

FORMATTED PRODUCT TOOL (FPT)
EXTERNAL Q&A DOCUMENT
UPDATED JULY 26th, 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Background & Policy Questions
 - II. General Contracting & Pricing Questions
 - III. eOffer/eMod and Baseline Questions
 - IV. FPT Wizard and System Questions
 - V. Manufacturer Part Number (MPN), Universal Product Code (UPC) and Product Description Questions
 - VI. Pricing Questions
-

To submit feedback or ask additional questions, please email FPT-FB@gsa.gov

I. Background & Policy Questions

1) Why is GSA implementing the Formatted Product Tool (FPT)?

- a. Thousands of suppliers offer millions of items through the Multiple Award Schedules (MAS). These items have part numbers, descriptions, and price points that are then made available to the customer on *GSAAdvantage!* However, decades of growth in the MAS Program and dramatic increases in the number and variety of items available through MAS are driving changes to how these items are represented and priced.

2) What are FPT's benefits?

- a. This tool will provide Schedule contractors with valuable information in terms of where their products are positioned in the marketplace, as well as provide contracting officers (COs) with data intelligence to use in their price evaluations and negotiations. This increase in data analytics and transparency will also help COs do their jobs more efficiently, saving all parties time and money. COs will still exercise their discretion in determining fair and reasonable pricing; FPT helps them do that faster.

FPT is not a separate application – it is a systems upgrade that will be activated within the existing eOffer and eMod platforms for certain Schedules. FPT is a pivotal enhancement for the MAS supplier base removing the cumbersome and redundant SIP and CORS processes, and through an automatic upload of products and prices, improves speed to market on *GSAAdvantage!* so items are seen immediately and can be purchased by our federal customers. Federal customers will have a more seamless shopping experience by being able to easily compare items on

GSA *Advantage!* using standard part numbers, have increased insights into products and their pricing, and better data quality.

3) What Schedules and SINs will be affected?

a.

Schedule	Description	SINs	Offerings
51V	Hardware Superstore	All	Products
58 I	Professional Audio/Video	All	Products
72	Furnishings & Floor Coverings	All	Products
73	Food Service, Hospitality, Cleaning Equipment	All	Products
70	IT Equipment, Software & Services	All	Products & Services
75	Office Products/Supplies	All	Products

4) Does FPT include just products?

a. Phase one only includes the above six product schedules. The FPT system does not accommodate service items at this time. For impacted Schedule holders with both products and services, enter product information in the FPT pricing template, and enter services information in a text file. Both documents will be uploaded via FPT, but in two different file formats.

5) What is the phase one rollout schedule?

- a. The FPT rollout schedule is estimated to begin in July 2016, with roughly two weeks in between implementation on each of the Schedules. The order of the Schedules to be rolled out and implemented is as follows (schedule is subject to change):
- Schedule 58 I (Professional Audio Video Telemetry Tracking) - July 22, 2016
 - Schedule 72 (Furnishings & Floor Coverings) *same time as Schedule 58 I - July 22, 2016
 - Schedule 75 (Office Products) – Q4 FY 2016
 - Schedule 73 (Food Service, Hospitality, Cleaning Equip. & Supplies, Chemicals & Service) – Q4 FY 2016
 - Schedule 51 V (Hardware Superstore) – Q1 FY 2017
 - Schedule 70 (Information Technology, Equipment, Software & Services) - Q1 FY 2017

6) If I am on one of the pilot Schedules, is participation mandatory?

- a. At this time, acceptance of the modification is optional, but strongly encouraged, for existing contractors. FPT will be mandatory for all new offers submitted under the Pilot Schedules as each schedule is refreshed and is rolled out. Note: While the FPT mass mod displays as “mandatory” on the VSC website, it is only mandatory that vendors respond (i.e., accept or decline the modification).

7) Will there be training? When?

- a. Yes, there will be ample training and communication surrounding the rollout of the FPT. There will be an advanced notice posted on Interact prior to each Schedule update and an online webinar with subject matter experts in advance of FPT implementation for each Schedule.

8) Has my CO been trained?

- a. All affected GSA acquisition workforce personnel have been trained and provided resources to assist them during this transition.

II. General Contracting Questions

9) Will vendors still be able to use SIP to upload their GSA*Advantage!* listing?

- a. No, FPT will replace SIP for the Schedules/SINS affected in the phase one rollout for all new offers and will replace SIP for current contractors once the current contract has completed the baseline modification. SIP will still be available for current contractors who do not accept the FPT mod and baseline their contract.

10) Q10. Will the Price Reduction Clause (PRC) remain in effect but the Commercial Sales Practices (CSP) and Basis of Award (BOA) be eliminated once the vendor accepts FPT?

- a. No. Under FPT, the PRC, CSP and MFC/BOA all remain as currently awarded within your contract. However, there may need to be an adjustment to the price/discount relationship awarded under your schedule, if your pricing was adjusted and a reduction in price was necessary.

11) Will vendors be able to accept the next Solicitation Refresh mass modification if they have not accepted the FPT mass mod?

- a. Yes.

12) Will the approved SIP file be removed from GSA eLibrary/GSA*Advantage!* if vendors accept the mass modification but do not submit a baseline within 60 days?

- a. No. At this time, vendors’ current GSA*Advantage!* file will not automatically be removed if vendors do not complete the baseline modification within 60 days. However, the CO/CS should be kept apprised if vendors are experiencing problems with getting the baseline modification done in a timely manner.

III. eOffer/eMod & Baseline Questions

- 13) Does the approved baseline offer overwrite all previous GSAAdvantage! information for the contract?**
- Once baseline modification is done and completed, it will overwrite all information on GSAAdvantage!. This allows GSA to capture everything on contract and ensures the most accurate information is displayed on GSAAdvantage!.
- 14) Will the eMod process be similar to the eOffer process?**
- After FPT is implemented and a contract has been baselined, any future modification actions will be done through eMod and will be maintained through the FPT Wizard. Vendors will only be responsible for uploading the new information.
- 15) How should vendors handle eMods already submitted or eMods being prepared to be submitted within the next month?**
- For modifications currently in progress, vendors will continue to complete them as they currently do. Once a vendor accepts the FPT mass modification, the modification listing will include "Capture Formatted Pricing" (baselining). After the baseline modification is completed and awarded, all subsequent pricing modifications will have a formatted pricing template.
- 16) Will the country of origin for each model be baselined?**
- Yes, Country of Origin is one of the template elements and will be updated as part of the FPT data.
- 17) Who can vendors contact for assistance with the baseline process?**
- Your CO can answer general questions. The Acquisition Workforce (AWF) will be getting training as well. There will also be Help Desk Support and self-paced training videos as well as a vendor-facing user guide on the [eMod/eOffer](#) homepage.

IV. FPT Wizard and System Questions

- 18) What system/software is being used?**
- We are using the XSB System with a series of enhancements. The tool will be iteratively developed in order to incorporate user feedback and process improvements.
- 19) Will the system allow vendors to go back into the Wizard if an error is made or an element is missed during the initial Wizard setup?**
- Vendors will be able to return to the Wizard and change their data on the left menu at any time before re-submitting their data.
- 20) Currently, GSAAdvantage! does not allow pricing that extends past 2 decimals. How many decimal places does the FPT system allow for?**

- a. FPT is programmed to allow for 4 decimal places. This may be shortened to 2 decimal places once the item is uploaded on *GSAAdvantage!*.

21) How is the FPT and upload to *GSAAdvantage!* going to handle Customized to Order (CTO) items?

- a. FPT mimics the current *GSAAdvantage!* process for CTO items. Use accessories and/or options process.

22) Once approved, how long does it take for the item to get on *GSAAdvantage!*?

- a. It depends on the size of the catalog, but we estimate that most uploads will be processed within several hours.

23) Can vendors upload multiple product images or will the image be a standard one?

- a. In the Wizard, there is a Photos section where vendors can upload the standard image and three additional photos.

24) Do vendors have to enter product information line by line, or is it possible to upload an Excel spreadsheet containing all items?

- a. Use the download method to then upload a spreadsheet. Use the on-screen method to enter in line by line information or cut and paste information in.

25) If a vendor is selling products only, will the system prompt the vendor to upload a text file?

- a. For products, the system will not prompt the vendor to upload a text file as it is currently optional. The product text file (for terms and conditions) can be uploaded at any time during the baseline process or with a later modification. However, the system will prompt vendors to upload a text file for services.

26) How is GSA differentiating a “product” versus an “accessory”?

- a. In the current SIP process, vendors identify products and accessories. The FPT Wizard works the same way.

27) Can vendors continue to use EDI to submit modifications after baselining?

- a. After baselining, you will be able to continue using EDI to submit modifications. You must generate a modification key before entering the data in eMod.

28) Can vendors enter information for special delivery, etc by item rather than by SIN?

- a. Yes. The system allows for line item entry of special delivery instructions, environmental and other features.

29) Will there be a limitation on the number of characters in the product description?

- a. There is a limitation of 1,000 characters.

30) If you make typos when entering data will the system be able to recognize the errors and request a correction?

- a. The system will recognize small typos (i.e. one digit off) made in the standardization section. However, if the item does not have a standard match for the system to compare it to, then typos

may go unrecognized. The CO may also recognize an error if no target pricing is returned on an item where there is known duplication.

31) How does the FPT system capture information regarding authorized resellers or grey market items?

- a. Authorized reseller information is still captured as order points of contact (POCs). Grey market items should not be on contract as they are not authorized for sale in the US.

32) Will there be a help desk number for this system?

- a. Yes. Contact the eTools Help Desk at 1-866-472-9114.

V. Manufacturer Part Number (MPN), Universal Product Code (UPC) and Product Description Questions

33) How is MPN standardization determined?

- a. GSA is working with manufacturers and wholesalers to obtain trusted content for all products. Where we are unable to obtain that, we will use the most common representation within the supply chain. We will be expanding our knowledge base over time. In addition, the system does not directly override any vendor data, rather it identifies the standard version .

34) How will variances in MPN be handled? What if an MPN is used for an alternate product?

- a. Addressing this issue is one of the goals of implementing FPT. We want to ensure accurate representation of the product based on standard part numbers. One of the ways to help mitigate variances is that the outlier price analysis will flag items so the CO can understand where variances are occurring and connect with the vendor. The FPT will facilitate dialogue between the COs and the suppliers.

35) What if I don't have a MPN? How will my items be compared?

- a. If no standardized part number is found, the vendor's part number will be accepted. We expect most major manufacturers to have a standard, configuration-specific part number. In rare instances where you do not identify specific configurations, please reach out to your CO.

36) Will corrections to the MPN be cause for additional clarifications or a rejection and resubmission?

- a. Corrections can be made if detected during the standardization process. Vendors will have an opportunity to review the proposed standardization information and flagged pricing, make any changes, and provide rationale for their information during the eMod process. The file will not be rejected during this process.

37) What are you doing with configurable items when it can change the MPN?

- a. We expect most major manufacturers to have an identifier in the part number for a specific configuration. In rare instances where the manufacturer does not identify specific configurations, speak with your CO regarding the features and value of the configuration being offered.

38) Are duplicate MPNs accepted?

- a. No, duplicate MPNs from the *same* manufacturer will not be accepted. The system will only allow for MPN duplication if the manufacturers and items are different. In addition, items should only appear on one SIN per contract so there is no duplication across the contract.

39) If the MPN is identified by the system as incorrect will the offer be rejected or is all this done prior to submission?

- a. All standardization and evaluation is done prior to submission, so the offer will not be rejected. Vendors can provide comments or explanation when the proposed standardization and/or target pricing isn't accepted. Vendors will have the opportunity to review all information prior to it being submitted to the CO.

40) How does the system distinguish when a contractor uses the MPN for refurbished gear, rather than new?

- a. There are some inferences made from product name and description, but vendors should ensure that the product description includes the word "refurbished" so that verbiage is recognized by the system.

41) How will the FPT address customized items with regard to MPNs?

- a. The configuration specific part number should be used. Configure-to-Order items should be listed as base items with accessories.

42) What if I don't have a UPC-A code?

- a. UPC-A code is only required for items that have an existing UPC-A code that has been registered by the manufacturer of the product. If the item does not have a registered UPC-A, it is not required.

43) How will the baseline price allow for different Units of Measure (UOM) for the same items?

- a. There will be a field with standardized Unit of Issue (UOI). If you are using a non-standard UOI, you can provide justification for that UOI. Standardization will refer to the manufacturer UOI.

44) Will product descriptions be standardized?

- a. We are working with Industry manufacturers and wholesalers on the descriptions. Where we don't have a standard description from manufacturers or wholesalers, the system uses the most common description. Vendors can also add an additional description.

VI. Pricing Questions

45) For those items that have been awarded and previously deemed "fair and reasonable pricing", will they be subjected to another pricing review when completing the baseline mod?

- a. The baseline mod process does not constitute a need to re-negotiate contract pricing. We have given COs/CSs guidance to contact the vendor to discuss items out of range.

46) The instructions applicable to new offers address "fair and reasonable pricing" in part by stating that "offers that propose MFC pricing but are not highly competitive will not be determined fair and

reasonable and will not be accepted.” Where in the FAR is the term "highly competitive" used with regard to "price analysis?"

- a. The FAR does not use the words “highly competitive.” However, COs are charged with obtaining a price that is fair and reasonable utilizing the price analysis techniques described in FAR Part 15.404. It is GSA's intent to award the best price possible considering all elements of award. A price could be fair and reasonable when evaluated just from a vertical perspective, or comparing the offered price only to the price offered the Most Favored Customer (or Basis of Award customer). However, that same price might not be considered fair and reasonable when evaluated from a horizontal perspective, or compared with the offered price for the identical item by other Schedule vendors.

In the context of FPT, highly competitive would be a price that is equal to or better than the MFC (when analyzed vertically) and that also falls within the range identified by FPT (horizontal analysis). The tool allows COs to have visibility across the marketplace in order to make the best pricing decisions possible on behalf of the taxpayers. Further, the FAR grants CO's fairly broad discretion in how to determine fair and reasonable pricing. We will be providing COs with internal policy guidance to promote uniform application of pricing targets.

47) How will FPT affect Economic Price Adjustments (EPA)?

- a. FPT will provide a faster and more thorough analysis of the pricing so that the COs/CSs don't have to do manual searches through *GSA Advantage!* or cut and paste spreadsheets together and add formulas to evaluate pricing. We will still evaluate based on the EPA clause in the contract, but will have improved pricing data from the onset.

48) How does this affect Commercial Sales Practices, Most Favored Customer, and Basis of Award category of customer for new offers and current schedule holders?

- a. For new offerors, FPT does not have any impact on CSP, MFC or BOA. New offerors will go into eOffer/eMod and complete the Wizard (which will require CSP). The CO/CS will identify a MFC/BOA per the usual process. FPT provides significantly more data for the CO/CS to evaluate.

For current contractors, if you do decide to lower pricing, the CO/CS may need to re-establish your price/discount relationship but would not impact your CSP. However, if your CSP does indicate that the MFC/BOA has changed, the CO/CS would address that. This action would be outside of FPT.

49) Will vendors still be asked to provide comparable pricing for products being offered now that the FPT tool is in place?

- a. Yes, vendors may be asked to provide additional information in those instances where there may be no comparable items within *GSA Advantage!* Or other sources. However, the FPT process will provide significant additional information for the COs/CSs to utilize in their evaluation of identical or standardized items which will eliminate the need for additional information in those instances.

50) Before accepting the FPT mass modification, will contractors have the opportunity to clean-up their data, reduce prices to be more competitive and increase pricing on under-margin items prior to submitting the baseline modification?

- a. There is nothing to preclude vendors from doing clean-up modifications in advance of completing the baseline modification. However, the purpose of the baseline modification is to do that clean-

up for you. The baseline process will standardize part numbers, analyze pricing, and provide vendors an opportunity to review and make changes. It is recommended that EPAs be done after the baseline modification to prevent those items going through the evaluation process multiple times.

51) What are examples of competitive pricing ranges if I choose to alter my price?

- a. Pricing ranges are based on a reasonable range of variance from a benchmark of the lowest available market price. The target pricing ranges for your items will be displayed in the FPT system. Below is a chart of pricing model examples:

Pricing Model Examples		
When Lowest Price is:	"High" Target Price	Price Variability Threshold
\$1	\$1.50	150%
\$5	\$7.40	<i>Tightens proportionally from 150% at \$0 to 130% at \$50</i>
\$25	\$35	
\$50	\$65	130%
\$75	\$97.30	<i>Tightens proportionally from 130% at \$50 to 120% at \$1000</i>
\$100	\$129.47	
\$300	\$382.11	
\$500	\$626.32	
\$750	\$919.74	120%
\$1,000	\$1,200	
\$1,500	\$1,781.25	<i>Tightens proportionally from 120% at \$1000 to 110% at \$5000</i>
\$3,500	\$3,981.25	
\$5,000	\$5,500	110%
\$7,500	\$8,250	<i>Flat 110% at > \$5000</i>

52) Can I still offer my product even if it is outside of the target price range?

- a. Yes. Phase one of FPT implementation is focused on collecting standard part numbers for items on Schedule, which allows the CO to approve your item to go on *GSA Advantage!* much faster than if the item did not include standard part numbers. Suppliers are encouraged to provide justification for their items' higher prices, such as unique warranty or terms and conditions. COs continue to have the authority to determine fair & reasonable pricing.

53) Where can I add details about my items to justify my price?

- a. If there are additional terms or conditions (extended warranty, etc) that add value to your product, please contact your CO for further evaluation. If an item has been flagged as an outlier, the CO can assess the value of the terms and make a determination as to whether or not it is reasonable to award a price outside of the target ranges.

54) Does the FPT allow for the entry of both quantity pricing and tiered pricing?

- a. Yes.



55) How will pricing standardization affect the current price reduction clause?

- a. FPT does not change the requirements of the Price Reductions Clause. If a vendor is lowering their price to both Government & Most Favored Customer (MFC), there is no change. If a vendor lowers their price to the Government but not to the MFC, then the CO would re-establish the price or discount relationship for the lower price or higher discount offered.