Delivering visa services for Australia - Request for Information
RFI 22/17 B4 Assessments against visa criteria

Department of Home Affairs
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1. Introduction

1.1. The challenge

As a global operation that generates billions of dollars annually for the Australian economy, the Department of Home Affairs (Department) is committed to transforming Australia’s visa system and how it is delivered globally. Transformation will simplify and better align Australia’s visa system with its long-term economic, social and national security priorities. This will assist in attracting travellers, students, skilled migrants and business people and make a positive economic and social contribution to Australia.

The Department has commenced a fundamental, end-to-end reform of Australia’s visa system and global service delivery arrangements. This work is taking place within the context of a broader program of transformation, which includes consultation on the future shape of a new legislative framework for visas, and enhancements to the Department’s risk and threat capabilities. Enhancements to departmental risk assessment, intelligence and data sharing capabilities are, over time, intended to allow for more streamlined processing of low-risk applications and identification of high risk applications that require further assessment, verification or investigation.

Immigration Reform offers the opportunity for market-based services and innovative digital technologies to assist in increasingly automating application processing for the majority of clients who are low risk. This will increase visa processing efficiency and support economic growth and development by enhancing the competitiveness of Australia’s visa system and improving the overall visa applicant experience, and facilitate legitimate movement of people across the border. It will also enable departmental staff to focus on higher risk clients using better supporting information.

The focus of this market engagement is to explore issues and capabilities relevant to the Department’s assessment of visa applications against complex criteria. This includes where the circumstances of the application mean that departmental risk assessment capabilities identify that streamlined processing is not appropriate and additional investigation, analysis and assessment is required to generate further inputs to the visa decision making process. Relevant circumstances may include, for example, investigation and assessment of the genuineness of the applicant’s intention to depart Australia at the end of their visa, or the genuineness of a claimed spouse relationship.

Currently, a large proportion of this work is undertaken manually by departmental staff due to the diverse range of information that must be considered – gathered mainly from paper visa applications – in making assessments against each visa criteria. Making these assessments, which form part of the information on which a decision to grant or refuse a visa is made, costs several hundred million dollars a year.

In this context, the Department is looking to explore whether existing market services and/or emerging technologies may offer potential for improvement to these processes in the face of growing demand for Australian visas and an evolving risk environment. This may include sophisticated data collection and analysis of information to support assessment processes which, in general terms, involve reaching a level of satisfaction about the likelihood of compliance, or alternatively, the risk of non-compliance.

In this way, these assessments can support automation of low risk decisions, or provide better quality information on which departmental staff can make decisions on higher risk applicants.

The Department will retain accountability and responsibility for policy development and all decisions to grant or refuse a visa (whether through automated processes following business rules determined by the Department in keeping with relevant legislation, or following further consideration of an application by departmental staff). Market capabilities, including both human and technology delivered services, are expected to increase automated assessments of low risk clients. In the context of significant demand growth, this will in turn enable departmental staff to focus on higher risk applicants and more complex assessments, in light of better supporting information. We also anticipate that over time the mix of human and technology services is expected to change as emerging technologies evolve.
This Request for Information (RFI) is the first step in exploring how the Department can transform the delivery of assessments against visa criteria, increasingly augmenting human assessments with technology to enhance and, where appropriate, automate assessment activity. Throughout this process the Department will ensure that any solutions are fully compliant with its legal privacy, and ethical obligations and will support them with rigorous quality assurance, integrity and compliance measures.

The Department is keen to work closely with providers that have established or emerging capabilities that can help deliver and transform visa criteria assessments now and in the future. This transformation is at the heart of tackling one of the toughest challenges facing private and public sector service delivery: meeting growing volumes and higher service and integrity demands whilst maintaining or improving efficiency and quality. The Department is exploring all approaches to this problem and is seeking to hear from a wide variety of providers with a range of capabilities, which might include providers who specialise in, or see opportunities to combine capabilities across proprietary data sources, general business process services, and machine learning and other disruptive technologies.

Australian and international providers, from small start-ups to large multi-nationals, are invited to participate in this unique opportunity to partner with the Department in this business-led transformation of how Australia’s visa system is delivered around the world.

In particular, the Department is seeking market input to help resolve the following key questions:

a. What potential solutions exist to meet the Department’s needs?

b. How can the Department engage the best of the market to help us define the right solution(s) and delivery approach?

c. How can the Department engage the best of the market in on-going delivery and innovation?

d. What impact will market-delivery have on funding requirements for assessments against visa criteria?

Responses in formats such as demonstrations, videos, pitches and other mediums are welcome in addition to, or in place of, text-based responses.

Please submit all written responses to market.partnerships@homeaffairs.gov.au

Please contact market.partnerships@homeaffairs.gov.au to arrange for submissions of responses in formats such as demonstrations, videos, pitches and other mediums.

1.2. Background to the digital transformation of visa service delivery

In the face of globalisation, mass mobility and a growing middle classes in emerging economies, the Department is faced with never before seen volumes of visa applications and travellers. Volumes of visa and citizenship applications are forecast to increase by around 50 per cent by 2026-27, to around 13 million visa and citizenship applications per annum. To manage these demands without exponentially increasing costs, the Department is seeking to leverage opportunities provided by the market and new technologies to design, build and run key elements of the visa system and global service delivery arrangements.

This RFI is part of the Department’s transformation of its global visa system known as Delivering Visa Services for Australia. This transformation will complement the Department’s existing risk management capabilities by enabling the delivery of more streamlined and effective visa criteria assessments which will improve the quality and timeliness of visa decision making.

This RFI follows the release of a market consultation paper on 23 June 2017, Delivering Visa Services for Australia – Market Consultation Paper which provides helpful context and background to the Department’s high-volume, transactional business and the fundamental reforms underway (see also Appendix B). That document describes the Department’s overall reform, through which the Department is approaching the market for visa services through functional groups or ‘Bundles’. This RFI discusses two of those bundles, Bundles 4 and 8: Complex visa criteria assessments for shorter-term validity visas and longer-term validity visas, respectively.
The Department is continuing extensive engagement with the market to co-design the future visa system and how it is delivered globally and identify suitable partners. A Request for Expression of Interest (REOI) released on 22 September 2017, *Delivering Visa Services for Australia – Bundle 1*, began procurement of the Global Digital Platform (the Platform) and supporting systems (Bundle 1) that will underpin the workflow, client services, data collection and simple assessment functions of Australia’s visa system. That process closed on 27 October 2017.

Informed by responses to this RFI, and subject to further consideration and approval by the Australian Government, the Department expects to commence a procurement process for assessment against visa criteria in mid-2018. The first new visa product, delivered using the Platform, is expected to be launched in December 2019.

### 1.3. Assessments against visa criteria: Bundles 4 and 8

Following determination of threshold eligibly (e.g. passport validity and security-related elements), consideration of a visa application involves making further assessments against relevant criteria. This may include, for example assessing whether a visa applicant genuinely intends to depart Australia at the end of their visa validity, whether a claimed domestic relationship is genuine, or whether they have the capacity to support themselves financially while in Australia.

Bundle 4 includes assessments of **temporary visa applications** from **all geographic locations** against visa criteria (other than health and national security assessments). Bundle 8 is proposed for a later stage of reform. It is expected to be similar in scope to Bundle 4, although it will cover longer-term, more complex visa products (e.g. for permanent migrants).

It should be noted that assessments against visa criteria constitute inputs to the final decision to grant or refuse a particular visa application. These assessments inform but do not constitute a decision. **The Department will always retain responsibility and accountability for visa decisions** whether they are granted automatically in accordance with business rules determined by the Department (as already happens...
now in relation to certain short term visitor visa classes), or following further consideration by departmental staff.

All information used to inform the assessment against a visa criteria must be provided to the Department. Further, all information will need to be collected, stored, accessed, disposed, shared and analysed in line with Australian Government requirements and law relating to the collection, storage and disclosure of data. All information, including management information, will be owned by the Australian Government.

Further information on assessments against visa criteria are included in section 2 below and in Appendix A.

1.4. Rationale for market-delivery of assessments against visa criteria

In 2016-17 the Department granted more than 8.4 million temporary visas, an 8.7 per cent increase of the previous year. It is expected that this will continue to grow significantly over the next 10 years.

The Department currently uses market providers to support assessments against visa criteria in relation to the health status of visa applicants. Appreciating that there is not a similarly established and mature market for providing assessments against all visa criteria, the Department expects that providers will be able to adapt generic, adjacent or analogous solutions to help achieve the following objectives:

- High quality and consistent decisions
- Improve applicant experience
- Provide flexibility to implement future changes
- Improve efficiency

Figure 2: Objectives of Bundles 4 and 8

The Department expects there are three broad types of solutions (see diagram below) that could deliver assessments against visa criteria. Providers may have product and service offerings that bridge these three solutions. The Department is seeking to understand how a mix of these solutions, or others, could be relevant for visa criteria assessments. The Department also recognises the capabilities of market providers can and will develop over time, especially in light of emerging technological capabilities and experience in other industry sectors.

Figure 3: Broad types of solutions
The market consultation process shows that business process services could play a substantial role in any initial solution for assessments against visa criteria, with supportive technology improving productivity and accuracy over time. Disruptive technologies are maturing and may be ready to play a role in assessments against visa criteria by the time the first temporary visa product is launched in December 2019.

The Department is seeking market input to understand who is best placed to develop and deploy disruptive technologies to address the challenges identified in this paper.

### 1.5. Engaging with this unique market

Given the Department’s objectives and the nature of the market, the Department is aware of the need to engage and build capability in innovative ways. While the Department believes there is capability in the market to deliver improved assessments for the December 2019 launch, the Department expects the nature of the solutions and the mix of human and technology elements to change significantly over time. The Department is keen to work with the market to define the initial, day one, solution, and to deliver innovation in the long-term. To achieve this, the Department seeks to understand how it can enter into an ongoing dialogue with providers and build and deploy the capabilities to deliver visa criteria assessments using current and disruptive technology.

![Figure 4: Key features of market engagement for Bundles 4 and 8](image)

The Department is committed to finding the best capabilities in the market through engagement over the next nine months prior to a potential procurement process, in the second half of 2018. Further engagement will be part of a separate process to this RFI, and may include:

- **Dialogue-based engagement** (individual and group discussions) to allow the Department and providers to exchange information and seek clarification.
- **Proofs of concept**, solution demonstrations and other dynamic opportunities to explore and test solutions for visa criteria assessments.
- **Workshops and sandboxes** for providers and departmental experts to collaborate on potential approaches to visa criteria assessments.

However, the Department is also keen to hear from providers about other ways they would like to engage with the Department during the ongoing market engagement process(es). Informed by this engagement, and subject to further consideration and approval by the Australian Government, the Department may initiate a
procurement process for visa criteria assessment solutions. These will be in place in the transformed visa system and global service delivery, which is expected to launch in December 2019.

Given the evolving nature of solutions, the Department expects that there would be an ongoing role, beyond any initial procurement, to identify, incubate, develop and deploy innovative solutions. The Department is seeking market input on this proposed approach and is open to other innovative approaches to achieve its objectives.

1.6. Responding to this RFI

To assist in informing Government decision making, responses are requested by 5:00pm (local Canberra time, Australian Capital Territory), Friday, 9th February 2018. However, the Department will consider responses received after that date. All responses are encouraged and providers may choose to complete some or all of the RFI questions, or provide alternative information. Responses in other formats such as demonstrations, videos, pitches and others are welcomed in addition to text-based responses. Please contact market.partnerships@homeaffairs.gov.au to make arrangements.

This consultation is a non-competitive information gathering process. Responses will not advantage or disadvantage prospective tenderers in any future competitive tenders for visa service delivery. Prospective providers will not be evaluated based on any response. By responding to this RFI providers agree to the RFI Terms and Conditions at Appendix C.

1.7. Appendices

Detailed appendices are available to assist providers:
A. Detailed description of approach to visa criteria assessments.


C. RFI Terms and Conditions including terms and conditions that apply to the RFI process.

D. Optional response template to answer specific questions in section 3.

2. What are visa criteria assessments?

2.1. Framework for assessments

Processing a visa application involves assessment of the applicant’s eligibility against threshold questions. Legal, policy, risk and business considerations then inform which criteria are to be assessed and the required approach. The range of assessments are therefore diverse and vary by visa type. At their core, assessments can be understood through the framework in the diagram below:

- **Consider inputs** such as information about the applicant which can be provided in various forms. In the new visa system and global service delivery, inputs will be collected and verified by other market providers and supplied to Bundles 4 and 8 providers for consideration.

- **Make assessments** based on criteria either via a system or by a person. Criteria are legally specified and often have risk, policy and business rules that determine the level of confidence and scrutiny to be applied to particular applications.
- **Indicate outcomes** of assessments to the Platform to support visa decisions. Bundles 4 and 8 providers may also request more information to be collected in order to form a conclusion.

The Department will determine parameters for inputs, judgements and outcomes for different types of visa applications. This will be informed in many cases by the Department’s sophisticated risk capabilities along with legal, policy and business considerations. The Department’s enterprise systems consider a range of factors about the application and the individual and help inform the degree and type of scrutiny an application requires before it can be resolved.

![Figure 5: Assessment Framework](image)

The requirements will change over time, including as the Government makes policy decisions. The visa system is and must be highly dynamic and any solutions would need to be flexible and responsive to global events and trends that change the requirements for assessments.

Some visa applications require support from third-parties (a ‘sponsor’), for example an employer or partner. These sponsors and their relationship with the applicants may also need to be assessed by Bundle 4 and Bundle 8 providers.

### 2.2. Visa assessment criteria

Although the type and number of criteria vary between visas, there are four key criteria that help to illustrate the nature of certain visa criteria assessments across visa types:

- Whether based on all relevant inputs the visa applicant genuinely intends to enter and remain in Australia temporarily.
- Whether based on all relevant inputs the visa applicant will comply with all visa conditions.
- Whether based on all relevant inputs the visa applicant has sufficient funds to financially support themselves in Australia during their intended stay.
- Whether based on all relevant inputs a sponsorship relationship with the visa applicant is genuine.

A high-level description of each of the criteria is provided below, with further information on some of these and other, less common assessments, in Appendix A.
Evidence of a visa criteria: genuine temporary stay

The genuine temporary stay assessment is an assessment conducted for all temporary visa types and requires the visa applicant to genuinely intend to enter and remain in Australia temporarily. The key objective is to ensure the integrity of the temporary visa program by ensuring migration outcomes are not being sought without the appropriate scrutiny applied to longer-term visa products.

Informed by legal, policy, risk and business requirements, the range of inputs to be considered may include:

- Documents supporting employment or education history.
- Applicant statements of intent regarding their purpose and motivations for applying for a visa.
- Evidence of the applicant’s financial situation (such as bank statements).

The critical assessment to be made is whether, weighing all of the available inputs, the incentives for the applicant to depart Australia are greater than the incentive to stay in Australia at the conclusion of their visa’s validity.

In making this assessment the following relevant considerations are taken into account, with the level of scrutiny informed by the level of risk identified by departmental systems:

- Whether or not the applicant will seek to remain in Australia due to economic or political circumstances in their country of residence, familial or business links in Australia?
- Is the intended length of stay in Australia consistent with the applicant’s stated intentions and the detailed individual dynamics of their family, employment and social circumstances?

The outcome of a genuine temporary stay assessment is usually an important factor in a final visa decision. There are often situations in which further information is sought, including about the applicant’s situation in their home country to clarify motivations for return. Where there are concerns emerging from a genuine temporary stay assessment, heightened scrutiny of their likelihood of complying with visa conditions may also be warranted.

Example of a visa criteria: compliance with visa conditions

All temporary visas include certain conditions that successful applicants must abide by and it is important to assess whether an applicant genuinely intends and is able to comply visa conditions. The objective of the assessment is to ensure that visa conditions can be effectively used to manage risks while still facilitating entry and stay in Australia for genuine travellers and migrants. Visa conditions can be mandatory or discretionary and vary for different visas, but one example is the mandatory condition many temporary visas have to limit the applicant from certain types or amounts of paid employment.

Informed by legal, policy, risk and business requirements, the range of inputs to be considered may include:

- Evidence of the applicant’s financial situation and anticipated expenses in Australia.
- Public statements made by the visa applicant.
- Detailed statements and history about any past criminal history.

The critical assessment to be made is whether, weighing all of the available inputs, it is more likely than not that the visa applicant will comply with any prescribed visa conditions imposed on their visa.

In making this assessment the following relevant considerations are taken into account, with the level of scrutiny informed by the level of risk identified by departmental systems:

- Is the expected financial expenditure associated with entry and stay in Australia consistent with the details of the individual applicant’s current employment, financial and familial obligations such that they will be able to comply with any work restrictions?
- Would the details of the individual applicant’s skills or employment history, or connection to Australia, suggest that the visa applicant would likely seek to work?
The outcome of assessment of the likelihood of compliance – or alternatively the risk of non-compliance – is an important factor in a final visa decision including whether to impose any additional conditions. There are often situations in which further information is sought about the applicant’s situation, such as further evidence they genuinely have access to any claimed cash savings.

**Example of a visa criteria: capacity to financially support stay in Australia**

Many temporary visas require applicants to have sufficient financial capacity to support themselves and any dependents during their stay in Australia. Assessments are conducted to determine whether the visa applicant holds, or has access to, adequate funds to financially support themselves during their period of stay in Australia, taking into account the likely financial obligations. The objective of the assessment is to ensure that visa holders will not work illegally in Australia and will not be a financial burden to the Australian community during their period of stay.

Informed by legal, policy, risk and business requirements, the range of inputs to be considered may include:

- Evidence of the applicant’s financial situation.
- Declarations about the duration, nature and cost of plans and activities in Australia.
- Evidence of pre-arrangement of support, such as scholarships, health insurance, pre-purchased flights or accommodation.

The critical assessment to be made is whether it is more likely than not that the applicant will have access to adequate funds to financially support themselves during their period of stay in Australia.

In making this assessment the following relevant considerations are taken into account, with the level of scrutiny informed by the level of risk identified by departmental systems.

- Whether the applicant’s declared source of funds is consistent with the details of their individual employment or saving history.
- Is the expenditure relevant to the future intent of the visa applicant i.e. the level of funds required by a student visa during their stay in Australia is similar to the details of the applicant’s likely future income.
- Whether funds will, in reality, be available throughout the visa applicant’s intended stay in Australia?
- Is it reasonable in the detailed individual circumstances that the visa applicant would be able to freely deploy any declared savings having regard to their age, employment history and familial obligations?
- Does the expenditure of the declared funds undermine the likelihood that the individual visa applicant would return to their country of residence?

The outcome of assessment of financial capacity is usually an important factor in a final visa decision including whether to consider any additional conditions. There are often situations in which further information is sought about the applicant’s situation, such as further information about intended plans while in Australia.

**Example assessment of criteria for longer-term visa products: genuine sponsorship relationship (partner)**

Assessments against visa criteria for longer-term visas are currently proposed to be included in Bundle 8 which will be implemented at a later stage of reform. An example of assessments required by longer-term visa products is the genuine sponsorship relationship criteria, which is generally required for partner visas.

Informed by legal, policy, risk and business requirements, the range of inputs to be considered may include the following.

- Evidence of ownership of real estate or other major assets, liabilities (loans or insurance), bank accounts or legal commitments.
- Evidence of maintaining a joint household such as rental statements or property ownership, utility accounts, payment of accounts and responsibility for children (if relevant).
• Recordings or live-streams of interviews with applicants discussing their motivation for travel to Australia
• Joint social interaction such as invitations to social events, recognition of the relationship to government bodies, commercial or public institutions/authorities, statutory declarations in support of the relationship, membership of sporting, cultural or social activities or evidence of travel.
• Evidence of commitment such as written or electronic correspondence between the visa applicant and sponsor, joint wills, shared knowledge of each other’s personal circumstance and evidence of intent to maintain a long-term relationship.

The critical assessment to be made is whether it is more likely than not that the visa applicant and sponsor are in a genuine relationship and have a genuine intention to remain together as partners to the exclusion of all others.

In making this assessment the following relevant considerations are taken into account, with the level of scrutiny informed by the level of risk identified by departmental systems.

• Is the relationship genuine or merely designed to obtain a positive migration outcome for the visa applicant or to facilitate family reunification?
• Has the visa applicant or sponsor been subject to coercion or exploitation in lodging the visa application?
• Is the sole purpose of the visa application to enable the visa applicant to work in Australia?
• Was the partner visa lodged solely to postpone/stop the visa applicant from departing Australia?
• Is the visa applicant or sponsor in an exclusive relationship, or is either in a relationship with another person?
• Do the visa applicant and sponsor have a shared commitment to the relationship or is the relationship only one sided?

The outcome of assessment of sponsorship is usually an important factor in a final visa decision. There are often situations in which further information is sought about the applicant’s relationship with the sponsor, which can be collected via an interview.

3. Market input required

3.1. Introduction

Set out in this section are four high level questions the Department is keen to engage with providers on. Together these will help the Department understand how the market can assist in providing visa criteria assessments, and how the Department can work with providers to deliver those services and build capabilities over time.

While the Department has provided questions to guide responses, respondents should feel free to provide additional information, answer parts of questions or pose other relevant questions. Demonstrations, videos, pitches and other mediums are encouraged in addition to or in place of text-based responses. Please contact market.partnerships@homeaffairs.gov.au to make arrangements.

Please note that the Department will use responses to assist in determining whether and how to use market delivery of assessments against visa criteria, including informing any potential procurement processes. The Department may also use responses to obtain necessary Government approval and funding. Providers should refer further to Appendix C.

The Department is committed to protecting confidential information of providers and where necessary can arrange for specific channels to allow such information to be provided. Providers should indicate in their
responses where they would like to explore providing such information. Providers should also refer to Appendix C in relation to confidential information.

### 3.2. What potential solutions exist to meet the Department’s needs?

The Department’s current approach, described in section 2 and in Appendix A, is resource intensive. Departmental staff follow a range of detailed processes with some use of supporting technology. The Department believes that there is significant potential to leverage market capabilities to deliver assessments against visa criteria. As previously outlined, this could involve using business service solutions, established supportive technologies (such as Robot Processing Automation and analytics) and emerging disruptive technologies (such as Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning). The Department expects the type and mix of solutions that could be best suited will change rapidly over the coming years.

Given the varied and complex nature of assessments against visa criteria the Department expects that a mix of solutions will likely always be required. This may be achieved through a diverse set of providers or by engaging with a smaller number of select providers to develop and integrate that solution mix. The Department seeks to test these initial views and explore in detail what solutions exist now and what solutions could be developed and applied in the near and medium term.

**Specifically, the Department is seeking input on the following.**

- What product or solution would you propose that could already, or in the near future, be deployed to meet the Department’s needs, and how could it be delivered?
- What elements of assessments against visa criteria would a proposed product or solution be able to assist with (please see the examples in section 2 and the detailed description of assessments against visa criteria in Appendix A)?
- What potential solutions you have or are developing that you believe could be applied to visa criteria assessments in the future?
- What information sources do you have that can support you in making visa criteria assessments?
- If you are a business services provider, how you have in similar areas or would in the future, integrate nascent and established technologies to support visa criteria assessments?
- If you are provider with potential technological solutions, how you have in similar situations, or would in the future, work with the Department or other providers to deploy your technologies to deliver or augment visa criteria assessments?
- How the Department could work with you, particularly, the ways in which you work with customers and the business model that underpins your organisation (e.g. software licensing or business service provision)?
- What would you require from the Department – human capital, expertise, or other resources – in order to apply your solution to visa criteria assessments?

### 3.3. How can the Department engage the best of the market to help us define the right solution(s) and delivery approach?

The Department recognises, as discussed at section 3.1, that the solution(s) that could deliver assessments against visa criteria are varied, evolving and cover a broad set of providers and markets. The Department is keen to understand how it can best engage with the market over the coming months to explore possible solutions.

Engagement with smaller and niche providers, including start-ups and universities, as well as business service providers and a range of other organisations will be critical. The Department also recognises that the
commercial realities and engagement approaches for these different organisations will vary considerably. The Department wants to understand how it can best engage with the market throughout this process.

Specifically, the Department is seeking input on:

- How you typically engage in this kind of exploration of solutions or exploration of the application of your solutions to different problems?
- What types of engagement activities, for example challenges, proofs of concept, sandboxes etc., might be appropriate?
- How the Department would need to support and work with you during these exploratory engagements?

3.4. How can the Department engage the best of the market in ongoing delivery and innovation?

The Department expects available solutions for assessments against visa criteria are expected to change rapidly given rapid developments in analogous and adjacent fields. The Department recognises that to identify, develop and deploy relevant capabilities for assessments against visa criteria will likely require active market stewardship and the right commercial model. The Department is seeking to understand what approaches it can take to support innovation and gain the most value from expected advancements in technology.

The Department assumes that the initial capability required for December 2019 will involve predominately human delivered service solutions. The exact nature of those services and especially the extent to which supportive technologies would be involved is still uncertain. In that context, the Department would need to create the right conditions to encourage and support innovation by providers of human delivered solutions. This might involve those providers deploying supportive technology to augment human assessments which would require appropriate commercial incentives. These incentives could include, using shorter term contracts to drive contestability and flexibility, and performance management to improve efficiency, quality and consistency of assessments. There could also potentially be panel or other multiple provider contractual arrangements.

Separately, there may be compelling opportunities to deploy disruptive technologies developed by niche providers. The Department seeks to understand how it can engage such providers to identify, develop and deploy those solutions for assessments against visa criteria.

The Department wants to understand how the ongoing innovation and improvement process would affect engagements with its initial providers with substantially human solutions. It could, for example involve opportunities for those providers to acquire attractive technologies or they could take on responsibilities for systems and service integration of offerings of niche providers. The Department is particularly interested in understanding approaches that have been deployed in other settings and what advantages and challenges they present.

Specifically, the Department is seeking input on the following:

- How you would propose working with the Department to support the development and deployment of current, new and emerging technologies to make visa criteria assessments?
- What approaches you have engaged with in the past, or have seen work well, to deliver ongoing innovation and improvement?
- If you are a larger provider, how have you worked with smaller providers to incorporate disruptive technologies into your solutions?
- If you are a niche provider, how have you partnered with larger service providers to deploy and integrate your technologies, products and services to solve a business problem?
- What do you consider to be the most important characteristics of a contracting model (e.g., contract length, exclusivity of scope) and how can they be designed to incentivise ongoing innovation?

3.5. What impact will market-delivery have on funding requirements for assessments against visa criteria?

The Department is seeking market input on the potential implications of market delivered assessments against visa criteria for its funding requirements. This is to assist the Department in ensuring that appropriate resources are in place to allow a market-led delivery of assessments against visa criteria.

Recognising that this RFI is not part of a procurement, any input would be non-binding and non-evaluative. High level information has been provided on assessments against visa criteria in this document, with further detail about current visa criteria assessments available in Appendix A. Based on this information, providers’ experience and industry benchmarks for delivering similar services, the Department is seeking the following high-level and indicative information.

Please indicate approximate estimates of:

1. The rough magnitude and timing of any expected implementation costs needed to stand-up a given assessment solution(s). Please indicate the relevant solution and as many underlying assumptions, drivers or considerations as possible (e.g., time to train staff, level of detail in procedural requirements, complexity of security requirements, access to data-sets etc.). Please separately include any costs or input (e.g., departmental staff, access to data) you believe would need to be directly borne by the Department.

2. The rough magnitude of efficiencies that could be expected to result from deploying the given solution in the Department’s context based on what you have been able to achieve in providing similar services. Please indicate where possible the sources and basis of your estimates for efficiencies, including for example the impact of more efficient processes, productivity improvements from supportive technology and/or any potential automation of assessments.

3. The ongoing cost or inputs required (e.g., staff) for the Department to manage the given solution(s), for example, the cost of quality assurance, auditing and compliance activities?

4. Where a solution involves licensing or operating costs for software or other technology, what is the rough magnitude of ongoing costs for the given solution(s)? Include if possible any information about the ramp-up time to run-rate, where costs are fixed per annum or are variable unit costs per assessment and any high-level trends you would expect in the coming years for such a solution.
Appendix A: Detailed description of approach to assessments against visa criteria

Introduction

This document provides further detail on the Department’s general approach to conducting a number of assessments against visa criteria against currently current, and possible future, visa criteria and an indication of the assessments against visa criteria which the Department anticipates the market may be able to provide through Bundle 4 and 8 (assessments against visa criteria). Bundle 4 and 8 providers may consider providing visa criteria assessment solutions for the overarching assessments described below, or they may be able to provide solutions for the sub-criteria listed within each visa criteria assessment.

The information contained in this document is of a general nature only and is provided for the sole purpose of assisting respondents in responding to this RFI. Whilst this document reflects the Department’s general approach to conducting a number of assessments against visa criteria, it is not intended to be a substitute for, and should not be taken as a definitive statement of, the law or legislation or policies applicable to assessments against visa criteria, including the Migration Act 1958 (Cth), or the Department’s processes or approaches with respect to visa decision-making.

This document provides the general approach to undertaking the following visa criteria assessments:

- **Genuine temporary stay** – does the visa applicant genuinely intend to enter and remain in Australia temporarily?
- **Capacity to financially support stay in Australia** – can the applicant financially support themselves during their stay in Australia?
- **Genuine student** – does the applicant genuinely intend to study while in Australia?
- **Identity** – is the visa applicant able to confirm who they say they are?
- **Character** – whether the visa applicant’s prior conduct impacts on visa grant?
- **Compliance with work conditions** – will the applicant comply with visa conditions relating to work entitlements and limitations?

The descriptions provide an overview of the test to be applied, the objectives of the assessment, the information (inputs) to be considered in the assessment, specific questions, criteria and thresholds that make up the assessment and outputs of the assessment.

Workflow considerations

The Department currently anticipates that the high level workflow of the future operating model may operate as follows:

- Departmental risk systems, policy and business rules and systems will identify cases that require an assessment against visa criteria and the level of scrutiny required.
- Where an application has been identified as requiring an assessment against visa criteria, the Bundle 1 provider, through the Global Digital Platform (Platform), will manage the workflow of the application to the Bundle 4 and 8 provider. This includes information that has been collected, validated and verified either directly, through the Platform, or through the Department, the Department’s risk systems or service providers engaged specifically to collect and verify applicant information.
- The Bundle 4 and 8 provider uses the information provided by the Platform to conduct a visa criteria assessment against the applicable test and to the standard required.
• The Bundle 4 and 8 provider records the output of their assessment via the Platform, including succinctly identifying the information considered in the assessment, outcomes and recommendations.

• The Platform then auto-grants or refers the case to a departmental visa processing officer, in accordance with the Department’s designated business rules.

**Genuine temporary stay**

*Definition of test applied*

Does the visa applicant genuinely intend to enter and remain in Australia temporarily?

*Objective*

To ensure the integrity of the temporary visa program.

*Inputs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input in relation to the visa applicant</th>
<th>Prior visa decisions (both grant/refuse decisions) for the visa applicant and declared family members. All prior and intended visa/travel history, not only to Australia, including that of family members. Residential address/status of family members in country of residence and family members/declared friends/associates residing in Australia. Employment/education/study history. Asset ownership (business, home, motor vehicle etc.). Declarations and evidence of the personal financial position of the applicant, including income and asset ownership (business, home, motor vehicle etc.); Immigration history of family members/declared friends/associates residing in Australia. Visa applicant’s statement of intent and relevance to employment, education, financial circumstances etc. To be supported by relevant statements/evidence. Declared or potential marriage or engagement with an Australian resident/citizen.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country specific</td>
<td>Economic opportunities in home country in their field of work or study. Military service laws that may discourage the visa applicant from wanting to return to their country of residence. Political or civil unrest. Targeting/persecution of groups that the visa applicant may be a member of. Legal status of the visa applicant in their country of residence. Prevalence of study courses in the visa applicant’s home country and region. Cultural norms and expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa applicant specific credibility/genuineness</td>
<td>Credibility/genuineness information obtained through direct engagement with the applicant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Factors considered**

The assessments will consider some or all of the following factors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visa element</th>
<th>Current considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Whether the incentive to depart Australia is greater than the incentive to stay in Australia: | Are the visa applicant’s personal ties to their country of residence (including family, community, study or employment) a significant enough incentive to return? Do these outweigh the visa applicant’s personal ties in Australia?  
Is the capacity to find employment and financial remuneration a driving consideration in seeking a visa to Australia?  
Are the visa applicant’s future or likely economic opportunities in their country of residence a significant incentive to return? Is the visa applicant’s economic circumstances above average in their country of residence?  
What is the likelihood that the visa applicant will seek to extend their stay in Australia lawfully through lawful visa pathways?  
Is the visa applicant’s legal status in their country of residence likely to impact on their intention to depart Australia at the conclusion of their visa validity?  
Are there any military service commitments that present a significant incentive for the visa applicant not to depart Australia at the conclusion of their visa validity? |
| Whether the visa applicant’s immigration history indicates an intention to remain in Australia at the conclusion of their visa validity: | Does the visa applicant have any adverse visa decisions to a country other than Australia and the basis for these decisions?  
Has the visa applicant been refused, cancelled or considered for cancellation for a visa in Australia and do the reasons indicate future non-compliance?  
Has the visa applicant complied with visa conditions in previously held Australian visas (if any)?  
How much time has the visa applicant spent in Australia, and does this suggest the visa applicant is using study/work/business etc. as a means to extend their stay in Australia indefinitely?  
Has the visa applicant complied with migration/immigration laws in other countries and if not, what are the results of any non-compliance? |
Confidence thresholds required for assessment

The following table is indicative of the levels of scrutiny that may be required to undertake the visa criteria assessment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complexity</th>
<th>Level of scrutiny</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Comparison of minimal documents already provided as part of visa application and can easily verify against other existing information/systems to find match.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Additional information and documents sought from visa applicant, including additional verifiable documents. Documents cannot be confidently verified and veracity of the applicants written claims assessed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>In-depth assessment of political and environment landscape. Comprehensive review of the visa applicant's biographical information. Applicant interviewed and overall credibility of the applicant's claims considered.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outputs

Outputs will include a finding that the applicant does/does not genuinely intend to stay temporarily in Australia or may request additional information from the visa applicant to inform a re-assessment of the applicant's genuineness. Some or all of the following information may be provided to support the assessment outcome:

- visa applicant's verified information;
- the type of visa application for which the genuine temporary stay was assessed;
- any issues that caused concern and the outcome;
- which verification activities were undertaken;
- the outcome of any verification activities;
- workflow recommendation to request additional information from the visa applicant if required; and/or
- workflow recommendation to a departmental visa processing officer to consider more complex or high risk information, if required.

Capacity to financially support stay in Australia

Definition of test applied

Does the visa applicant hold or have access to adequate funds to financially support themselves, during their period of stay in Australia?

Objective

The objective of assessing the visa applicant's ability to financially support themselves is to ensure that temporary visa entrants will not work illegally in Australia and will not be a financial burden to the Australian community during the period of their stay.
### Inputs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of Funds</td>
<td>Bank statements and/or passbooks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Savings and/or income history.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Letters from banks/financial institutions regarding the visa applicant’s financial position or access to funds of another person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Available credit card funds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Letters of ongoing employment in country of residence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Letters confirming financial support from third parties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student scholarship confirmation from educational institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial capacity declaration (for low-risk applicants).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated expenses in Australia</td>
<td>Evidence of family links and family-provided accommodation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anticipated health costs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Length of anticipated stay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prepaid course/tuition fees (evidenced on the confirmation of enrolment).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australian work arrangements or intentions, if relevant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Evidence of travel, health and/or life insurance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caseload/country or visa caseload</td>
<td>Information on reliability of financial authorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information about genuine financial documents, including security features.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prevalence of document fraud in the visa and/or country caseload.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economic and industry data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political, economic or geographic data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Factors considered

Financial capacity assessments will consider some or all of the following factors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visa element</th>
<th>Current considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Does the visa applicant have adequate funds to support their length of stay? | • What are the costs to the visa applicant of staying in Australia?  
• Have the costs to the visa applicant for staying in Australia been pre-paid?  
• Does the visa applicant have sufficient funds to cover anticipated costs?  
• Does the visa applicant have sufficient funds to cover anticipated costs as well as other ongoing costs the visa applicant is responsible for (eg, family support or business costs in their country of residence)?  
• Does the visa applicant have sufficient funds to cover the costs of family members who are also travelling/studying with the visa applicant?  
• Does the visa applicant have sufficient funds or insurance to cover anticipated health care costs a reciprocal health care arrangement which would cover the cost of health care in Australia? |
| Genuineness | • Has the visa applicant had consistent funds available, or have they been entered into a bank account for the sole purpose of obtaining an Australian visa?  
• Are the funds available to the visa applicant at the time of visa application, likely to remain available to the applicant throughout their period of stay? |

Confidence threshold required for assessment

An assessment of an applicant's capacity to financially support themselves is conducted for all temporary visa types, excluding work, business or investment visas, where the visa applicant's intention to stay in Australia includes earning an income to support themselves.

Financial capacity assessments will vary in complexity based upon how simply a visa applicant's financial status can be automatically verified, and the extent to which a visa applicant can provide verifiable evidentiary support of their financial status.

The following table is indicative of the levels of scrutiny that may be required to undertake the visa criteria assessment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complexity</th>
<th>Level of scrutiny</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Comparison of minimal documents already provided as part of visa application and verification against other existing information/systems to find match.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Moderate   | • Comprehensive review of the visa applicant’s financial information.  
• Additional information and documents sought from visa applicant, including additional verifiable documents.  
• Documents cannot be confidently verified and the veracity of the applicants written claims assessed. |
| High       | • Intensive assessment and/or interviews of the visa applicant and overall credibility of the applicant’s claims considered.  
• Referrals to Australian Government diplomatic posts or external service providers for additional in-country verification or information |
**Outputs**

Outputs will include a finding that the financial capacity criteria is met/not met or may request additional information from the visa applicant to inform a re-assessment of the criteria. Some or all of the following information may be provided to support the financial viability outcome:

- visa applicant's verified information
- the type of visa application for which financial viability was assessed
- any issues that caused concern and the outcome
- which verification activities were undertaken
- the outcome of any verification activities;
- workflow recommendation to request additional information from the visa applicant if required
- workflow recommendation to a departmental visa processing officer to consider more complex or high risk information, if required.

**Genuine student**

*Test to be applied*

Does the visa applicant genuinely intend to enter and remain in Australia for the purpose of studying?

**Objective**

This assessment ensures the integrity of the student visa program, which supports the sustainable growth of Australia’s international education sector worth approximately $21.8 billion to the Australian economy per year. It facilitates the lawful entry and temporary stay of genuine international students. Student visa criteria are designed to ensure that Australian education remains internationally competitive, while preserving high levels of immigration integrity.

**Inputs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence of study — applicant specific</th>
<th>Confirmation of enrolment or student registration numbers from educational institutions (overseas).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of intent and reasons for study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scholarship information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overseas secondary student exchange form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Institution or sponsoring organisation</td>
<td>Information regarding the existence/reliability of overseas educational institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country information</td>
<td>Prevalence of study courses in visa applicant's home country and region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prevalence of alternative study opportunities in visa applicant's home country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genuineness</td>
<td>Educational history in the applicant’s country of residence and other countries.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Factors considered

The assessments will consider some or all of the following factors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visa element</th>
<th>Current considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Whether a visa applicant genuinely intends to study in Australia having regard to the cost of the course and the overall benefit to the applicant’s future: | • What is the value of the course to the visa applicant’s future?  
• Are there commensurate study courses in the visa applicant’s country of residence?  
• Is the course consistent with the visa applicant’s current level of education?  
• Will the intended course enhance the visa applicant’s future employment opportunities in their country of residence?  
• The potential for the visa applicant to undertake the intended course of study in their home country or region.  
• The relevance of the intended course of study in the visa applicant’s country of residence.  
• Does the visa applicant have a reasonable knowledge of their proposed course of study and education provider and their living arrangements in Australia, commensurate with their previous studies and qualifications? |

Confidence threshold required for assessment

These assessments are conducted for all student visas. They will vary in complexity based upon how simply a visa applicants student enrolment status can be automatically verified and the reliability of the educational institution. Visa applicants who have provided a confirmation of enrolment from a trusted education provider, a letter of support from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade or the Department of Defence, or an overseas secondary student exchange form generally have streamlined and automated processing.

More complex assessments may be required where the visa applicant has a history of visa non-compliance, their education history cannot be verified or they have many educational enrolments or incomplete study courses.

The following table is indicative of the levels of scrutiny that may be required to undertake the visa criteria assessment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complexity</th>
<th>Level of scrutiny</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>• Confirm previous enrolments in trusted educational institutions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Moderate   | • Additional information and documents sought from visa applicant, including additional verifiable documents.  
• Documents cannot be confidently verified and veracity of the applicants written claims assessed. |
| High       | • In-depth assessment of study and work opportunities in home country.  
• Comprehensive review of the visa applicant’s study and work history.  
• Applicant interviewed and credibility of the applicant’s claims considered. |

Outputs

Outputs will include a finding that the person has met/not met the genuine student criteria, or may request additional information from the visa applicant to inform a re-assessment of the criteria. Some or all of the following information may be provided to support the outcome of the assessment:

• visa applicant’s verified information  
• any issues that caused concern and the outcome
• which verification activities were undertaken
• the outcome of any verification activities
• workflow recommendation to request additional information from the visa applicant if required
• workflow recommendation to a departmental visa processing officer to consider more complex or high risk information, if required.

Identity

Definition of test applied

Identity assessments determine whether the totality of the information supplied by the visa applicant and available from other sources supports the assessment that the visa applicant is the person that they claim to be.

Objective

The stated identity may be supported by identity information, such as personal identifiers and identity documents. The stated identity may be assessed by undertaking internal and external checks to verify and/or authenticate the identity information presented and by evaluating the credibility and/or intentions of the visa applicant.

The objectives of assessing identity includes:

• authenticating the identity of, persons applying for visas
• enhancing the Department's ability to identify non-citizens who are of character or national security concern
• combating document and identity fraud
• detecting forum shopping by visa applicants.

Inputs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal identifiers</th>
<th>Fingerprint or handprints (paper and ink or through digital live-scanning).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Height and weight measurements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Photograph of persons face and shoulders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio or video recording of visa applicant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Iris scan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visa applicant's signature.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biographical information</th>
<th>Family names and given names.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aliases and name changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Date of birth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marital status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All current nationalities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National identity number or social security number.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Biographical information of family members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residential address.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity documents</th>
<th>Travel documents.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National identity cards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Birth/marriage certificate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drivers licence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Factors considered

Identity assessments will consider some or all of the following factors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visa element</th>
<th>Current considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whether the visa applicant’s personal identifiers are consistent over time and via different mediums:</td>
<td>• Is the identity information consistent within and across each item provided (including the personal identifiers)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If there are any differences, can these be traced and satisfactorily explained (for example, a change of name certificate or marriage certificate provided to explain a name change).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is the identity information consistent with identity information provided during previous interactions with the Department (if any)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The integrity/reliability of identity documents and their sources:</td>
<td>• Whether the document is genuine in accordance with identity document databases?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Whether document security features can be confirmation by expert examiners?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Whether there is local information/knowledge and precedents that undermine the document integrity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Self-declared information that undermines the credibility of the document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Information obtained from credible third parties regarding how the identity document may have been obtained.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If consideration of these factors does not lead to sufficient satisfaction of the visa applicant’s stated identity, an identity assessment officer may arrange an interview with the visa applicant to clarify any apparent ambiguities, inconsistences and/or omissions in the identity information.

Confidence thresholds required for assessment

The confidence threshold required for identity assessments is not prescriptive and will vary by application, dependent on:

• the type of visa
• the range of methods for lodging and processing visa applications
• the diversity of visa applicants and their objectives in applying for visas
• the range and diversity of identity documents (including levels of security features in those documents and the reliability of issuing sources).

The following table is indicative of the levels of scrutiny that may be required to undertake the visa criteria assessment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complexity</th>
<th>Level of scrutiny</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>• Comparison of minimal documents already provided as part of visa application and can easily verify against other existing information/systems to find match.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Moderate
- Additional information and identity documents sought from visa applicant, including additional verifiable documents.
- Documents cannot be confidently verified and veracity of the applicants written claims assessed.

### High
- Applicant interviewed and overall credibility of the applicant's claims considered.
- Intensive assessment of applicant’s biographical information.
- Referrals to Australian Government diplomatic post/ external service providers for additional in-country verification or information.

### Streamlined cases
A streamlined assessment may include an automatic check of the visa applicant’s passport number against existing systems, or provision of identity documents that can be easily and confidently verified based on the reliability of their source and security features. These assessments are considered to be objective and automatable (and are not included in the scope of Bundle 4 or this RFI).

### Complex assessments
Where information cannot be easily verified, moderately complex assessments against visa criteria may be undertaken. These are currently undertaken by a visa processing officer. Where a visa processing officer remains unsatisfied of the visa applicant's identity, they may refer the case for a more thorough identity assessment by an identity assessment officer.

### Outputs
Outputs will include a finding that identity criteria is met/not met or may request additional information from the visa applicant to inform an identity re-assessment. Some or all of the following information may be provided on completion of a successful identity assessment and finding:
- visa applicant’s verified identity information
- the type of visa application for which the stated identity was assessed
- the stage of processing at which the assessment was made (for example, at the beginning of processing, at health processing)
- which personal identifiers/identity information were considered
- any issues that caused concern and the outcome
- which verification activities were undertaken
- the outcome of any verification activities
- workflow recommendation to request additional information from the visa applicant if required
- workflow recommendation to a departmental visa processing officer to consider more complex or high risk information, if required.
**Character**

**Definition of test applied**
All non-citizens who wish to enter or remain in Australia must satisfy the good character assessment.

**Objective**
The objective of assessing good character is to ensure that temporary visa entrants will not pose a criminal threat while they are in Australia, result in the vilification of a segment of Australia community or undermine a cohesive multicultural society.

**Inputs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input in relation to the visa applicant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Self-declaration of character issues either on visa application forms (note, the range of character related questions on visa application forms can vary depending on the visa subclass) or incoming passenger cards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Police certificates (or equivalent) volunteered or requested as part of the visa application process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Departmental system checks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prisoner lists provided by corrective services agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information supplied by third parties, including members of the public, through the Department’s dob-in service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ministerial correspondence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Law enforcement or national security intelligence or referrals (including Interpol notices).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Open source information or media articles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Further information checking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A statement from an appropriate authority as to whether the visa applicant has a criminal history (for example, a penal clearance, police certificate or military certificate).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Open source material.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verification information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Identity information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information provided in the visa application.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Credibility information obtained in any visa applicant interviews.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Character criteria**

In order for a person to meet the good character criteria, they must not meet any of the following non-exhaustive criteria. A person need only be found to not pass one ground in order to not meet the good character criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visa element</th>
<th>Current considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Whether the visa applicant’s prior criminal history would influence their actions while in Australia** | • The visa applicant has a substantial criminal record.  
• The visa applicant has been convicted of crimes in immigration detention, during or after escape from immigration detention.  
• The visa applicant has associations or memberships with organisations suspected or involved in criminal activities.  
• There is sufficient intelligence or evidence to suggest that the visa applicant has been involved or convicted of crimes under international humanitarian law, such as people smuggling, human trafficking or war crimes.  
• The visa applicant has demonstrated past or present criminal conduct that may not be sufficient to meet criminal thresholds, but informs the person’s enduring moral character over time.  
• The visa applicant has presented a risk of engaging in criminal conduct in the future.  
• The visa applicant has an Interpol notice in effect that would infer a future risk to the Australian community.  
• The visa applicant has associations or memberships with organisations who espoused views that would if expressed publically vilify a segment of the Australian community.  
• Statements made by the visa applicant that, if expressed publically in Australia, would vilify a segment of the Australian community. |

**Confidence thresholds required for assessment**

The following table is indicative of the levels of scrutiny that may be required to undertake the visa criteria assessment:

| Low | • Comparison of minimal documents already provided as part of visa application and can easily verify against other existing information/systems to find match.  
• Analysis of currently existing open source information (eg media articles) to determine risk to the community. |
| Moderate | • Additional information, documents and references sought from visa applicant, some of which can be verified.  
• In-depth assessment of applicant claims and criminal history/allegations considered.  
• Statements of character provided by third parties considered for credibility. |
| High | • Outcomes of applicant interviews analysed for overall credibility of the applicant’s claims.  
• Outcomes of third party interviews analysed against applicant claims. |
Outputs

Character assessment outputs will include a recommendation of whether the character criteria is met/not met or further information required from the visa applicant. Some or all of the following information may be provided to support the outcome of the assessment:

- visa applicant's verified information;
- any issues that caused concern and the outcome;
- which verification activities were undertaken;
- the outcome of any verification activities;
- workflow recommendation to request additional information from the visa applicant if required; and/or
- workflow recommendation to a departmental visa processing officer to consider more complex or high risk information, if required.

Compliance with work conditions

Definition of test applied

Will the applicant comply with work conditions on their visa?

Objective

The objective of assessing visa compliance (work) is to determine whether the applicant will comply with prescribed visa work conditions. Visa work conditions may include a prohibition, limitation, connection to a sponsoring organisation, or obligations to notify the Department.

Inputs

| Evidence of Funds | • Bank statements and/or passbooks.  
|                  | • Savings and/or income history.  
|                  | • Letters from banks/financial institutions regarding the applicant’s financial position or access to funds of another person.  
|                  | • Available credit card funds.  
|                  | • Letters confirming financial support from third parties.  
|                  | • Student scholarship confirmation from educational institution.  
|                  | • Financial capacity declaration (for low-risk applicants).  
|                  | • Loan documentation (financial institutions, family, friends).  
| Input in relation to the visa applicant | • Age of the visa applicant.  
|                                           | • Composition of visiting family members.  
|                                           | • Family composition remaining and accompanying the visa applicant.  
|                                           | • Visa validity and intended period of stay in Australia.  
|                                           | • Time of visit in relation to possible work opportunities.  
|                                           | • Details of contacts in Australia.  
| Evidence of employment | • Evidence of employment (in and out of Australia).  
|                          | • Company/business financial statements.  
|                          | • Business registration certificates and registration details.  
|                          | • Personnel list on company website.  
|                          | • Financial statements demonstrating history of income reflecting employment remuneration and payment frequencies.  
|                          | • Qualifications and registrations with regulatory or professional employment bodies.  

**Anticipated expenses in Australia**
- Evidence of family links and family-provided accommodation.
- Age and health details of applicant.
- Length of anticipated stay.
- Australian work arrangements or intentions, if any.

**Country specific**
- Economic opportunities in home country.
- Company business statements of declared links in Australia

**Applicant specific credibility/genuineness**
- Credibility/genuineness information obtained through direct engagement with the applicant.

## Factors considered

Visa compliance (work) assessments will consider some or all of the following factors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visa element</th>
<th>Current considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Whether the visa applicant has sufficient funds for their intended stay in Australia: | - Does the declared access to funds suggest that the visa applicant would logically need to work in breach of their visa conditions?  
- Do pre-existing financial obligations suggest that the visa applicant would logically need to work in breach of their visa conditions?  
- Would the circumstances in the visa applicant's home country coupled with declared savings suggest that the applicant would seek to work in breach of their visa conditions?  
- Do the funds demonstrate that the visa applicant has the capacity to undertake the intended activities for the visa and in compliance with work conditions (i.e. 6 months travelling on visitor visa without working)? |
| Whether the visa applicant's current or prior employment suggests work in breach of their visa conditions: | - Are there existing connections, such as familial, that would assist or support the visa applicant to work in breach of their visa conditions?  
- Is the intended location of temporary residency in Australia conducive to the visa applicant working in breach of their visa conditions?  
- Does the period of visa applicant's proposed temporary stay conducive to the visa applicant working in breach of their visa conditions?  
- Does the applicant operate a business in their home country that would suggest work activities inconsistent with their visa conditions?  
- Has the visa applicant declared an intention to work in breach of their visa conditions? |
| Whether the visa applicant's declared location in Australia may indicate an intention to work in breach of their visa conditions: | - The period of study facilitates work in breach of visa conditions.  
- The intended course of study is consistent with the applicant's current level of education or specifically to support work in breach of visa conditions.  
- The visa applicant has participated in visa programs that permit work that would suggest that the visa applicant would seek to work in breach of visa conditions? |
**Whether the intended stay period in Australia indicates an intention to work in breach of their visa conditions:**

- Does the visa history of the visa applicant to Australia or other countries indicate that the visa applicant would work in breach of their visa conditions?
- Whether the timing of the visa applicant’s stay in Australia corresponds to work opportunities?
- If prior visa grants permit work whether it is likely that the visa applicant will continue to seek to work in breach of their visa conditions?
- Has the visa applicant been detected with tools or equipment when entering Australia that would indicate an intention to work in breach of their visa conditions?

**Confidence thresholds required for assessment**

The following table is indicative of the levels of scrutiny that may be required to undertake the visa criteria assessment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complexity</th>
<th>Level of scrutiny</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Comparison of minimal documents already provided as part of visa application and can easily verify against other existing information/systems to find match.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Additional information, documents and references sought from visa applicant, some of which can be verified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In-depth assessment of applicant claims and work/study history considered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Statements of character provided by third parties considered for credibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Applicant interview and analysis for overall credibility of the claims.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outcomes of third party interviews analysed against applicant claims.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Outputs**

Outputs will include an assessment that the applicant is or is not likely to comply with the visa work conditions. Some or all of the following information may be provided to support the assessment and finding:

- visa applicant’s verified information
- the type of visa application for which the visa compliance (work) was assessed
- any issues that caused concern and the outcome
- which verification activities were undertaken
- the outcome of any verification activities
- workflow recommendation to request additional information from the applicant if required
- workflow recommendation to a departmental visa processing officer to consider more complex or high risk information, if required.
Appendix B: Market Consultation Paper

Delivering Visa Services for Australia – Market Consultation Paper
Appendix C: RFI Terms and Conditions

1. The point of contact for all matters concerning this RFI is as follows:
   Market Partnerships Branch
   Visa Citizenship Services Group
   Department of Home Affairs
   Email: market.partnerships@homeaffairs.gov.au

2. Information on how to lodge a response to this RFI is set out in section 1.1 of the RFI.

3. Responses to this RFI include any material (including documents, presentations, demonstrations, videos or pitches) lodged, submitted or provided by a respondent in response to this RFI or at any stage during the RFI process.

4. This RFI is not an offer or a request for offers and must not be relied upon as such. It is an invitation to respondents to provide feedback and information. No binding contract (including a process contract) or other understanding (including any form of contractual, quasi-contractual, restitutionary rights, or rights based on similar legal or equitable grounds) will exist between the Department and a respondent in relation to the information provided during the RFI process, other than in respect of the licence granted in accordance with clause 13 of this Appendix C.

5. Participation in this RFI is subject to the terms and conditions set out in this Appendix C. By submitting a response to this RFI, respondents are deemed to have accepted these terms and conditions.

6. Responding to this RFI is non-competitive and will not advantage or disadvantage respondents in any future procurement process(es) for assessments against visa criteria (however, it provides respondents with the opportunity to potentially input into the development of the Department’s requirements and any future procurement process(es)).

7. The Department may, in its absolute discretion, request follow-up discussions with any or all respondents. Any request or invitation by the Department to engage with a respondent must not be, nor be deemed to be, a representation by the Department that it will invite that respondent to participate in any future procurement process(es) for assessments against visa criteria or any component thereof.

8. While the Department encourages responses and may draw on and use responses in accordance with this RFI, the Department is not obliged to consider, use or incorporate any feedback provided in any response.

9. Notwithstanding anything else contained in this RFI or limiting its rights at law or otherwise, the Department may:
   9.1 vary this RFI, or the structure, requirements or processes referred to in this RFI at any time, with or without public consultation;
   9.2 vary the timing(s) referred to in this RFI;
   9.3 seek amended or call for new responses;
   9.4 cease, suspend or vary the consultation and / or any procurement process(es) envisaged in this RFI;
   9.5 seek additional information and / or clarification from any respondent or third party at any time;
   9.6 provide additional information to respondents (including potential respondents) at any time;
   9.7 provide supplementary information, requirements or protocols with respect to any activities undertaken as part of this RFI or the RFI process;
   9.8 conduct other market engagement activities in relation to, or any aspect of, assessments against visa criteria, including undertaking any procurement process(es);
9.9 add to, alter, delete or exclude any assessments against visa criteria from any future procurement process(es);
9.11 conduct an approach to market for all or any component of assessments against visa criteria;
9.12 elect not to proceed with any future procurement process(es) for all or any component of assessments against visa criteria; and
9.13 suspend or terminate this RFI process.

10. To the extent permitted by law, the Department, its officers, employees or advisers will not be liable to any respondent or in any way responsible for any loss, cost, expense, claim or damage incurred by a respondent in participating in this RFI process, including where the Department:
10.1. exercises or fails to exercise any of the Department's rights under this RFI;
10.2. fails to inform a respondent of its exercise or non-exercise of those rights;
10.3. suspends or terminates this RFI process;
10.4. does not proceed with any future procurement process(es) for all or any component of assessments against visa criteria.

11. Participation in this RFI process, or in relation to any matter concerning the RFI, is at the respondent's sole risk and cost. The Department will not be liable or in any way responsible for any loss, cost, expense, claim or damage incurred by a respondent in responding to this RFI.

12. All submitted responses become the property of the Commonwealth as represented by the Department upon lodgement.

13. Clause 11 of this Appendix C does not affect ownership of intellectual property rights that exist in any material provided by a respondent in response to this RFI, which remain the property of the respondent or other relevant third party.

14. In lodging a response, respondents grant to the Department a licence to use, reproduce, adapt, modify and disclose (including to the responsible Minister and any adviser) on a royalty-free, perpetual and irrevocable basis any material provided by a respondent in response to this RFI, for the purposes of:
14.1 the RFI process, reviewing and considering or clarifying responses;
14.2. informing, planning, developing and delivering any future procurement process(es);
14.3. refining and defining the Department's requirements;
14.4. audit requirements;
14.5. complying with governmental and parliamentary reporting requirements, including requests for information by Parliament or Parliamentary Committees; and
14.6. any other purpose related to the RFI process;

15. All intellectual property rights in this RFI and any attached or related Commonwealth material remain the property of the Commonwealth as represented by the Department. Each respondent is permitted to use this RFI and the material contained in it (in whatever form) solely for the purpose of preparing and lodging a response and participating in the RFI process, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Department.

16. Subject to clause 16 of this Appendix C and to the use and disclosure of any such information for the purpose of informing and conducting any procurement process(es) after the RFI process, the Department undertakes to keep confidential all responses provided to the Department by respondents prior to the completion of the RFI process.

17. The obligation of confidentiality in clause 15 of this Appendix C does not apply if the confidential information:
17.1. is disclosed by the Department to its advisers or employees, or to other Commonwealth entities or departments and their advisers or employees, solely in order to consider responses, clarify a response or for a purpose specified in clause 13 of this Appendix C;

17.2. is disclosed by the Commonwealth or other Commonwealth entities or departments to Ministers or the Parliamentary Secretary (and their advisers) or Cabinet, including for the purposes described in clause 13 of this Appendix C;

17.3. is disclosed to the Commonwealth’s internal management and senior personnel, to enable effective management or auditing;

17.4. is disclosed by the Department, in response to a request by a House or a Committee of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia;

17.5. is shared by the Department within the Commonwealth, or with another State or Territory agency or department or a Commonwealth entity or department, where this serves the Commonwealth’s legitimate interests;

17.6. is disclosed by the Department in response to a request made by the Auditor-General, or by a person authorised by the Auditor-General;

17.7. is disclosed as agreed with the respondent;

17.8. is authorised or required by law to be disclosed; or

17.9. is in the public domain otherwise than due to a breach of clause 15 of this Appendix C.
Appendix D: Optional response template

Set out in this section are four high level questions the Department is keen to engage with providers on:

- What potential solutions exist to meet the Department's needs?
- How can the Department engage the best of the market to help us define the right solution(s) and delivery approach?
- How can the Department engage the best of the market in on-going delivery and innovation?
- What impact will market-delivery have on funding requirements for assessments against visa criteria?

Together these will help the Department to understand how the market could engage in providing assessments against visa criteria and how it can work with providers to deliver those services and build capabilities over time.

While the Department has provided questions to guide responses, providers should feel free to provide additional information, answer parts of questions or pose other relevant questions. Demonstrations, videos, pitches and other mediums are encouraged in addition to or in place of text-based responses. Please contact market.partnerships@homeaffairs.gov.au to make arrangements.

The Department is committed to protecting confidential information of providers and where necessary can arrange for specific channels to allow such information to be provided. Providers should indicate in their responses where they would like to explore providing such information. Providers should also refer to Appendix C of the RFI in relation to confidential information.
What potential solutions exist to meet the Department’s needs?

Specifically, the Department is seeking input on:

1. What product or solution would you propose that could already, or in the near future, be deployed to meet the Department's needs, and how could it be delivered?

2. What elements of assessments against visa criteria would a proposed product or solution be able to assist with? (please see the examples in section 2 of the RFI and the detailed description of assessments against visa criteria in Appendix A of the RFI).
3. **What potential solutions do you have or are you developing that you believe could be applied to visa criteria assessments in the future?**

4. **What information sources do you have that can support you in making visa criteria assessments?**

5. **If you are a business services provider, how have you, in similar areas, or would you, in the future, integrate nascent and established technologies to support visa criteria assessments?**

6. **If you are a provider with potential technological solutions, how have you, in similar situations, or would you, in the future, work with the Department or other providers to deploy your technologies to deliver or augment visa criteria assessments?**

7. **How the Department could work with you, particularly, the ways in which you work with customers and the business model that underpins your organisation (e.g. software licensing or business service provision).**
8. What would you require from the Department - human capital, expertise, or other resources - in order to apply your solution to visa criteria assessments?

How can the Department engage the best of the market to help us define the right solution(s) and delivery approach?

Specifically, the Department is seeking input on:

9. How do you typically engage in this kind of exploration of solutions or exploration of the application of your solutions to different problems?

10. What types of engagement activities, for example challenges, proofs of concept, sandboxes etc, might be appropriate?

11. How would the Department need to support and work with you during these exploratory engagements?
How can the Department engage the best of the market in on-going delivery and innovation?

Specifically, the Department is seeking input on:

12. How would you propose working with the Department to support the development and deployment of current, new and/or emerging technologies to make visa criteria assessments?

13. What approaches have you engaged with in the past, or have seen work well, to deliver ongoing innovation and improvement?

14. If you are a larger provider, how have you worked with smaller providers to incorporate disruptive technologies into your solutions?

15. If you are a niche provider, how have you partnered with larger service providers to deploy and integrate your technologies, products and services to solve a business problem?
16. What do you consider to be the most important characteristics of a contracting model (e.g. contract length, exclusivity of scope) and how can they be designed to incentivise ongoing innovation?

What impact will market-delivery have on funding requirements for assessments against visa criteria?
Please indicate approximate estimates of:

17. The rough magnitude and timing of any expected implementation costs needed to stand-up a given assessment solution(s). Please indicate the relevant solution and as many underlying assumptions, drivers or considerations as possible (e.g. time to train staff, level of detail in procedural requirements, complexity of security requirements, access to data-sets etc.). Please separately include any costs or input (e.g. Departmental staff, access to data) you believe would need to be directly borne by the Department.

18. What is the rough magnitude of efficiencies that could be expected to result from deploying the given solution, in the Department's context, based on what you have been able to achieve in providing similar services? Please indicate where possible the sources and basis of your estimates for efficiencies, including for example the impact of more efficient processes, productivity improvements from supportive technology and/or any potential automation of assessments?

19. What are the ongoing cost or inputs required (e.g. staff) for the Department to manage the given solution(s), for example, the cost of quality assurance, auditing and compliance activities?
20. Where a solution involves licensing or operating costs for software or other technology, what is the rough magnitude of ongoing costs for the given solution(s)? Include if possible any information about the ramp-up time to run-rate, where costs are fixed per annum or are variable unit costs per assessment and any high-level trends you would expect in the coming years for such a solution.