

**Guidance Document
for Determining Best In Class (BIC) Contracts
7/6/2016**

General Guidance

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| 1 | Government-wide availability is not a mandatory requirement for a vehicle to be considered BIC. In most cases the vehicles should be government-wide or multi-agency in scope. |
| 2 | Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiatives (FSSIs) must be reviewed against the BIC criteria for validation. Evaluation of existing contracts should include performance. Evaluation of new vehicles will not include performance until subsequent periodic reviews following a demonstration period. |
| 3 | The main objective for Category Management teams is to ensure that there are BIC vehicles for each category; if no current vehicles for a Category meet those criteria, the team should move to address this as soon as possible. |
| 4 | Category teams can determine whether they want to apply BIC evaluations to contracts for an entire category, or for a specific sub-category. It is possible, in limited cases, that a BIC contract for one sub-category will not apply to any others; breadth of scope is less relevant than the quality and applicability of the BIC vehicle. |

BIC Evaluation Process

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| 5 | To be considered a BIC vehicle, a documented evaluation must be completed. This includes a cross-category/cross-agency Subject Matter Expert (SME) evaluation, Category Team recommendation, and a final review/approval by the Category Manager that the vehicle satisfactorily met the criteria. OMB will provide updates to the CMLC as BIC solutions are identified. |
| 6 | When vehicles cross categories, the category team with the preponderance of spend should take the lead in a BIC review, including representatives of the other affected category teams. If two categories reach different conclusions, they should document the basis of their decision and expect to have additional oversight questions from OMB and/or CMLC. |
| 7 | Category teams should use the BIC criteria as defined and utilize the BIC evaluation tool, unless there is a category-specific rationale for modifying the criteria and/or tool. The baseline criteria is meant to be a guideline and further tailored by the Category teams as needed. |
| 8 | SME review teams that evaluate the individual BIC vehicles should include as many cross-government key stakeholders for the Category as possible/feasible to ensure impartiality. The preferred result is a consensus decision within the Category; if a consensus cannot be reached, the Category Team should escalate to the CMLC/OMB. |
| 9 | Executive agents of the vehicle being evaluated must be represented during the SME review to address questions, provide clarifications, and may include the Director, Program Manager, or Lead Contracting Officer. |
| 10 | If determined to be appropriate by the Category Leadership Team, review-by-exception is an acceptable method of BIC review. This approach would allow for review of a solution outside of scheduled team meetings, with formal meeting time used only to discuss any sub-criteria elements that are contested by one or more team members. |
| 11 | The Category Teams should document the participants contributing to the BIC review in the BIC evaluation tool. |
| 12 | A BIC designation should entail satisfying the outlined five key requirement areas, (Rigorous Requirements Definitions and Planning Processes; Appropriate Pricing Strategies; Data-driven Demand Management Strategies; Category and Performance Management Strategies; and Independently Validated Reviews), but not necessarily all of the sub-criteria within each. Individual Category teams can decide how many or what percent of the criteria are required to be considered BIC based on the needs of their category. |
| 13 | Documentation/notes related to the criteria analysis should be kept for reference; the Category Manager is responsible for ensuring that this is completed. This documentation should be maintained on the Acquisition Gateway and backup information posted to the Category's OMB MAX. |

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| 14 | In cases where Category teams alter BIC criteria for category-specific requirements, the same set of criteria must be applied to assess all BIC vehicles within their category or sub-category. |
| Ongoing Analysis and Improvements | |
| 15 | The reasons why vehicles are not selected as BIC should be communicated back to the vehicle owner to drive continual improvements or innovations. |
| 16 | A Mandatory Use determination by OMB will be granted on a Category-by-Category basis where it is clear it will benefit the Federal Government pursuant to the OMB Category Management Circular (under development); OMB will rely on the Category Managers to propose Mandatory Use recommendations. |
| 17 | BIC vehicles must be reviewed annually to retain their BIC status. The focus should be on reported results from those BIC contracts (quality, timeliness, cost, etc.), to determine if there are issues resulting from the contract structure that affect whether it should remain BIC. |
| 18 | Category Teams working on developing new vehicles should provide the BIC criteria to the organization that will develop and maintain the vehicle so that these criteria are built into the vehicle from the beginning of its lifecycle. The criteria will also be widely disseminated to all agencies. |
| Government-Wide PMO for Category Management Role | |
| 19 | Solutions available on the Acquisition Gateway will not solely be limited to BIC to drive ongoing transparency and enable valuable comparisons. BIC contracts will be clearly identified. |
| 20 | The GSA CM PMO will maintain an ongoing cross-category list of BIC contracts under consideration for review. |