Guide to Developing a Request for Proposal for the Digitization of Audio

by chris lacinak
avpreserve
www.avpreserve.com

2015-05-11

350 7th Avenue
Suite 1605
New York, NY 10001
917.475.9630
info@avpreserve.com

NOTE ON USE, LICENSING AND ATTRIBUTION:

This document is meant to be used as a resource to help think critically and guide discussion about the salient aspects of a digitization request for proposal (RFP) and the details within. Copying and pasting the text in this document without seriously considering the implications for your own organization, goals, and objectives is likely to lead to disappointing outcomes. In other words, don't simply copy and paste sections of text. Also note that the sample text provided consists of disconnected excerpts from section to section. This means that sections may be out of alignment with each other and the reader should be aware of this.

THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

ABOUT THE CLIENT AND PROJECT:
  Draft 2 – 4 paragraphs providing relevant background information on your organization and project in order to provide appropriate context.

1. **BRIEF DESCRIPTION:**
   Describe the relevant source materials such as formats, quantities, durations (total/average), and the nature or types of content. For Instance:

   The items in the collection are field recordings, consisting of a combination of interviews and musical performances. The format types and quantities are as follows:

Format	Quantity (items)	Total Estimated Duration (hours)
Lacquer Discs	*83*	*28*
¼" open reel	*112*	*Most of these are recorded as ½ track, 7.5ips with a small percentage recorded using other track configurations and tape speeds. Total time is approximately 100 hours.*
Audiocassette	*143*	*150*
DAT	*52*	*45*

   Program lengths are estimated based on the best information available for the purpose of providing a general scope of work.

   Section Notes

   If duration is unknown it is best to use the maximum media length (e.g., 63 minutes for a 60 minute cassette) as the point of reference, and to explicitly state that the media length has been used. You will also note in the pricing section that pricing is requested based on actual program time and not on media length. Using maximum media length for duration will provide a safe estimate to use. Using the pricing information provided in response to this request for proposal will help you understand the range of possible prices.

   ---

2. **TIMELINE:**
   Provide a detailed description of the relevant milestones and deadlines. For instance:

   RFP Distributed: yyyy-mm-dd

   Bidder Questions: yyyy-mm-dd

   CLIENT Responses: yyyy-mm-dd

   Proposals Due: yyyy-mm-dd

   Award: yyyy-mm-dd

   Ship to Vendor: yyyy-mm-dd

Ship Files to CLIENT: yyyy-mm-dd

CLIENT Quality Control Completed: yyyy-mm-dd

Rework Completed by: yyyy-mm-dd

Ship Originals to CLIENT by: yyyy-mm-dd

Project complete: yyyy-mm-dd

Section Notes

The date formatting used here conforms to an international standard date format, labeled ISO 8601. Consistent use of this format throughout this document, as well as in associated spreadsheets and other documentation, is highly encouraged. Also note that spreadsheet applications often choose to reformat date formats. It is important to take steps to ensure that this does not happen. To find out more about this and how to work around it, see http://www.avpreserve.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Spreadsheet_Workshop_Materials.zip

It is important for the client to perform quality control, and commit to performing quality control within a specified amount of time, just as it is important for the vendor to commit to a time in which they will complete their tasks. Depending on the size of the project or batch, typical turnaround times for client QC and vendor rework are 30 – 60 days.

While terms and scheduling of payment to the vendor are not explicitly identified in this document, they should be established and formalized in an agreement with the vendor that is selected.

---

3. **CLIENT POINT OF CONTACT**
   Identify the primary point(s) of contact for your organization. There may be only one or there may be multiple (e.g., technical, administrative). For instance:

   The primary point of contact for this project will be:
   Jane Doe
   Client Org
   565 Milwaukee St Clinton, WI 53525
   ph: 555-555-1212 xt. 1
   email: janedoe@client.com

   The shipping point of contact for this project will be:
   John Doe
   Client Org
   565 Milwaukee St Clinton, WI 53525
   ph: 555-555-1212 xt. 2

email: johndoe@client.com

The billing point of contact for this project will be:
Jackson Doe
Client Org
565 Milwaukee St Clinton, WI 53525
ph: 555-555-1212 xt. 3
email: jacksondoe@client.com

Section Notes
The number and roles of people listed in this section will vary depending on the size of the organization and project.

---

4. **COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL**
   Identify the relevant points and circumstances in which you expect communication to occur. For instance:

   a. *CLIENT will notify the vendor 48 hours prior to shipping the originals with an item-level shipping manifest, detailing the format, title information, and the source item identifier. The manifest should also contain a summary consisting of a total count for each format (e.g., 83 Lacquer Discs, 112 ¼" open reels, 143 audiocassettes, 52 DATs) and a total count of items (e.g., 390 items).*

   b. *Vendor is required to contact CLIENT within 24 business hours of receiving the originals to confirm receipt of the delivery, stating the total number of boxes received.*

   c. *Vendor is required to contact CLIENT within 72 business hours of receiving the originals to confirm receipt at the item level.*

   d. *Weekly updates on project status will take place via phone and/or email, as agreed upon.*

   e. *Vendor will notify CLIENT 48 hours prior to shipping the originals with an item-level shipping manifest, detailing the format, title information, and the source item identifier. The manifest should also contain a summary consisting of a total count for each format (e.g., 83 Lacquer Discs, 112 ¼" open reels, 143 audiocassettes, 52 DATs) and a total count of items (e.g., 390 items).*

   f. *CLIENT will contact the vendor within 24 business hours of receiving the originals to confirm receipt of the delivery, stating the total number of boxes received.*

   g. *CLIENT will contact the vendor within 72 business hours of receiving the originals to confirm receipt at the item level.*

     h.   The vendor is required to contact CLIENT for email confirmation prior to deletion of backup files on vendor's storage system.

5. **CARE, HANDLING AND STORAGE**
Identify expectations for care, handling and storage of your materials once they are in the possession of the vendor. Where applicable, ask for these to be demonstrated and responded to in the vendor's proposal. For instance:

The vendor must acknowledge and demonstrate the following care, handling, and storage requirements in their proposal:

    a.   All staff handling the original objects must be knowledgeable regarding care and handling of the open reel, cassette, and disc based media identified in section 1.

    b.   Originals shall be transferred only once unless condition or playback issues require otherwise; Originals shall be transported (or "played") as little as possible.

    c.   Under non-emergency circumstances, no source objects shall ever be left unattended during transport.

    d.   Under non-emergency circumstances, no source objects shall ever be left in a machine unattended for extended periods of time (i.e., lunch break, overnight)

    e.   All machines used for transport and playback of media must be known to be in good working order and under a routine maintenance plan, demonstrable through associated documentation. Inclusion of actual recent routine maintenance documentation in the proposal is preferred but not required. If requested, the selected vendor will furnish relevant maintenance documentation to CLIENT within 10 days.

    f.   The vendor must demonstrate, through documentation provided as part of the proposal, the ability to meet the following criteria for storage of the media while in their care:

        i.   Temperature no greater than 68 degrees Fahrenheit. A storage environment temperature tracking report for at least the previous 6 months is preferred.

        ii.   Relative humidity no greater than 50%. A storage environment humidity tracking report for at least the previous 6 months is preferred.

        iii.   Secured entry. Photographic evidence with accompanying narrative description is preferred.

iv. *Shelving appropriate for the media identified in section 1. Photographic evidence with accompanying narrative description is preferred.*

v. *Low dirt, dust, and particulate levels. Storage environment tracking reporting is preferred but not required. In the absence of documentation the vendor should describe the conditions to the greatest level of specificity possible.*

6. **MEDIA ISSUES**
Identify how you would like problematic issues to be addressed and what the expectations are in these scenarios. For instance:

All discs shall be cleaned prior to transfer unless they are deemed too fragile by the vendor. The method of cleaning discs must be detailed in the proposal.

Cleaning of open reel media will only be performed with tapes that are suitable for transport and are deemed by the vendor to be in need of cleaning. Tapes that are exhibiting symptoms related to sticky shed or soft binder syndrome should not be cleaned unless they have first been stabilized.

Problematic tapes requiring additional cleaning, repair, baking, or other treatments shall be brought to the attention of CLIENT prior to action being taken. The issue and the proposed solution should be sent in an email along with any associated pricing information and shall be approved by CLIENT prior to taking further action.

Vendors should provide information in their proposals regarding their standard and recommended practice for cleaning and/or treatment for each format listed in section 1. The vendor should also state what is included in the base price or should be considered as an additional charge beyond the base price.

Additionally, vendors should provide documentation of the equipment used for cleaning and treatment of media as part of their proposal.

7. **REFORMATTING**
Identify the practices, protocols, and standards that you require/expect the vendor to follow with regard to setup, calibration, alignment, etc. For instance:

a. **REPRODUCTION SETUP**

Audio setup must be performed for each reproduction pass of an item (side of an audiocassette, side of a disc, side of a bidirectional open reel tape) to ensure alignment with source media and optimal reproduction. If tone is present on an item, the audio level shall be adjusted as early on in the signal path as possible so that the tone is at 0VU on a VU meter or -18 dBFS on a digital/peak meter – using calibrated precision meters.

If there is no tone on the item, or if the tone is misrepresentative of the content, the audio levels shall be adjusted so that content averages 0VU and -18dBFS with peaks not to exceed 0dBFS and with no added analog oversaturation or digital clipping. All level adjustments should be performed as early on in the signal path as possible.

At minimum, for analog tape formats, azimuth shall be adjusted to achieve maximum high frequency output for each reproduction pass. The equalization curve that was used in the original recording shall be selected for reproduction on the playback device.

At minimum, for analog discs, proper stylus selection, tracking force, tracking angle, and speed shall be assessed for each reproduction pass to ensure optimal reproduction and minimal wear on the disc.

Where a standard recording equalization curve was used in the original recording (e.g., NAB, RIAA), the related standard reproduction equalization curve shall be applied for proper reproduction.

Where a standard noise reduction encoding was used in the original recording (e.g., Dolby, DBX), the related noise reduction decoding shall be applied for proper reproduction.

The vendor shall acknowledge these requirements and expand on their reproduction setup practices and protocols in their proposal.

Section Notes

Due to the custom and inconsistent nature of disc formats pre-dating LPs, it is particularly challenging to specify recording and reproduction equalization curves and mechanical calibration adjustments. It is important to identify a vendor that has expertise in working with these formats to ensure proper reproduction. Compare and contrast descriptions of vendor's reproduction setup practices and protocols as the basis for continued discussions with vendors to come to a better understanding of their expertise in this area.

---

b. **SIGNAL PATH**

For analog sources, or digital sources that only have analog outputs, as much of the signal path as possible, from source through destination, should be balanced. For digital tape formats that have digital outputs, AES, S/PDIF or other appropriate digital interface (e.g., Lightpipe, MADI) must be used throughout the entirety of the signal path from source through destination without sample rate conversion. Exceptions to this must be explained and requested prior to performing the transfer.

All components in the signal chain must be tested and known to pass the audio signal without alteration (level or quality) at null.

Calibrated high-quality distribution amplifiers or routers must be used for any signal splitting and distribution. No other substitutions may be used.

The most direct and clean signal path must be used at all times from source to destination. There may be no devices inserted in the signal path that are not being used. If there are multiple destination formats being used in the transfer, the signal path must be routed in parallel. No daisy chaining of devices may occur.

c. **SOUND PROCESSING**

No sound processing such as noise reduction, compression, or limiting shall be used in the creation of the preservation masters aside from the aforementioned recording/playback equalization and noise reduction specifications in section 7.a.

Section Notes

Some organizations may wish to have audio enhancements performed on their access copies to offer a better listening experience. These require additional effort by the vendor, for which they will likely charge. If you are requesting these additions, be sure to request that the associated pricing be made clear in the proposal. Also discuss your needs with the vendor to establish expectations and guidelines.

---

d. **DESTINATION FILE FORMAT SPECIFICATIONS**
Identify the target format specifications in the necessary detail to avoid miscommunication. For instance:

The following specifications shall be used in the creation of preservation masters and access copies:

I. *Preservation Master*

Wrapper: Broadcast Wave File Format

Codec:

> *For analog sources, or digital sources with no digital outputs: PCM uncompressed at 96kHz, 24-bit*

> *For digital sources with digital outputs: PCM uncompressed at native/original sampling rate and bit-depth*

Embedded metadata: bext and list-info fields populated according to metadata specification

ii. *Access Copy*

Wrapper: MP3

Codec: MP3 at 128kbps per channel

Embedded metadata: ID3 tags populated according to metadata specification

8. HEAD AND TAIL CONTENT
All source content, including audio slates and tones, must be included.

In the event that program ends prior to the end of media, the content shall be checked through the end of the media to ensure awareness of any additional content. In the event that there is additional content, all content on the item shall be captured. In the event that there is no additional content, the file should contain the end of content followed by 10 seconds of additional playback. Abrupt endings shall be noted in the transfer notes as a quality assurance and control measure. Any questions arising regarding what constitutes "content" should be raised with CLIENT and resolved.

Section Notes

Some organizations may wish to have edits performed on their access copies to offer a better listening experience. These require additional effort by the vendor, for which they will likely charge. If you are requesting these additions, be sure to request that the associated pricing be made clear in the proposal. Also discuss your needs with the vendor to establish expectations and guidelines.

---

9. REFERENCE FILES
   a. GENERATING REFERENCE FILES:

   At the beginning of the project, 20 seconds of tones representing each setup used for reformatting shall be digitized using the following specifications:

   - *The signal generator shall replace the playback device in the signal path.*

   - *The test signal shall be routed through the same signal path as the audio signal from the playback device.*

   - *The signal generator shall use the same output format as the playback device it is representing.*

   - *The tones shall be 2 channels and shall consist of 5 seconds of 50 Hz, 5 seconds of 1000 Hz, and 5 seconds of 20kHz, each at -18dBFS, followed by 5 seconds of no tone. Note that the silence shall consist of the signal generator being muted, and shall represent the noise floor of the signal path post playback device.*

   - *The file specifications shall match the preservation master destination format.*

   The resulting files shall also be encoded using the same signal path/software and settings, matching the specifications for the access copy files.

For instance, where two separate setups are used to transfer ¼" open reel tapes and audiocassettes, (2) 20-second preservation master level files will be generated. In addition, access copies will be generated, resulting in a total of (4) 20-second files – 2 preservation master level and 2 access copy level files. If more setups are used, additional files must be generated for each one. If both formats use the exact same setup, with the exact same signal path other than the playback device, then (1) 20-second preservation master level file and (1) access copy level file will be generated.

Each setup shall be assigned a 4-character alphanumeric system ID containing no spaces and only lowercase characters. This will be used in file naming below and incorporated into system metadata to be delivered by the vendor.

b. ***FOLDER, FILE NAMES AND EMBEDDED METADATA FOR REFERENCE FILES:***

The files shall be placed in a directory structure using the following conventions and the reference files folder shall be placed at the root level:

Reference Files/

> *yyyy-mm-dd_vendorID_systemID/*

>> *yyyy-mm-dd_vendorID_systemID_PM.wav*

>> *yyyy-mm-dd_vendorID_systemID_AC.wav*

The filename shall be embedded into each file using the List-Info INAM field.

The vendorID will be established in further conversations between CLIENT and the selected vendor.

Section Notes

The reference file specification is used as a quality control mechanism. Recording standard reference signals through the exact same signal path being used for your recordings provides a reference for the quality of the signal path and helps ensure that an unreasonable amount of noise or artifacts are not being introduced into your recordings. These reference signals should be reviewed using software-based tools as part of the quality control process. At minimum, the files should be checked for any notable signs of noise or other artifacts. The reference file name is embedded in the Broadcast Wave Format (BWF) files so that, in the instance that issues are found, you are able to identify which associated files may be impacted and will need to be reviewed.

---

10. **DIRECTORY STRUCTURE AND FILE NAMING**
    Identify the naming and organizational conventions required. For instance:

Files shall be named as follows:

Preservation Master: sourceItemID_pm.wav
Access Copy: sourceItemID_ac.mp3

The sourceItemID will be supplied by CLIENT.

The following directory structure shall be used for delivery of the resulting files:

projectID/
sourceItemID_pm.wav
sourceItemID_ac.mp3

The project ID will be provided by CLIENT.

Section Notes

As the client, you will need to provide an item-level source item ID for each item. The source item ID will be sent to the vendor as part of the shipping manifest that you provide before shipping them the materials. If these do not exist yet, you should create them according to whatever conventions make the most sense for your organization. A project ID may or may not be used, depending on the size of the organization and project. For large projects there may also be the need for a batch ID in order to identify batches sent and received as part of a single project.

---

11. METADATA

Identify your metadata requirements. Specify the fields, vocabularies, definitions, and controls, and provide example values. Also specify the form of delivery and formatting required. For instance:

a. *EXTERNAL*

Metadata documenting the reformatting process shall be captured and returned to CLIENT along with file deliverables. The metadata fields and structure required for capture and delivery by the vendor are defined in the attached schema titled "CLIENT_reformatting_metadata_spec.xls" (see http://www.avpreserve.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/AVPS_Audio_RFP_Guide_Metadata_Appendix_1.xlsx). Note that there are multiple tabs in the spreadsheet. The vendor shall supply one Excel spreadsheet per project. More extensive quality reports should be provided in addition and referenced by filename within the metadata spreadsheet.

Section Notes

Spreadsheets are not the best mechanism for managing metadata over the long term. Databases are much more effective for this purpose. If your organization has the ability to manage metadata within a database application, requesting metadata be delivered

---

using an XML specification is recommended. Using the XML document, metadata can be imported into your database. Additionally you may choose to store the XML alongside the preservation master file. Under any circumstance, the spreadsheet may still be useful for performing quality control. Differing metadata specifications may have different costs associated with them and should be discussed with the vendor.

The format of any quality reports delivered should be discussed before fulfillment of deliverables.

b. **EMBEDDED**
   Preservation Master

The following data shall be embedded into the designated field within each preservation master file. All information with the exception of the reference file filename will be provided by CLIENT:

Information	*bext/LIST-INFO field*
Full Filename with extension	*bext: Description / LIST-INFO: ISRF*
Organization Name	*bext: Originator / LIST-INFO: IARL*
Creation date of the file	*bext: Origination Date / LIST-INFO: ICRD*
"Reference File": Corresponding full reference filename	*bext: Description / LIST-INFO: ICMT*
Source Item ID	*bext: Originator Reference / LIST-INFO: ISRC*
"Publication and other forms of distribution may be restricted. For details, contact the CLIENT"	*LIST-INFO: ICOP*
Title information	*bext: Description / LIST-INFO: INAM*

Section Notes

Find out more about embedded metadata specifications at
http://www.digitizationguidelines.gov/guidelines/digitize-embedding.html

The bext fields are limited to ASCII and have character limits as specified in
https://tech.ebu.ch/docs/tech/tech3285.pdf. These include:
> The Description field must not exceed 256 ASCII characters.
> The Originator field must not exceed 32 ASCII characters.
> The OriginatorReference field must not exceed 32 ASCII characters.
> The OriginationDate field must not exceed 10 ASCII characters and must be formatted as follows: yyyy-mm-dd.

This may call for modifications or abbreviated forms of information embedded in files.

Access Copy

The following data shall be embedded into the designated field within each preservation master file. CLIENT will provide all information:

Information	*ID3 field*
Title	*Title*
Organization Name	*Publisher*
Source Item ID	*Catalog Number*
"Publication and other forms of distribution may be restricted. For details, contact CLIENT."	*Copyright*

12. VENDOR QUALITY ASSURANCE AND CONTROL
Document your expectations of quality assurance and control within the vendor's organization.

Lacquer discs must be transferred using one-to-one transfer methods. One-to-one transfer methods are defined as one operator giving 100% of their attention to the transfer of an individual item.

Parallel transfers are allowed for open reel and cassette-based items. Parallel transfers are defined as one operator transferring more than one item at a time.

Fully automated transfers, using robotics, are not allowed.

One-to-One Transfers

a. *Operators must fully monitor the program in its entirety using high quality audio monitors as well as audio meters. The monitoring environment shall be suitable for critical listening. The physical transport of the media shall also be monitored during the transfer, paying attention to instability in the transport and with immediate access to the source machine controls. The operator may not engage in any other activities or work on any other transfers during the transfer of this item.*

b. *The operator will fully document the reproduction throughout the duration of the transfer noting the timestamp and description of any artifacts that appear. Any notable events such as program changes, periods of silence, audio distortion on the original, etc. should be documented. If automated quality assurance analysis and reporting is used, the operator must validate all reporting to ensure that it is accurate and remove any false reporting.*

Parallel Transfers

a. *Vendors must provide details in their proposal regarding their approach to performing parallel transfers, addressing the selection and preparation of items, the number of items transferred simultaneously, automation used, quality assurance and control used to mitigate risk, how monitoring is performed, the staffing and expertise used, and other pertinent information on the process.*

b. *Relevant sample quality reports must be provided as part of the proposal.*

All Transfers

a. *All destination files must be checked at the head, middle, and tail for content matching, completeness, and quality differences.*

b. *All labels and metadata (embedded and in the spreadsheet) shall be compared and checked for accuracy and completeness.*

c. *An MD5 checksum shall be created for every digital file prior to delivery. The checksum value shall be documented in the metadata set for delivery. Checksums shall be verified on their delivery medium before being delivered to CLIENT.*

d. *Vendors must perform routine integrity testing and maintenance of equipment and systems to ensure proper performance.*

Section Notes

The checksum type identified here is an MD5 checksum. However, there are multiple checksum types. Another widely used checksum type is SHA256. There are minor differences but they offer the same basic functionality. An organization may choose one over the other for various reasons driven by internal factors.

Verifying checksums on their delivery medium prior to delivery only makes sense if the delivery medium is a hard drive.

13. DELIVERY
Specify the methods and expected protocols for transfer of deliverables back to your organization. For instance:

a. *CLIENT will provide hard drives for delivery of content in batches.*

b. *Logistical details and coordination of hard drives and batches is dependent upon further discussions between the vendor and CLIENT.*

c. *All files shall be maintained on the vendor's storage systems while CLIENT performs quality control.*

d. *CLIENT will perform extensive quality control and agrees to do so within 30 days of receipt.*

e. *CLIENT will provide the vendor with written documentation of results. The vendor shall resolve any quality control issues without additional charge and within 30 days of receiving the written documentation.*

f. *Shipping of the original items back to CLIENT shall take place after CLIENT confirms in writing that initial quality control is complete and all initial quality control problems have been resolved. Shipping should be arranged to ensure delivery within two calendar days, and to avoid shipping over weekends.*

Section Notes

The vendor may incorporate language into an agreement regarding the consequences of the client failing to perform quality control within the specified time. For instance, the vendor may state that after 30 days all work is accepted and the vendor is removed from liability for issues identified after this period. Performing quality control in the specified amount of time is an important commitment that should be honored by the client.

The vendor may incorporate language into an agreement regarding additional payment for errors resulting from incorrect data provided by the client. Therefore it is important to ensure that the data provided to the vendor is accurate.

The vendor may incorporate language into an agreement regarding when payment occurs in order to avoid lack of payment due to delayed client quality control, or

> withholding of an entire payment when there are unresolved issues with only a portion of the project.
>
> It is typical that the originals are shipped from the vendor to the client only after quality control is performed and all issues are resolved. However, a vendor may incorporate language into an agreement regarding the shipment of materials back to a client after a specified period of time after files are delivered for quality control. Vendors do this to help ensure that their storage areas are not unduly burdened with the storage of media that is not involved in an active project and keeping them from bringing in new work.

14. RFP RESPONSE

Let the vendor know how they should respond to the SOW/RFP if they are interested. For instance:

Interested vendors should provide direct responses to the requirements stated herein, providing requested documentation, evidence, samples, information on workflows, staffing, facilities, equipment, processes, and protocols that demonstrate appropriate capabilities, acknowledgement, and compliance. Proposals should be emailed to janedoe@client.com no later than yyyy-mm-dd. CLIENT will inform vendors of decision no later than yyyy-mm-dd.

15. VENDOR QUALIFICATIONS AND PAST PERFORMANCE

Ask the vendor to provide additional information to help evaluate their capabilities and expertise. For instance:

Interested vendors should provide the following:

a. *Resumes of key personnel that will be working on this project*

b. *Brands and model numbers of equipment that will be used on this project*

c. *Brief description and references for at least three similar projects that the vendor has performed in the past three years.*

> Section Notes
>
> It is important to check references as part of vendor evaluation.

16. PRICING INFORMATION

Ask the vendor to provide pricing information in a manner that will help you fairly evaluate costs across multiple vendors. For instance:

In the response and quote provided to this statement of work, the vendor shall fill out "CLIENT_reformatting_pricing_worksheet.xls" (see http://www.avpreserve.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/AVPS_Audio_RFP_Guide_Pricing_Appendix_2.xlsx).

The base price, at minimum, must include conformance with the specifications in this document. Any additional activities/costs not encompassed shall be documented in the cells provided. Assumptions, inclusions, and exclusions shall be included in the cells provided.

Section Notes

This method of providing pricing information offers the fairest way of evaluating pricing because it is transparent and helps mitigate implicit vendor assumptions, but it requires performing calculations to estimate total cost. You should ask questions as necessary to clarify any information and to make sure that you are fairly comparing service offerings.

---

17. QUESTIONS
Allow the vendor to ask questions about the RFP in order to gain clarity or details. For instance:

Please provide questions in writing to janedoe@client.com by yyyy-mm-dd. Responses will be provided by yyyy-mm-dd. All questions and responses will be shared with all bidders.