

Request for Information

Subject: Fast Stream assessment process

Date: 18 January 2023

Dear assessment supplier,

Civil Service Fast Stream is seeking your input regarding a redesign of our Fast Stream graduate level recruitment process.

1. Request:

Via this request for information, we are asking the market to respond with innovative solutions and technology that transforms our existing assessment methodology. We are open to different design proposals for all or part of this graduate process.

At this stage we only require your proposals for assessment tools and how you deliver them. We intend to progress new solutions by September 2023 or, if that is not wholly achievable, a phased implementation approach to be complete by September 2024.

2. Background:

Fast Stream is the Civil Service's flagship graduate-level talent programme, number 1 in The Times Top 100 graduate employer listing. The programme identifies and develops high potential individuals to help meet the present and future demands of the Civil Service, specifically to Grade 7 (middle manager) level.

We offer 15 schemes within Fast Stream, of which 4 schemes may be selected by an individual candidate. Around 40-50,000 applications are received annually, for approximately 1,000 graduate level roles. We anticipate these figures will be maintained.

The application window typically opens in mid-September and remains open for around 4 weeks. Applicants progress through a series of online tests for sift purposes before attending a generic assessment centre (common to all schemes). Some schemes also have a specialist final selection process (although this is out of scope for this procurement), dependent on the specific scheme.

All applicants currently apply via an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) (designed and run in house) which is devised to follow candidates through from application to pre appointment checks for successful candidates. The system also manages assessment centre and assessor bookings and integrates scores from assessment exercises (out of scope for this RFI).

3. Drivers for updating assessment design:

- To **modernise** our selection methodology to ensure the process is cutting edge, utilising latest technology against the **defined** criteria.
- To potentially include **immersive** technology (to increase realism and authenticity), **multimedia** (including video/animation scenarios), augmented **video interview** technology, **gamified** assessment, or other design approach.
- To ensure a **stream-lined** and efficient assessment design, ideally reducing/shortening assessment stages, potentially using a **blended** methodology.
- To be able to **manage candidate numbers and vacancies** through the assessment stages.
- To provide the **best candidate experience** at all assessment stages.
- To **maximise predictivity** in selecting high potential leaders of the future.

- To **maximise diversity outcomes** by careful design, piloting and monitoring in the context of wider targeted attraction and positive action areas, including increased **STEM and regionally** based roles.
4. **Existing assessment design and criteria:**
- The essential assessment criteria is set out in **Annex A** with the current assessment approach outlined in **Annex B**.
 - We anticipate that we will maintain the assessment criteria, which are based on extensive, recent research.
 - Please consider **Reasonable Adjustment** paths in respect to the different suggested solutions for disabled candidates.
 - Your insight is invited in respect to re-developing all or some of the **assessment design**.
5. **Applicant Tracking System (ATS):**
- Clarification should be provided regarding the relevant **ATS** - in particular whether the whole provision will be on your **own platform** and own tests or whether tests are considered **stand alone** and would need integration with an ATS solution to manage candidate workflow/bookings/passes.
6. **Related guidelines:**
- Potential suppliers need to be aware of and aligned with the Government Digital Service (GDS) digital design specifications and the **GDS Service Standard**.
 - Look and feel - products are expected to be visually configurable, and designed with accessibility in mind (required minimum standard is AA of the WCAG 2 standard **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines**).
 - Maintain any data in the UK, or EEA where appropriate.
 - Products and services must adhere to **GDPR** and general data security, aligning with our stated position on data retention (e.g. length of time kept before erasure, type of data etc).
 - Additional guidelines to note are presented in **Annex C**.
7. **Required response:**
- As a pre-procurement stage request for information, please provide a **short written submission** with estimated costing (up to max three sides in 12 font) to outline your initial suggestions to develop all or some of the assessment stages, or to reconfigure the overall approach taken.
 - Responses should meet the Fast Stream **assessment criteria (Annex A)**, please state clearly which assessment criteria your solution meets.
 - **No supplier assessment will be made on the basis of this submission.** This submission will only be used to support internal decisions regarding our recruitment process and an Invitation to Tender will then seek bids for a specific assessment process (all or part).
 - Send your response to: louise.attwood@cabinetoffice.gov.uk by **8 February 2023**.
 - All responses are **confidential** and will not be shared further, except as an element within a possible Invitation to Tender, unlinked to a specific supplier. If you consider any of the information provided to be commercially sensitive please indicate.
 - Any **questions** relating to this request must be submitted via e-mail to: louise.attwood@cabinetoffice.gov.uk by **31 January 2023**.
 - Please use the following text in the email subject 'RFI Fast Stream assessment process'
 - To ensure that all organisations have equal access to information regarding this Request for Information, the Cabinet Office will publish all its **responses to questions** raised by organisations on an anonymous basis, by **2 February 2023**.

- Cabinet Office/FSET will not enter into *exclusive* discussions regarding the requirements of this Request for Information with organisations.
- An additional **meeting opportunity** may follow. Please indicate if you would like to attend.

8. Procurement stages (following the RFI):

- On receipt of submissions, Fast Stream will review submissions and formalise a **business case** to gain the necessary internal spend approvals.
- If approved, the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) will then agree a **procurement strategy**. This will outline the route to market, whether it will be via Framework or other route(s).

Fast Stream and Emerging Talent

Annex A: Essential Fast Stream assessment criteria

THINK	1. ANALYTICAL THINKING	A. Gathering and filtering data	<input type="checkbox"/>
		B. Information processing	<input type="checkbox"/>
		C. Critical thinking & decision making	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. HOLISTIC THINKING	A. Takes account of the wider context	<input type="checkbox"/>
		B. Sees patterns and interrelationships	<input type="checkbox"/>
		C. Envisages how events may play out	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3. STRUCTURED THINKING	A. Investigating and clarifying tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>
		B. Planning & organising	<input type="checkbox"/>
		C. Monitors and takes corrective action	<input type="checkbox"/>

RELATE	1. INTERPERSONAL STYLE	A. Collaborative and consultative	<input type="checkbox"/>
		B. Recognises and attends to others' needs	<input type="checkbox"/>
		C. Values diverse contributions and perspectives	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. PERSONAL IMPACT	A. Initiates and builds contacts with others (networking)	<input type="checkbox"/>
		B. Influences the views and actions of others	<input type="checkbox"/>

		C. Communicates effectively	
	3. SELF-REGULATION (Emotional Intelligence)	A. Self-awareness & empathy	
		B. Self-management: manages own emotions	
		C. Self-expression: projects a positive impression on others (Impression management)	

ADAPT	1. FLEXIBILITY	A. Open to change	
		B. Responds flexibly to meet changing requirements	
		C. Rapidly comes to terms with change	
	2. LEARNING AGILITY	A. Has a learning orientation	
		B. Acquires new learning at pace	
		C. Consolidates learning	
	3. INNOVATION	A. Incorporates alternative thinking	
		B. Generates novel approaches to address problems or new challenges	
		C. Makes improvements to existing approaches	

STRIVE	1. MOTIVATION	A. Driven to succeed and achieve	
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		B. Applies effort to meet demands	
		C. Takes the initiative (proactivity)	
	2. COMMITMENT	A. Goal orientated	
		B. Strives to improve and succeed (stretch)	
		C. Takes responsibility	
	3. CONDUCT	A. Calculated risk-taking	
		B. Resilient/pragmatic in adversity	
		C. Integrity	

Annex B: Existing Fast Stream assessment design

The current **assessment approach** is described below, consisting of 5 to 6 phases, with the 6th phase dependent on Fast Stream scheme(s) selected by a candidate. See Annex A for the anticipated **assessment criteria** overview, which was based on extensive job analysis and **we expect to be maintained**.

Assessment phases:

Phase 1 - Online Tests (untimed and multiple choice) consisting of:

- Work Style Questionnaires (strength and learning focused)
- Multimedia Situational Judgement Questionnaire
- Adaptive Numerical test assessing data interpretation and calculation skills

Phase 2 – Online Work Based Scenarios (untimed and multiple choice) consisting of:

- Multimedia Case Study
- Learning Assessment – assessing learning agility capacity

Phase 3 – Online Video Interview (while on hold in 2022-23, we would like some form of video interview to return) consisting of:

- Strengths focused asymmetric interview

Phase 4 - Additional Information required for some schemes, to verify candidate degree-level eligibility (they must hold a degree in related subjects).

Phase 5 - Virtual Fast Stream Assessment Centre

Assessing approximately 3,500-4,000 candidates reaching this stage and would prefer any assessment centre to be kept within half a day:

- Leadership Scenario
- Team Scenario
- Written/Analysis Scenario

Stage 6 – Final Selection Boards - these are out of scope

Virtual scheme specific assessments for the majority of Fast Stream schemes.

Annex C: Additional guidelines for participation

1. Costs

1.1 The Authority will not reimburse any costs incurred by an Organisation (including the costs or expenses of any members of its Group of Economic Operators (if acting as a Lead Contact), Sub-Contractors or advisors) in connection with the preparation and/or submission of the Organization's Request for Information response, including (without limit) where:

1.1.1 The Request for Information is cancelled, shortened or delayed for any reason (including, without limitation, where such action is necessary due to non-compliance or potential non-compliance with the law, including the Regulations);

1.2.1 All or any part of the Request for Information is at any time amended, clarified, added to or withdrawn for any reason;

1.3.1 The Organisation and/or its Respondent is disqualified from participation in this Request for Information for any reason, including breach of these Terms of Participation.

2. Right to Cancel or Vary this Request for Information

2.1 The Authority reserves the right, subject to the rules set out in the Regulations, to:

2.1.1 Change the basis of or the procedures for this Request for Information at any time;

2.1.2 Amend, clarify, add to or withdraw all or any part of the Request for Information at any time, including varying any timetable or deadlines set out in the Request for Information; and:

2.1.3 Cancel all or part of this Request for Information at any stage and at any time.

3. Right to Confirm or Request Updated RFI Information

3.1 The Authority reserves the right to require Organisations to confirm that their Request for Information response remains accurate at all stages of the Request for Information process and/or to request updated Information.

3.2 The Authority also reserves the right to specify additional standards or requirements according to their particular requirements.

4. Conduct - Specific Obligations

4.1 The Organisation must not directly or indirectly canvass any Minister, officer, public sector employee, member or agent regarding this Request for Information or attempt to obtain any information from the same regarding this Request for Information (except where and as permitted by the Request for Information). Any attempt by the Organisation to do so may result in the Organisation's disqualification from this Request for information.

5. Notices to Organisations

5.1 This Request for Information and any related documents referred to have been prepared on behalf of the Authority for the pre-market test to gather information.

5.2 Whilst prepared in good faith, the Request for Information documents are intended only as a preliminary background explanation of the Authority's activities and plans. Therefore it isn't intended to form the basis of any decision on whether to enter into any contractual relationship with the Authority.

5.3 The Request for Information documents do not purport to be all inclusive or to contain all of the information that organisations may require.

5.4 Neither the Authority or its advisors, or the directors, officers, partners, employees, other staff, agents or advisers of any such body or person:

5.4.1 Makes any representation or warranty (express or implied) as to the accuracy, reasonableness or completeness of the Request for Information documents;

5.4.2 Accepts any responsibility for the information contained in the Request for Information documents or for its fairness, accuracy or completeness; or

5.4.3 Shall be liable for any loss or damage (other than in respect of fraudulent misrepresentation) arising as a result of reliance on such information or any subsequent communication.

5.5 Nothing in the Request for Information documents is, or should be, relied upon as a promissory or a representation as to the Authority's ultimate decisions in relation to the Request for Information.

5.6 The publication of the Request for Information documents in no way commits the Authority to award any contract.

6. Confidentiality

6.1 Subject to the exceptions referred to in paragraph 5.2, the contents of the request for information are being made available by the authority on the conditions that the organisation:

6.1.1 Treats the Request for Information as confidential at all times, unless the information is already in the public domain;

6.1.2 Does not disclose, copy, reproduce, distribute or pass any of the Information to any other person at any time or allow any of these things to happen, except where, and to the extent that, the Information has been published in accordance with paragraph 7 (Freedom of Information);

6.1.3 Only uses the Information for the purposes of preparing a Response (or deciding whether to respond); and

6.1.4 Does not undertake any promotional or similar activity related to this Request for Information within any section of the media.

6.2 An Organisation may disclose, distribute or pass any of the Information to its members of its Group of Economic Operators (if acting as a Lead Contact), Sub-Contractors, advisers or to any other person provided that:

6.2.1 This is done for the sole purpose of enabling the Organisation to submit its response and the person receiving the information undertakes in writing (such written undertaking to be made available to the Authority on the Authority's request) to keep the information confidential.

6.2.2 It obtains the Authority's prior written consent in relation to such disclosure, distribution or passing of Information; or

6.2.3 The disclosure is made for the sole purpose of obtaining legal advice from external lawyers in relation to this Request for Information;

6.2.4 The Organisation is legally required to make such a disclosure; or

6.2.5 The information has been published in accordance with paragraph 7 (Freedom of Information).

6.3 The Authority may disclose information submitted by Organisations during this Request for Information to its officers, employees, agents or advisers or other government departments who are stakeholders in this Request for Information.

6.4 All Central Government Departments and their Executive Agencies and Non

6.5 Departmental Public Bodies are subject to control and reporting within Government. In particular, they report to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury for all expenditure.

6.6 Further, the Cabinet Office has a cross Government role delivering overall Government Policy on public procurement – including ensuring value for money and related aspects of good procurement practice.

6.7 For these purposes, the Authority may disclose within HM Government any of the Organisation's documentation or information (including any that the Organisation considers to be confidential and / or commercially sensitive such as specific information in its response) submitted by the Organisation to the Authority during this Request for Information. Organisations taking part in this Request for Information consent to such disclosure as part of their participation in the Request for Information process.

7. Freedom of Information

7.1 In accordance with the obligations and duties placed upon public authorities by the FoIA (Freedom of Information Act 2000) and the EIR (Environmental Information Regulations 2004) and in accordance with any Government Code of Practice on the discharge of public authorities' functions under the FoIA all information submitted to the Authority may be disclosed under a request for information made pursuant to the FoIA and the EIR.

7.2 Organisations should note that the information disclosed pursuant to a FoIA or EIR request may include, but is not limited to, the disclosure of its Request for Information response (including any attachments or embedded documents).

7.3 If the Organisation considers any part of its Response or any other information it submits to be confident or commercially sensitive, the Organisations should:

7.3.1 Clearly identify such information as confidential or commercially sensitive;

7.3.2 Explain the potential implications of disclosure of such information taking into account and specifically addressing the public interest test as set out in the FoIA; and

7.3.3 Provide an estimate of the period of time during which it believes that such information will remain confidential or commercially sensitive.

7.4 If the Organisation identifies that part of its Response or other information it submits is confidential or commercially sensitive, the Authority in its sole discretion will consider whether or not to withhold such information from publication. Organisations should note that, even where information is identified as confidential or commercially sensitive, the Authority may be required to disclose such information in accordance with the FoIA or the EIR.

7.5 The Authority is required to form an independent judgement of whether the Organisation's information referred to in paragraph 7.4 is exempt from disclosure under the FoIA or the EIR and whether the public interest favours disclosure or not. The Authority cannot guarantee that any information indicated as being confidential or commercially sensitive by the Organisation will be withheld from publication.

7.6 If the Organisation receives a request for information under the FoIA or the EIR during and in relation to this Request for Information, it should be immediately referred to the Authority.

8. Intellectual Property

8.1 The Request for Information issued shall remain the property of the Authority and shall be used by the Organisation only for the purposes of this Request for Information.

8.2 The Organisation grants the Authority an irrevocable, perpetual, non-exclusive licence to copy, amend and reproduce any intellectual property contained within its Response for the purposes of carrying out this Request for Information; complying with the law and/or any government guidance; and/or carrying out the Authority's business activities. This licence shall also permit the Authority to sublicense the use of the Organisation's. Response to its advisers or sub-contractors or other Contracting Bodies for the same purposes.

9. No Inducement or Incentive

9.1 The Organisation acknowledges and agrees that nothing contained within the Request for Information shall constitute an inducement or incentive nor shall have in any other way persuaded an Organisation to submit a Response or enter into any other contractual agreement.

10. Law and Jurisdiction

10.1 Any dispute (including non-contractual disputes or claims) relating to this Request for Information shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of England and Wales.

10.2 The courts of England and Wales shall have exclusive jurisdiction to settle any dispute or claim that arises out of or in connection with this Request for Information (including non-contractual disputes or claims).