4.01.dotx>
 - a. Please report errors, inconsistencies
 - b. CATS+ template will continue to evolve based on automation
 - c. Always use the very latest version of the document
 - d. CATS+ Standard Template Forms
<http://doit.maryland.gov/contracts/Pages/CATSPplusFAQStandardForms.aspx>
- **CATS+ TORFP old-to-new mapping tables**
http://doit.maryland.gov/contracts/Documents/_procurementForms/Old-New-CATS+Template-Comparison.pdf
- **Minimum Qualifications Guidance**
http://doit.maryland.gov/contracts/Documents/_procurementForms/Guidance-Writing-Minimum-Qualifications-09262017.pdf
- **RFP Template**
<http://doit.maryland.gov/contracts/Pages/writingITsolicitations.aspx>

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Questions?

ITPO

ITPO.DoIT@maryland.gov

Cindi Duehmig

Cindi.duehmig@maryland.gov

Sachin Bhatt

Sachin.Bhatt3@maryland.gov

Please provide feedback on this session.

