



# Innovation Procurement Guide No. 1

## Guide to Developing Evaluation Criteria

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# Introduction

## Background

The purpose of the proposal evaluation process is to provide a mechanism to determine which offers submitted in response to a request for proposals (“the RFP”) best meet a Healthcare Organization’s stated needs. The proposal evaluation results in an assessment of a Proponent’s ability to successfully deliver against the contract. Because the sourcing selection decision is based on the proposal evaluation, it is important that the evaluation criteria clearly reflect the Healthcare Organization’s needs and facilitate preparation of proposals that best satisfy them and allow for an accurate evaluation of the Proponent’s proposal.

The proposal evaluation process is distinct from the Proponent selection process. The proposal evaluation must provide a fair, transparent, and accountable method for evaluating Proponents’ proposals that balances the ability to meet requirements with innovation, other non-financial factors, and total cost of ownership. This is best applied and demonstrated by the use of properly constructed proposal evaluation criteria and by following the BPS Procurement Directive principles, which are:

- **Accountability** – Organizations must be accountable for the results of their procurement decisions and the appropriateness of the processes.
- **Transparency** – Organizations must be transparent to all stakeholders. Wherever possible, stakeholders must have equal access to information on procurement opportunities, processes and results.
- **Value for Money** – Organizations must maximize the value they receive from the use of public funds. A value-for-money approach aims to deliver goods and services at the optimum total life-cycle cost.
- **Quality Service Delivery** – Front-line services provided by Organizations, such as patient care, must receive the right product, at the right time, and in the right place.
- **Process Standardization** – Standardized processes remove inefficiencies and create a level playing field.

## Purpose of this Guide

This guide is intended as a resource tool to assist Healthcare Organizations in developing evaluation criteria to be included in RFPs for innovative solutions. The guide, RFP template, and its corresponding agreement template, are available online at [www.hscn.org](http://www.hscn.org).

This guide is for Broader Public Sector (BPS) Buyers, which refers broadly to any buyer (e.g. shared service organizations (SSOs), Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), clinicians, administrators) using public funds to acquire innovative solutions (equipment, goods, and/or services).

This guide is intended as a reference guide only and does not replace the mandatory requirements described in the BPS Procurement Directive or your organization's own procurement policies and processes. It is intended to be a dynamic document and will be updated over time.

### **Approach & Methodology**

This guide is based on the results of the following activities:

- A review of a number of major publications from EU countries, addressing the key areas of innovation procurement;
- A cross-jurisdictional scan to understand the different initiatives around innovation procurement in Ontario and Canada; and
- A series of workshops with key stakeholders from different areas, such as shared services organizations (SSOs), group purchasing organizations (GPOs), Suppliers, and the Healthcare Supply Chain Network (HSCN).

### **Cautionary Statements**

This guide assumes that BPS Buyers and Healthcare Organizations are familiar with the original Common Tendering and Contracting Templates developed by HSCN – including the guides and annotations for those templates and, in particular, the Services RFP and Agreement templates. See those annotations and guides for additional assistance in completing the Innovation Services RFP Template and Innovation Services Agreement Template.

If you are uncertain about any part of the guide, and procurement documentation, or if the particular innovation procurement is relatively complicated, you should consult with the appropriate professional advisor.

Please read the terms upon which this guide is provided [www.hscn.org](http://www.hscn.org).

# Evaluation Criteria

## **Innovation Proposals Evaluation**

Outcome-based specifications, procedures that invite dialogue, being open to alternative proposals, and the awarding of contracts based on the best fit-for-purpose solution, at the best value, are a few of the relevant prerequisites to facilitating the procurement of innovative solutions. At the same time, these conditions may contribute to making the evaluation and selection of innovative proposals both challenging and resource intensive.

The evaluation criteria used to assess innovation proposals consist of the factors and sub-factors that reflect the areas of importance Healthcare Organizations use in making their selection decision. Through the evaluation factors, a BPS Buyer is able to assess the similarities and differences, and strengths and weaknesses, of competing proposals and, ultimately, use that assessment in making a sound sourcing selection decision. It is critical to have the appropriate mix of expertise in the members of the evaluation team, to ensure that differences between the proposed solutions are being evaluated from all perspectives.

The development of evaluation criteria that allows the evaluation of Proponents' proposals based on the outcome-based requirements set by the Healthcare Organization is critical to the successful procurement of innovative solutions. Awarding contracts solely or primarily based on the lowest price may not result in the purchase of innovative solutions, as innovation is often associated with some degree of risk/uncertainty for both Healthcare Organizations and Proponents, and this may be reflected in the cost of the solution. If BPS Buyers focus on price exclusively, Proponents cannot necessarily take on the increased risk associated with supplying an innovative solution. To promote innovation through the procurement process, BPS Buyers should select the proposal that offers the best value for money, meaning the innovative solution that best addresses the Healthcare Organization's needs or desired outcomes, at the lowest total cost of ownership possible.

## **Key Elements in the Development of Evaluation Criteria**

The evaluation criteria included in an innovation RFP can be developed using different approaches. Selecting the appropriate approach will depend on the specific Healthcare Organization's need, outcome-based requirements, and the market's maturity and capacity. The evaluation approach selected should enable the Healthcare Organization to objectively determine which proposal offers the most innovative solution by addressing:

- Conformity with conditions for participation (mandatory requirements);
- An appropriate level of conformity with non-mandatory compliance requirements such as compliance with contractual terms and conditions;
- The degree to which a proposal meets qualitative and quantitative criteria (outcome-based specifications). The level of quality needed by the Healthcare Organization in performance of the contract is an important consideration in structuring non-cost factors;

- The degree to which a proposal meets desirable non-cost criteria (e.g. capabilities and key personnel, innovation implementation plans, innovation market roll-out plans, management plan, management risk);
- Total cost of ownership; and
- The level of risk associated with selecting a particular proposal.

As a guiding principle, evaluation criteria should reflect areas necessary to determine the merit of a proposal, pertinent to the Healthcare Organization's stated outcome-based requirements, and measurable to permit qualitative and quantitative assessment against the weighting criteria.

The table below provides practical examples of evaluation criteria that can promote innovation:

**Figure 1 – Examples of Evaluation Criteria**

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>
Task comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effectively do Proponents document their understanding of the Healthcare Organization’s specifications?</li> </ul>
Innovation expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience in developing innovative solutions.</li> <li>• References from previous innovation projects.</li> <li>• Information about how Proponents have contributed to innovative solutions in similar assignments.</li> </ul>
Proposed solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent does the solution offered meet the requirements the Healthcare Organization faces?</li> <li>• Does the Proponent suggest new solutions that are appropriate for the Healthcare Organization’s needs?</li> <li>• What is the level of innovation in the proposed solution? Innovation should be rewarded to the extent that it contributes to better solutions, for instance by improving patient outcomes, extending the lifespan of the product, lowering life cycle costs, generating environmental improvements, or providing sustainable alternatives.</li> </ul>
Functionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The functional characteristics of a solution (e.g. usability, security, human factors, and compatibility with products that interface with the solution).</li> </ul>
Better quality, better performance, better synergy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BPS Buyer can stipulate minimum requirements that a specific procurement must achieve. In such cases, the BPS Buyer must define how and within which areas these effects are desired beyond the stipulated requirements, and should tie this minimum requires back to the evaluation process.</li> </ul>
Total cost of ownership (TCO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A focus on the total cost of ownership enables BPS Buyers to focus on innovations that examine both indirect and direct costs of a solution.</li> </ul>
Patient Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The value that the innovation provides in the clinical context, for instance by reducing procedure times, providing better diagnosis, fewer complications, and better short-term and long-term outcomes.</li> </ul>

## Considerations for Price Criteria

Price is used as an important evaluation criterion for BPS procurements. However, placing too much weight on price can redirect the focus away from fresh thinking and innovation. A pressure on price can contribute to increased efficiency (working faster), but not necessarily increased innovation (working smarter).

In some instances, the evaluation of price may include not only consideration of the one-time price to be paid to a Proponent, but other costs that the Healthcare Organization may incur as a result of awarding the contract. Examples of these latter costs include re-training costs, system or software conversion costs, power consumption, life cycle costs, and transportation costs. In these cases, the RFP should clearly identify other costs that will be considered in the evaluation.

Because it is possible that the more radically innovative a proposed solution is, the higher the price may be, the BPS Buyer must find a way to recognize and reward innovation in the evaluation criteria and make this clear to prospective Proponents.

## Alternative Proposals

If Healthcare Organizations are interested in receiving alternative proposals concerning the innovation solution, they must expressly ask for those in the RFP and have a method for evaluating them. If a request for alternative proposals is not set out, then the evaluation process cannot take into account any alternative proposal put forward by Proponents. The RFP should also include:

- Alternative minimum requirements for performance and function. If this is not included, alternative proposals cannot be submitted or accepted;
- Specify whether Proponents should also submit a standard proposal alongside their alternative. Healthcare Organizations should consider allowing Proponents to submit an alternative proposal without an accompanying ‘non-alternative’ proposal. Where two proposals are requested, careful consideration must be given to the purpose of the request to ensure that unnecessary costs are not placed on potential Proponents and that evaluators’ time is used wisely;

The evaluation of proposals in a competition that permits alternative proposals can be very challenging. Healthcare Organizations should request Proponents to specify how their alternative proposal differs from the original requirements specified in the RFP, and demonstrate how better value for money can be obtained through the alternative. The alternative proposal should only be considered if it leads to a better overall solution for the Healthcare Organization, and should be evaluated using the same evaluation criteria as the standard proposal and compared on a like-for-like basis. This can often be hard to achieve unless the outputs set are sufficiently clear.

Advantages of permitting alternative proposals:

- Potential to improve patient outcomes
- The market gets the opportunity to showcase alternative solutions.
- Alternatives provide more opportunities to meet the Healthcare Organization’s needs
- Challenges the market to take a creative approach to solutions.
- Potential to foster innovation in Canada
- Potential to deliver better value for money

## **Principles of Evaluation**

The innovation procurement evaluation process must adhere to common BPS procurement principles:

### **Defensible**

- A clear and logical process has been rigorously applied.

### **Transparent**

- Evaluators must conduct assessments individually and independent of other team members and must clearly document their findings in the scoring booklets. Findings are converted to numeric scores so that there are both a qualitative and a quantitative summary of each proposal. Each Evaluator must clearly document all comments/findings to ensure integrity of the procurement process, as this documentation may be used to debrief proponents. Additionally, evaluation booklets may be requested through a Freedom of Information (FOI) application.
- Final conclusions and award recommendations are arrived at by the evaluation team, after reviewing the total scoring.

### **Integrity**

- The process must be as objective as possible.
- Confidentiality and security must be ensured. Evaluators are not to discuss the evaluation with each other or with anyone outside the evaluation team. Evaluators will be allowed to discuss the evaluation with other evaluation team members only during the decision making process.
- Only material submitted as part of the RFP submission and material obtained by formal clarification is to be evaluated.
- No communication with Proponents will be allowed, except via the RFP coordinator.
- All compliant bids are to be treated in the same manner and to be given equal consideration.

### **Documented**

- For reporting and auditing purposes, all procurement documentation, as well as any other pertinent information must be retained in a recoverable form for a period of seven years. This is also important in case a Freedom of Information (FOI) is requested. Exemptions from disclosing information about other Proponent may be available under applicable privacy laws.

# Evaluation Process

## Process Overview

The evaluation of innovation RFPs may be conducted using a six-stage process as detailed below:

**Figure 2 – Evaluation Stages and Weightings (example)**

Stage	Description	Points	Minimum Score [Optional – delete this column if not required]
I	Mandatory Requirements	(Pass/Fail)	Pass
II	General Requirements	55%	44%
III	Oral Presentation and/or Site Visit <i>[Optional]</i>	5%	4%
IV	Total Cost of Ownership	10%	8%
V	Risk Mitigation	25%	20%
VI	References Verification	5%	4%
	Total	100%	80%

### Stage I – Review of Mandatory Requirements (Pass/Fail)

Each Proponent’s written response will be subjected to a compliance check of the mandatory requirement forms as set out in the RFP (see figure 3). Proposal submissions that do not comply with all of the mandatory requirements must be disqualified and removed from consideration. The RFP Coordinator will perform this task as part of the evaluation process.

When selecting mandatory requirements, the BPS Buyer should consider that Proponents must comply with every mandatory requirement or the BPS Buyer is obligated to disqualify that Proponent’s proposal. Proponents must achieve a pass for each criterion in order to proceed to Stage II.

The following list shows an example of mandatory requirements that could be included in an innovation RFP:

**Figure 3 – Innovation RFP Mandatory Requirements**

<b>ID</b>	<b>Mandatory Requirements</b>
<b>M1</b>	Mandatory Requirements Checklist
<b>M2</b>	Declaration and Certification
<b>M3</b>	Total Cost of Ownership Schedule
<b>M4</b>	Unfair Advantage and Conflict of Interest Statement
<b>M5</b>	Medical Device and Medical Establishment Licenses
<b>M6</b>	Electrical Certification
<b>M7</b>	Safety Disclosure
<b>M8</b>	Proponent Consortium Information

In addition to the standard mandatory requirements used in the equipment, goods, and services CTC templates, the pricing schedule has been changed to support innovation procurement.

*M3 – Total Cost of Ownership Schedule*

The Proponent should separately provide in the Total Cost of Ownership Schedule, details of base price/fee, and any applicable costs associated with training, implementation, or consumables. Installation charges of equipment related to the equipment or services provided should include all necessary components, including but not limited to, conversion costs, cabling, connections, and wall plates to provide a complete operational system.

Please refer to the Total Cost of Ownership Guide and Calculator.



**Stage II – Evaluation of General Requirements (Point Rated Criteria)**

The Evaluation Team’s responsibility is to review the Proponents’ written responses to determine a shortlist of Proponents. Proposals will be evaluated against the Point Rated Criteria identified in the RFP.

At the conclusion of the individual evaluations, a meeting will be convened to discuss the consolidated scoring results for each proposal and the final average score. A master document will be developed by the RFP Coordinator based on the findings from the meeting and will contain a summary of the Evaluators’ comments for all of the rated criteria of the RFP.

The following list shows an example of General Requirements that can be included in an innovation RFP:

ID	Evaluation Criteria	Weighting	Minimum Score
GR1	Corporate Overview	5%	4%
GR2	Innovation Overview	15%	12%
GR3	Service Schedule (Outcome-based Specifications)	75%	60%
GR4	Form of Agreement	5%	4%
	Total	100%	80%

In addition to the standard general requirements used in the equipment, goods, and services CTC templates, one requirement has been added (Innovation Overview), and one requirement has been changed (Service Schedule) to support innovation procurement.

### *GR2 – Innovation Overview*

A number of detailed criteria have been developed for this section. An example process for scoring these criteria is outlined in [Appendix A](#) of this guide.

1. **General Overview** – The Proponent should provide:
  - a. The innovation name with a detailed description, highlighting the functions, specifications and outputs.
  - b. A description of how the proposed innovation functions in a planned operational setting, including evidence, measured, quantified, or observed data that demonstrate the specifications of the proposed innovation were achieved.
  - c. The expected life cycle, in years, of the proposed innovation for the end user.
2. **Features and Benefits** – The Proponent should describe the features and benefits of the proposed innovation, including any relevant qualitative or quantitative data or measurable benefits.
3. **Innovation Readiness Level (IRL)**– The Proponent should indicate the appropriate IRL (see [Appendix B](#) for a high level explanation of each level) for the proposed innovation, including any challenge that has been addressed or any challenge that remains to be addressed, and the required certifications, licences, and approvals obtained to date for the proposed innovation.
4. **Intellectual Property (IP) Rights and Ownership** – The Proponent should indicate the patent status and patent ownership status relating to the proposed innovation.
5. **Test Plan** – The Proponent should describe:
  - a. The objectives of testing the proposed innovation, the summary of the proposed testing scenario and test methods, and the environment(s) required to test the proposed innovation.
  - b. The logistic and resource requirements for the installation and operation of the proposed innovation, including the required physical resources to be provided, such as equipment, infrastructure, or utilities, as well as technical requirements for proper functioning of the innovation, if applicable.
  - c. The estimated time, in weeks, required to complete and deliver the associated equipment and any implementation requirements necessary for test plan

execution, providing the specific metrics that would be measured and verified through the proposed test, as well as how performance and value measurement and monitoring could be accomplished.

- d. All of the risks and mitigating strategies related to the testing of the proposed innovation that the Proponent has identified.

### *GR3 – Service Schedule (Outcome-based Specification)*

The Proponent must review the specifications set out in the Service Schedule (Outcome-based Specifications) and demonstrate which specifications the Proponent will be able to meet. The Proponent must provide detailed responses and must identify any item not applicable to the proposed innovation as “not applicable”.

Consider assigning a greater weighting score as Outcome-based specifications will help determine the best fit-for-purpose solution to a Healthcare Organization stated need.

Please refer to the Outcome-based Specification Guide for more details on how to develop this schedule.



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### **Stage IV – Total Cost of Ownership/ (Point Rated Criteria)**

Pricing will be scored based on a relative pricing formula on the basis of the information provided in the Total Cost of Ownership Schedule

Each Proponent will receive a percentage of the total possible points allocated to price for the innovation by dividing the lowest bid TCO / fee for the innovation services by the Proponent’s total cost of ownership (TCO)/fee for the innovation services. For example, if the lowest TCO / price offered by one Proponent is \$120.00, that Proponent will receive 100% of the possible points ( $120/120 = 100\%$ ). A Proponent who bids \$150.00 will receive 80% of the possible points ( $120/150 = 80\%$ ) and a Proponent who bids \$240.00 will receive 50% of the possible points ( $120/240 = 50\%$ ).

$(\text{Lowest Price}/2^{\text{nd}} \text{ Lowest Price}) \times \text{Total available points} = \text{Score for proposal with } 2^{\text{nd}} \text{ lowest price}$

$(\text{Lowest Price}/3^{\text{rd}} \text{ Lowest Price}) \times \text{Total available points} = \text{Score for proposal with } 3^{\text{rd}} \text{ lowest price}$

# Responsibilities of Evaluators

1. Review the RFP package and addenda/attachments fully and thoroughly, with particular focus on the evaluation criteria and their mapping to outcome-based requirements.
2. Review submissions, assign points and write corresponding comments to support each individual score. Comments are necessary to support the evaluation and will be used to conduct debriefings with unsuccessful Proponents. Minimal comments and clustered points may leave the impression that due diligence was not applied during the evaluation. Unsuccessful Proponents will want to improve their content and to better understand the bidding process. Evaluation booklets are subject to FIPPA and in this regard can be requested through a Freedom of Information (FOI) request.
3. Evaluate content and not style. It is critical that the focus be on content only and in accordance with the pre-established evaluation criteria as set out in the RFP document.
4. Assess each proposal independently of the other submissions and score accordingly. Rate each of the criteria separately and distinctly for each Proponent. There must be clear separation of the results of the proposals and a clear winner to support award recommendation. In case of a tie score, the method of resolving the tie score stated in the RFP will be executed.
5. Review all information in the proposal. Information may not be in the correct location, but should still be taken into account.
6. Score Proponents' responses solely on the degree to which their proposed solution will meet the need identified by the purchaser. Evaluators are required to exercise due diligence to ensure that personal preferences and bias have not affected the scoring.
7. After the individual portion of the evaluation has been completed, the scores will be multiplied by the total points allocated per deliverable in order to determine a weighted score per deliverable. Weighted scores will be added to determine the final score for each Proponent in the rated criteria section.

The Evaluation Team Lead will then prepare the Evaluation Summary for each evaluation by coordinating all comments and feedback from the team members in order to provide the Proponent with a debrief of the strengths and weaknesses of their proposal. This Summary will be signed by each member of the evaluation team.

# Appendix A – Example evaluation criteria for the innovation overview section

In applying scores through the evaluation process, evaluators should note that proposals are evaluated against the Evaluation Team's expectations of what are acceptable responses to the criteria. For consistency, the following sections describe the characteristics attributable to particular scores between 0-15 and are inserted as an example of acceptable evaluation responses.

## General Overview

- 0 Points: The Proponent has not provided key functions, specifications, planned operational settings, and outputs regarding the proposed innovation.
- 5 Points: The Proponent has partially provided key functions, specifications, planned operational settings, and outputs regarding the proposed innovation.
- 10 Points: The Proponent has provided key functions, specifications, planned operational settings, and outputs regarding the proposed innovation.
- 15 Points: The Proponent has fully provided key functions, specifications, planned operational settings, and outputs regarding the proposed innovation.

## Features and Benefits

- 0 Points: The proposed innovation has no features or benefits that offer differentiation from similar competitive offerings already in the marketplace.
- 5 Points: The proposed innovation has features and benefits that offer minimal differentiation from similar competitive offerings already in the marketplace.
- 10 Points: The proposed innovation has unique features and benefits that offer moderate differentiation from similar competitive offerings already in the marketplace.
- 15 Points: The proposed innovation has unique features and benefits that provide exceptional differentiation from similar competitive offerings and are sufficiently unique that the potential exists to not only create significant competitive advantage in existing market niches but also define new market spaces.

## Innovation Readiness Level

- 0 Points: The Proponent has not demonstrated that the innovation has reached the appropriate level of development, testing and validation to a minimum of Technology Readiness Level (TRL) as required under the RFP. In addition, the Proponent has not demonstrated that they have obtained the certifications, licenses, and approvals required to test their innovation in an operational setting, and provided details on those left to obtain.
- 5 Points: The Proponent has partially demonstrated that the innovation has reached the appropriate level of development, testing and validation to a minimum of TRL as required under the RFP. In addition, the Proponent has partially demonstrated that they have obtained the certifications, licenses, and approvals required to test their innovation in an operational setting, and provided details on those left to obtain.
- 10 Points: The Proponent has demonstrated that the innovation has reached the appropriate level of development, testing and validation to a minimum of TRL as required under the RFP. In addition, the Proponent has demonstrated that they have obtained the certifications, licenses, and approvals required to test their innovation in an operational setting, and provided details on those left to obtain.
- 15 Points: The Proponent has fully demonstrated that the innovation has reached the appropriate level of development, testing and validation to a minimum of TRL as required under the RFP. In addition, the Proponent has fully demonstrated that they have obtained the certifications, licenses, and approvals required to test their innovation in an operational setting, and provided details on those left to obtain.

## Intellectual Property (IP) Rights and Ownership

- 0 Points: The Proponent has not provided an IP Right strategy that is appropriate to the conditions outlined in the Innovation Overview Schedule and hasn't agreed with the terms and conditions set in terms of IP Ownership.
- 05 Points: The Proponent has provided a preliminary IP Right strategy that is appropriate to the conditions outlined in the Innovation Overview Schedule and has partially agreed with the terms and conditions set in terms of IP Ownership.
- 10 Points: The Proponent has provided an IP Right strategy that is appropriate to the conditions outlined in the Innovation Overview Schedule and has agreed with the terms and conditions set in terms of IP Ownership.
- 15 Points: The Proponent has provided a complete IP Right strategy that is appropriate to the conditions outlined in the Innovation Overview Schedule and has fully agreed with the terms and conditions set in terms of IP Ownership.

## Test Plan

- 0 Points: The proposed test plan, objectives, tester benefits, performance metrics and risk assessment are not described.
- 5 Points: The proposed test plan, objectives, tester benefits, measurement approach and risk assessment are reasonably well-described.
- 10 Points: The proposed test plan, objectives, tester benefits, measurement approach and risk assessment are very well-described.
- 15 Points: The proposed BCIP test plan, objectives, tester benefits, measurement approach and risk assessment are compelling.

# Appendix B – Innovation Readiness Levels (IRLs)

Innovation readiness level (IRLs) are a set of management metrics that enable the assessment of the maturity of a particular innovation and the consistent comparison of maturity between different types of innovations—all in the context of a specific system, application and operational environment.



