Request for

Information (RFI)

**Request for Information**

**PR 2022 099**

**Low Code Solutions**

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# Introduction

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is currently seeking information from potential Suppliers active in the Marketplace in order to both qualify requirements and assess market supply opportunities for the provision of a **Low-code Platform.**

CPS will seek to assess opportunities for implementing supply contracts for such products and services which will deliver tangible value for money and best in class whilst ensuring a compatible strategic fit.  The Request for Information (RFI) is classified as **pre-market engagement** and a formal tender (or alternate legally Public Contracts Regulations 2015 compliant route to market) will be used to identify the supplier that best meets our needs.

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) wants to engage with Suppliers in the market to understand what solutions are available, the suitability of these solutions to the organisation, and how these can be delivered internally.

This Request for Information (RFI) document summarises the requirement and requests feedback to be provided via the supplier response to questions. This will aid the Authority to develop future requirements, inform future procurements, understand innovation as well as set an appropriate budget.

The CPS understands that Supplier time is incredibly valuable, and your input into this exercise is both welcomed and appreciated, though please note that the CPS is under no obligation to go out to the market following this exercise.

This Request for Information (RFI) document adheres to the [GCF Supplier Code of Conduct](file://azfs/RCTGroups/PCS/Governance%20%26%20Policy%20Area/1.%20The%20Library%20-%20Approved%20Suite%20of%20Documents/Supplier%20Code%20of%20Conduct/GCF%20Supplier_Code_of_Conduct.pdf).

Following this exercise, the CPS may undertake further market engagement exercises to obtain and refine information.

## 1.1 Principles

**The principles of this request for information are as follows:**

**Consistent Messaging to the Market**

Dialogue with the market will be consistent and as open as is possible within the bounds of appropriate commercial confidentiality.

**Honesty and Openness**

Comments made will not be attributable, unless specifically agreed, and any/all discussions will work through possible options, however discussion does not imply that an option is preferred or will be implemented, as consultation is to shape the process.

**Future Procurements**

These discussions do not form a part, or any existing or future procurements and any feedback given during the discussions will have no influence on the participant’s role or standing in any future procurements. Accordingly, we do not encourage any marketing type statements in the documentation or during discussions.

**Confidentiality**

All information submitted or communicated by Suppliers will be treated as confidential and only used to inform internal strategies, tactics, and document creation.

**Inconsistencies and Omissions**

Suppliers should promptly advise CPS in writing of any inconsistencies or omissions they find in the Engagement Materials or their submission responses.

# 1.2. Background: Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

The CPS is responsible for prosecuting most cases heard in the criminal courts in England and Wales. It is led by the Director of Public Prosecutions and acts independently on criminal cases investigated by the police and other agencies.

We have more than 6,000 highly trained staff whose duty is to make sure the right person is prosecuted for the right offence, and that trials are fair so that offenders are brought to justice whenever possible. We are proud to be recognised as a leading employer, committed to supporting a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects the community we serve.

The CPS:

* decides which cases should be prosecuted – every charging decision is based on the same two-stage test in the Code for Crown Prosecutors;
* determines the appropriate charges in more serious or complex cases, and advises the police during the early stages of investigations;
* prepares cases and presents them at court; and
* provides information, assistance and support to victims and prosecution witnesses.

**How we are organised and operate**

The CPS operates across England and Wales, with 14 regional teams prosecuting cases locally. Each of these 14 CPS Areas is headed by a Chief Crown Prosecutor (CCP) and works closely with local police forces and other criminal justice partners.

CPS Areas deal with a wide range of cases. The majority are less serious cases and are heard in the magistrates’ courts, while the most serious cases are heard in the Crown Court. CPS Direct, with prosecutors based across England and Wales, provides charging decisions to police forces and other investigators 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

There are also three Central Casework Divisions which deal with some of the most complex cases we prosecute. They work closely with specialist investigators from a range of organisations, including the National Crime Agency, HM Revenue and Customs and the Independent Police Complaints Commission, as well as with police forces across England and Wales.

**Our Values**

**We will be independent and fair**

We will prosecute independently, without bias and will seek to deliver justice in every case.

**We will be honest and open**

We will explain our decisions, set clear standards about the service the public can expect from us and be honest if we make a mistake.

**We will treat everyone with respect**

We will respect each other, our colleagues, and the public we serve, recognising that there are people behind every case.

**We will behave professionally and strive for excellence**

We will work as one team, always seeking new and better ways to deliver the best possible service for the public. We will be efficient and responsible with tax-payers' money.

**Equality and Inclusion**

The CPS commitment to inclusion and equality is at the heart of how we work, underpinned by The Equality Act 2010. It is important to us both as an employer and in the way we approach our responsibilities as a prosecuting authority. The two are closely linked – supporting a diverse workforce allows us to provide a better service to the public.

We also value the insight we get from engaging directly with the communities we serve, who provide welcome scrutiny of our work. This inclusive approach means that:

* Effective community engagement builds greater trust with the public, higher victim and witness satisfaction, and better-informed prosecution policy and practice
* The CPS has an inclusive culture, reflected in a diverse workforce, locally and nationally, and at all levels of the organisation
* By opening up the CPS and acting on input from diverse communities, we aim to inspire greater confidence in our work, in particular from witnesses and victims, resulting in improved prosecution outcomes.

## 2.0 The Landscape

The CPS understands that:

* the no-code/low-code market is in a low-maturity phase where suppliers are still entering the market with varied platform offerings at different points in the no-code/low-code spectrum.
* Standard metrics have not been developed either to quantify essential features of these offerings
* which in turn, impairs comparison of the effectiveness and overall economic advantage of these systems to traditional fully textual high-level programming languages and their attendant execution environments.

Following the Gartner definitions:

“a low-code application platform is an application platform that supports rapid application development, one-step deployment, execution and management using declarative, high-level programming abstractions, such as model-driven and metadata-based programming languages.”

Low-code is primarily designed for full-time developers, albeit sometimes people who do not have a formal background in fully textual high-level programming languages. It allows them to design applications with minimal code through visual blocks, with a drag-and-drop graphical interface to create applications.

No-code is designed primarily for business users or “citizen developers” who want to deliver simple functional use cases. As such, no-code systems are often simple tools capable of building small applications, meaning, anyone in the organisation with access and a minimum technical knowledge can quickly create business applications.

## 2.1 Existing Product/Service/Solution

The CPS currently uses a cloud based low-code development and execution platform to build and run applications in-house. Low-code application development allows the organisation to benefit from the decreased development times and reduced skill set that are associated with Low-code platforms (when compared to traditional development). The tools to build and manage the deployment of applications as well as the infrastructure to host them are all provided and managed by the low-code provider. The incumbent supplier (OutSystems) hosts 28 (at time of writing) live business applications, as well as multiple foundation & library applications that support their operations such as authentication, user management, global libraries & functions. We are presently exploring what the future provision of low-code development could look like in the long term.

The CPS digital strategy will inform key requirements for a low-code platform, including our ambitions for development of future casework tools. As this strategy is still being formulated, we are seeking information and feedback from the marketplace on low-code development and execution platforms to blend with the upcoming CPS strategy to provide a solid foundation of understanding for any future low-code tenders which may be generated after senior leadership decisions.

## 2.2 Existing Other Factors (Non-Functional)

* The CPS technical strategy and roadmap for future casework tools is currently under review. The outputs of this area are likely to have an impact on expectations for low-code deliveries.
* There is a current commitment to deliver a minimum of 4 new applications per year over the next 3 years as well as provide change/support to the existing suite of 28 live applications.
* The intended user base will be skilled low-code business users without significant skills in traditional software development or hosting management

# 2.3 Assumptions and dependencies

* There are a number of different scenarios in the event of a possible future adoption of a new low-code platform.
* The supplier may lead in the transition of the existing suite of applications & data to any new low-code platform within a predefined transition period. The aims of this transition period would include replicating existing functionality whilst causing minimal disruption of services to users.
* The supplier would lead an enablement period where CPS skilled business users would be upskilled in any new software required to build and maintain the existing suite of applications
* Platform must support standards-based authentication protocols including OpenID Connect, OAuth 2.0, and Security Assertion Markup Language (SAML) to allow integration with, for example, Azure Active directory authentication, Azure B2C and Azure B2B

# The Requirement

The CPS requires a low-code development platform which can offer the following:

**Architecture**

A development and execution platform that provides or supports

* The Model Driven Development (MDD) methodology
* automatic code compilation or translation to a runtime environment
* frameworks that provide most commonly used functionality so that only the unique functional behaviour needs to be coded, i.e. a template of a working program which uses shared resources and can be selectively modified by adding code.
* visual programming 'by drag and drop' and similar techniques in addition to text-based coding
* the ability to interface with remote information systems using standard transfer and encoding techniques, in particular SOAP/XML and REST/JSON.
* a high-performance dedicated private network connectivity option in addition to Internet access
* the ability to port code from the platform in a standard form (likely to be a high-level language suitable for compilation) should the need arise (for example due to commercial change or technical failure) thus avoiding the risk of extended downtime and supplier lock-in
* Options for interfaces to existing data sources, for example SQL database or non-relational data sources.
* Support for multiple pipelines to enable complete isolation of development and execution environments for different applications.

The platform should be physically hosted withing the United Kingdom, either on a major public cloud, or the supplier’s infrastructure, with the ability to host on an IaaS platform if required.

**Security**

At the point of any future competition, the following are likely to be advantageous security positions:

* ISO27001:2013 certification with appropriate scope
* Alignment with National Cyber Security Centre recommendations
* Service Organisation Control 2 Type II attestation with appropriate scope

The service should provide suitable tools to provide for confidentiality, integrity and availability of all CPS information held within the system, both during run time and in development. CPS information includes both operational information and the source code and configuration and associated metadata.

Provide a facility to export Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) data in real time to an external SIEM system hosted on the internet, with suitable security provided for SIEM data in-transit by TLS 1.3 or later, or otherwise.

Data to be hosted in data centres physically located within the territorial limits of the United Kingdom.

Support staff to be cleared to a minimum of the Baseline Personnel Security Standard. Where the system will be used to store CPS operational information, staff who could access that data will be required to obtain a DBS check or SC (Security Check) clearance as appropriate to the volume and sensitivity of the data. Individuals with tainted DBS checks can only be allowed access to CPS information with express agreement of the CPS. The decision as to the clearance staff required is solely a matter for the CPS, based on information provided by the supplier, and sensitivity of the information concerned.

**Development**

Development tooling must include a **visual Integrated Development Environment** (IDE) that enables rapid application development. The IDE should be simple and intuitive for use by skilled business users without significant skills in software development who use low-code code tools to deliver IT applications & services.

**Infrastructure and environment monitoring tools** which enable light touch amendments to infrastructure. Deployment management tooling, automated compilation of code & packaging for releases; all of which reduce the risk in deployment of releases, increases security, promotes standardisation & reduces the need for advanced skills to manage the resulting application.

**Technical debt avoidance**: Avoiding technical debt is key to maintaining applications & services and each application should be an individual application without dependencies on other application except where reuse of information makes that essential. A platform should include tools which assist limiting the creation of technical debt through provision of reusable patterns, and logging and monitoring technical debt.

**Accessibility:** Tooling should ensure that developers can meet web accessibility standards (such as WCAG 2.1 and later or), through the use of standard templates or otherwise, to decrease the development overhead in meeting CPS accessibility standards.

**Support**

* 24/7/365 for the operation of the low-code applications
* 8/5 support for the application development environment
* Support from supplier or through a third party to assist building skills and support for more advanced development issues.
* Robust community to support developers
* Wide availability of skills in the labour market to provide additional development resource to provide short term additional capability for development.

# Instructions to Respondents

Suppliers are required to submit responses to all questions contained within this RFI document and must be submitted to Elizabeth Glen, CPS Strategic Sourcing, via the Bravo procurement portal by no later than **1200 Tuesday 5 October 2022**

CPS may use this information to identify a short-list of potential suppliers who may be given the opportunity to be included in a subsequent Invitation to Tender or Request for Pricing. Any requests where you are unable to offer a response should be clearly marked as “No response to this request.” Please note this will not preclude you from any future CPS Commercial Activity.

CPS will not be responsible for any expenses incurred in the preparation of your response.

You are advised to check the accuracy of your response prior to submitting. Please note this RFI does not constitute an offer capable of acceptance.

Please note that the information provided does not constitute any contractual binding or impose any obligations on either the Supplier or the CPS.

# Appendix 1: Supplier Questionnaire

This questionnaire has been designed to obtain the following information:

1. To achieve an understanding of your company its’ objectives and policies to evaluate the common areas of understanding for the formation of a positive working relationship.
2. To establish your company’s potential to meet our needs, business requirements, quality, service, and cost.

**Please ensure that any additional documentation is appropriately titled as it is referenced within the below responses.**

|  |
| --- |
| A - Supplier Information |
| A1.1 | Supplier Name**:** |
|  |
| A1.2 | Name and contact details: |
|  |
| A1.3(100 max no of Words) | Brief Organisation description and overview: |
|  |
| A1.4 | Please confirm whether your company is on a framework either directly, or through a partner (please state the partner company). |
|  |
| Please state any further frameworks you supply through: |
|  |
| B – Mandatory Standard Questions |
| B1(max 500 words) | Please provide a general overview of your understanding of what the CPS wants to deliver. |
|  |
| B2(max 2000 words) | Please provide an overview of your solution/product and how this can deliver CPS’s requirements, including any additional services/functionality. |
|  |
| B3 | Have you made any assumptions from our requirements? Can you identify requirements that need further analysis and understanding? |
|  |
| B4 | Would you be willing to demonstrate your solution/product to representatives in CPS should this be required?  |
|  |  |
| C – Requirements Questions  |
| C1 - Experience | Example: Give succinct details of past experiences of delivering/providing the requirement of this product/service/solution, paying particular attention to detail around transition |
|  |
| C2 – Cost and risk | Following on from C1, give details of the key risks and cost drivers for a) the delivery and b) the transition, using the example above. Please address how these would be relevant to CPS requirements.  |
|  |
| C3 – Transition | **Please state how long you believe it would take to transition the CPS Low Code apps from one platform to another.** Can you describe the assumptions made based on our requirements? Can you identify requirements that need further analysis and understanding? |
|  |
| C4 – model | Please provide an outline of your licensing model i.e., user, environment, consumption based etc, with indicative costs |
| Innovation(max 1000 words) | Please outline any unique or innovative elements of your platform/service/organisation that you feel would offer the CPS value for money and better enable the organisation to fulfil its objectives |
| Social Value | The CPS works to ensure that to make sure the right person is prosecuted for the right offence, and that trials are fair so that offenders are brought to justice whenever possible. This involves touchpoints with all elements of the Criminal Justice System.The CPS recognises that a supplier’s offer is not unique to a single product or service, and that the organisation itself may be able to add social, economic, or environmental value through existing initiatives such as:1. Donating ICT equipment to charities working with victims and witnesses
2. Offering paid work placements to ex-offenders in order to enhance permeant employment opportunities.
3. Donating CSR funds to strategically relevant third sector organisations, e.g. victims of Rape and Serious Sexual Assault.
4. Using staff volunteer days to decorate a Sexual Assault Referral Centre.

Please outline how your organisation could add value through existing organisational assets. |
| Customer of Choice | The CPS is committed to acting as a customer of choice within the marketplace. Please list any requirements or behaviours that your organisation feels would be of detriment to the successful future delivery of a low code platform. |

**Assumptions**

**(2 sides of A4 only)**

* Clarification- Do you perceive any of our assumptions listed earlier should be revisited? If so, what do you perceive it would be helpful to change or to seek further clarity of?
* Benefits- Are there specific types of benefits or efficiencies that you believe your services/solution would provide to us in optimising our end-to-end use cases?

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