



Tips on Preparing Technical Specifications for the Request For Quote (RFQ) Process

1. Use the [Serials Subscription Checklist](#) to submit your technical specifications. It is a Word document that you can edit and send with your list of titles. See also the instructions in the [Serials Subscriptions Statement of Work \(SOW\)](#), Section C.4.1.3.5., regarding how to format your list of serial titles. The most important points to remember are
 - A. Ask your current serials vendor for an electronic title list that can be used for quote purposes, in MS Excel format.
 - B. If you prefer to create the list locally, please include ISSNs. If an ISSN is not available for any individual title, please add as much publisher information as possible (name, address, etc.). Include a special notation for newspaper orders plus delivery and frequency.
 - C. Provide a list of all ship-to addresses. If there are more than three, state the number of ship-to's at the top of the list. Identify foreign addresses and any special shipping or delivery needs.
 - D. List subscription periods title by title or at the beginning of the title list. Note especially if some need to be regularized.
 - E. The title list may be in alphabetical order and/or subdivided by ship-to addresses.
 - F. Identify the number of copies for any title needing multiple copies; ship-to addresses may be linked to copies.
 - G. The title list can include serials in any format. For electronic journals provide number of FTEs or relevant professionals, the number of IP addresses, size of agency and/or number of sites, etc. See information on Lot 3 in the [Serials Subscriptions Statement of Work \(SOW\)](#) regarding special assistance in managing electronic journals.
 - H. Identify delivery format of each title (i.e., print, print plus online, electronic only).
 - I. Provide any information on special arrangements with publishers and existing packages, memberships, licenses, etc. **Identify any pre-negotiated rates or terms and conditions you expect the vendor to handle for a title.**
 - J. Review your title list carefully and edit the list to ensure that it is representative of your current requirements. It is understood that some titles will change before orders are placed, given the nature of serials, but make the list the best estimate you can provide at the time.
2. There are two options for pricing terms. Estimated price with firm fixed service fee is the standard and is highly recommended. Firm fixed pricing is an option, but requires re-competition each year. Indicate pricing terms on the [Intent to Compete Serials](#) form for Transfer Pay, or on the RFQ for Direct Pay. For more information on pricing terms, consult the [FEDLINK Serials Subscription Services Handbook](#), Section II.C.4.

Unless there are special technical requirements, most libraries can stop here

3. Read the SOW referenced above before you write your special local requirements. Note especially if you need anything from Lot 2, Support Services, or Lot 3, Specialized Electronic Access Services, or if all your needs are covered in Lot 1.

A.. Most requirements are simply variations among the ways standard things can be done. You and the selected vendor can agree on how your account will be serviced for most of Lot 1 after the RFQ award. However, state requirements in your technical specifications if you have special concerns, have invested in particular ways of doing business such as using a local automated system, and/or recognize that the cost of doing business with you could be affected by your local requirements. (See also item C, below.)

B. If you have had a bad experience in the past with something that is a standard part of the SOW and want to alert FEDLINK that it should be considered during the RFQ and vendor selection process, indicate that at the end of the checklist. You will need to have a file of documentation that demonstrates your attempts to resolve problems and vendor responses. If you have submitted the file to FEDLINK previously, indicate when, and add any subsequent information.

C. To illustrate some technical requirements based on past experience, examples are listed below. The list is not exhaustive, but illustrative. It provides some areas to consider if you have special needs.

- Special delivery methods for certain publications (air mail special delivery, courier, newspaper delivery, etc.)
- If you would like your subscription agent to assist you in identifying which of your print titles are available in electronic format, you may request this as a standard service any time after you begin work with the vendor. However, you may want to alert the vendors in your RFQ specifications if you are new to electronic journals and need information and assistance as early as possible, and before your order is placed.
- Indicate how you need claims information reported if it is other than a quarterly claims report. For example, indicate if you need claims information delivered electronically or claims reports more frequently than quarterly or sorted in a particular way such as by ship-to address. (Some subscription agents believe monthly claims reports are too frequent to be efficient. They believe claimed items and second or third claims often cross in the mail, they believe.) Claiming via online access to the vendor's system or by uploading data from your ILS is an optional service; describe it on the second page of the checklist.
- Indicate any special way you need to communicate orders, especially rush orders. Phone and fax are most common methods and do not need to be specified unless it is part of a larger description concerning orders or rush processes. You need not necessarily predetermine how you will place orders, but should if you want to be able to upload orders from your local system, or if your established work flow depends on an ability to order online on the vendor's system. (Both are optional services, indicated on the second page of the checklist.) Once a vendor is selected, you may need to clarify

with them if orders should be accepted from multiple offices, or if one office/library is responsible for submitting orders for multiple offices.

- If orders are coordinated by the library or other central office for multiple locations, you may need to clarify how claims will be submitted. For example, all orders for new titles may need to come through the library but claims might be submitted by individual offices or branch libraries.
- Indicate if you need special assistance with estimates, notices for cost increases and/or have preferences for handling funds obligated for “bill-later” publications or standing orders. In preparing requirements related to account management, see the [Serials Subscription Statement of Work](#), sections C.4.1.3.7. (pages 10-11); C.4.1.4.10. (pages 12-13).
- Indicate anything needed more often than is standard, such as back or missing issues or reports.
- Indicate special reports you need regularly beyond those listed in the [Serials Subscription Statement of Work](#), C.4.1.9.4. (page 15). If you will need reports that include local data, such as fund numbers, give a sample of the data.
- If you coordinate orders for multiple locations, you may need to indicate how invoices should be grouped, e.g., by ship-to or fund account number.

D. As you read through the SOW, note any places where there are multiple options or it says that requirements should be defined in the RFQ process, if applicable. For example, [Serials Subscription Statement of Work](#), see C.4.1.3.7. "Costs in Excess of Authorized Funding Level" (pages 10-11). You will need to confirm how to handle these situations, either through the RFQ process, or, if you change vendors, when you first begin to communicate with the selected vendor.

E. Remember, your requirements should reflect the minimum you need to conduct business efficiently and effectively. NEVER list a requirement that you know you will not use. Putting in a requirement to try to affect the outcome of vendor selection rather than to meet a true need is not just cheating, *it is illegal*.

4. Optional Services must be described in your technical specifications. They are listed in Lot 2 and Lot 3 of the SOW, beginning on page 15. Read the descriptions in Lot 2 and Lot 3 carefully, noting where you would need to clarify your local requirement.

LOT 2 CHECKLIST

- Determine if a price alternative is required (firm fixed pricing or publisher’s price plus flat fee). Remember firm fixed pricing options must be competed every year. Also, decide if you require an average price index report.
- If you require journal check-in services, indicate how you want the issues processed (e.g., security strips, property stamps, labels, etc). If you need the vendor to check in on your local system, identify the system you use and how they should access it (e.g.,

Internet or dial-in service). Be as specific and brief with your descriptions.

- Indicated if you anticipate a large fulfillment of missing issues or back orders.
- If you will be bringing up a local system soon, consider purchasing MARC records from your subscription agent.
- Specify any additional reports required.

5. Lot 3 provides for specialized electronic access to electronic journals. **Subscriptions to journals which are published electronically are routinely provided under Lot 1;** Lot 3 relates to vendors who have software, systems and/or interfaces to help manage electronic journal subscriptions including ILS integration, electronic data exchange and e-journal maintenance.

LOT 3 CHECKLIST

- Indicate if you will need electronic or Web-based interactive e-journal management (ordering, access, claiming, etc.).
- If you want the vendor to interface with your local system, this is covered in the SOW under C.4.3.2., ILS Interfaces. State which system you use and what data you need to upload.
- Include any requirements for management and/or support of licenses.
- Identify any e-journal support (management of IP addresses, links, user authorizations, etc.).
- Include requests for assistance with consortium or group management.
- Identify any needs for customized reports (e.g., collection assessment, collection development).

6. Evaluation criteria will be pass/fail only because this method is the most efficient and works for all situations when requirements are clearly defined

For more information, visit the [Serials Subscription Services Web site](#) or call (202) 707-4800.