User Reference Group

Terms of Reference

## Purpose

The User Reference Group (URG) is an invitational only forum chaired by the Lead Department to ensure stakeholder feedback is captured and appropriately represented during the end-to-end contract lifecycle of whole of Victorian Government (WoVG) procurement activities.

Consisting of individuals appointed by the Responsible Officers (RO. E.g., CPO, CIO or equivalent as is appropriate), charged with representing the specific requirements and interests of their respective entities (Member), such as ensuring;

* the views of their constituency are known and considered.
* alignment with government policies and user needs.
* collaborative development and review of tender documentation, including specifications.
* provision of supplier and contract performance feedback including identifying opportunities and risks to be managed.

The Lead Department will assign an individual/s to manage the URG (Chair).

## Roles & Responsibilities

#### Each Member will:

* Complete, sign and return a conflict of interest (COI) and confidentiality declaration/s, to the Chair and immediately advise the Chair in the event of any change to their COI circumstances, or should they become aware of any breach of confidentiality.
* Represent the interests of their respective entities by:
  + identifying local / specific issues related to the contract;
  + articulating the business needs;
  + articulating the level of future demand;
  + actively participate in supplier performance management activities and reporting;
  + identifying opportunities and processes to raise standards;
  + reporting back to the entity on all relevant matters;
* Assist with the development of tender documentation including the specifications that:
  + are compliant with procurement policy;
  + meet the WoVG’s policy requirements in procurement;
  + provide optimum value for money and minimise administrative burden
  + support the development of quality assurance and continuous improvement procedures;
* Review and endorse the final technical and operational documentation including the specifications on behalf of their respective entities;
* Undertake any other pre-Request for Tender (RFT) release activities as necessary;
* Maintain probity requirements;
* Support WoVG procurement implementation activities;
* Be a channel for communications to decision makers, the wider contract user base, and liaise with relevant functional groups to onboard and offboard suppliers

#### Administrative arrangements

* The URG will meet periodically during the contract lifecycle and at each milestone throughout the sourcing project, or as otherwise deemed necessary by the Chair.
* During a sourcing project documentation can be endorsed and decisions registered out of session via email confirmation.
* Secretariat support will be provided by the Lead Department, and a documented record of the meeting including recorded actions and decisions taken (Minutes) will be distributed by email within five working days. Minutes will also be stored in the electronic Document and Records Management system – Content Manager (CM).
* The Chair will support the right of all Members to engage in free discussion, and ensure that privacy, security, and confidentiality standards are met.

#### Representation

* Members may delegate responsibility to another individual (Delegate) to act on behalf of the Member, including attending a meeting of the URG, by forward notification to the Chair, including the relevant period. The Delegate must have completed the necessary COI and confidentiality declarations and have the authority to make informed decisions on the Members behalf, including respond to out-of-session decision requests as required.
* Delegation should be infrequent and should be avoided to the extent possible.
* The RO, as determined to be appropriate based on the greatest spend and risk estimates by the Lead Department for the relevant category, has the right to nominate one Member.
* If the Lead Department believes that it is necessary for additional representation from a specific entity or group of similar entities with specific needs or interest in the relevant goods & services, it may make a request in writing for such support, to the relevant entity RO to action. Such representation will be considered a Member for the duration such support is required, as determined by the Lead Department.
* Meetings can proceed with three or more Members present, with decisions and/or endorsement actions carried as subject to a two third majority, calculated as follows;
  + where each Member has an equal vote; with,
  + absentees and abstaining Members to be noted in the Minutes, but not included in the result calculation.
  + all individuals present, including their title and entity, must be documented in the Minutes.

#### Other

The URG may seek additional input in the form of stakeholder surveys, ‘town hall’ meetings, focus groups, targeted interviews or by whatever form or means it determines necessary to achieve an optimal representation of user’s requirements and subsequent view of supplier performance and contractual effectiveness.