

Government of Saskatchewan

Vendor Debriefing

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## Purpose of this Protocol

The purpose of this protocol is to describe the purpose and nature of a vendor debriefing and the process for conducting vendor debriefings requested by vendors that have participated in a competitive procurement process conducted by a public entity.

“public entity” means a ministry, agency, board, commission, or Crown Corporation of the Government of Saskatchewan.

## Purpose of a Debriefing

The purpose of a vendor debriefing is to provide a two-way communication process for public entities and participating vendors to exchange constructive feedback on the public entity’s procurement processes and practices and the strengths and weaknesses of the vendor’s submission.

Debriefings are an important component of a competitive procurement process and provide an opportunity to:

- recognize the efforts vendors make in responding to procurement documents issued by the public entity and provide vendors with an opportunity to provide feedback on challenges that the process creates for vendors and potential changes or improvements that could be made to the public entity’s procurement processes and practices;
- provide constructive criticism and suggestions for improvements so that unsuccessful vendors have a better opportunity for succeeding in future procurement processes;
- promote positive two-way communication between the vendor and the public entity’s procurement professionals in order to build relationships and allow perspectives to be shared, which may result in enhancements to future procurement activities and improve project results.
- provide vendors with an explanation as to why their submission was not successful and address questions and concerns in a non-confrontational manner, which may increase the vendor’s understanding of the process and assist in mitigating the risk of unsuccessful vendors pursuing litigation or initiating procurement disputes.

## **Nature of a Debriefing**

The debriefing process is not a complaint or dispute resolution process and should not be treated as such. Information about other vendors or their submissions will not be discussed or disclosed in the debriefing. Information provided to a vendor during a debriefing is provided verbally and no documents will be distributed. The debriefing is intended to be an informal meeting and the vendor should not bring legal counsel to the debriefing.

## **Availability of a Debriefing**

Unless otherwise stated in the procurement document, debriefings are available in connection with all open competitive procurement processes where the procurement document is publicly posted, but may not be available in connection with lower value competitive procurement processes that are conducted by invitation. Debriefings are not offered if the competitive procurement process is cancelled. A debriefing is typically initiated at the request of a vendor. Only vendors that submitted a response to the competitive procurement process may request a debriefing. In most cases only one debriefing session will be provided to any one vendor in connection with any one competitive procurement process.

## **Requesting a Debriefing**

Requests for a vendor debriefing should be directed to the contact person identified in the procurement document (the “contact person”). Unless otherwise stated in the procurement document, vendors are expected to make their request for a debriefing within thirty (30) days of the notification of the outcome of the competitive procurement process. Requests for a debriefing that are made outside of the required time period may be considered by the public entity on a case by case basis. If the procurement document contains alternate or additional instructions regarding the time period or process for requesting a debriefing, vendors must follow those instructions.

“contact person” as identified in the competition document.

## **Scheduling a Debriefing**

The contact person is responsible for communicating and scheduling the debriefing with the vendor’s representative. Debriefings may occur in person at the public entity’s offices or by way of teleconference, depending on the location of the requesting vendor. The public entity should be as flexible as possible, within reason, when scheduling vendor debriefings. In most cases, a thirty-minute session should be sufficient and debriefings should be scheduled on that basis.

When scheduling the debriefing, the following should be addressed with the vendor’s representative:

- confirm the time and location of the debriefing or dial-in information if the debriefing is being conducted by way of teleconference;
- remind the vendor of the purpose and the nature of the debriefing, as described in this protocol; and
- confirm who will be attending the debriefing on behalf of the vendor.

## Conducting the Debriefing

The suggested structure for conducting a debriefing is as follows:

- introductions and reiteration of the purpose and nature of the debriefing;
- overview of the evaluation process and relative ranking;
- discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the vendor's submission in relation to the evaluation criteria;
- discussion of how the vendor could improve their submissions in response to future procurement opportunities;
- opportunity for the vendor to provide feedback on the competitive procurement process and suggestions for improvements to the Public Entity's procurement practices; and
- questions and answers.

## Questions

Questions and inquiries regarding this Vendor debriefing policy may be directed to the appropriate public entity or Priority Saskatchewan.