



Australian Government

Department of Social Services

National Panel of Assessors - Request for Tender (RFT) Exposure Draft

Public Briefing

6 September 2024

Acknowledgement of Country



The Department of Social Services acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, water, culture and community.

We pay our respects to the Elders both past and present.



Probity Statement

The Department of Social Services is committed to conducting a fair, honest, and transparent process for the design and implementation of the National Panel of Assessors program and related services.

For today's event, this means that:

- this presentation will be made publicly available on the DSS Engage website
- any views expressed, or information provided, by attendees to this event will be considered, along with the views expressed and information provided by other stakeholders.

We invite you to join the discussion

Use QR code or go to:

<https://app.sli.do/event/uXcTz5xxLX2PcThewuVTYw>



Overview

Key Topics

1. Approach to Market
2. Indicative timeline
3. Overview of the National Panel of Assessors (NPA) program
4. Key changes from current program
5. Request For Tender (RFT) process
6. Consultation and feedback



**The NPA program commences
1 July 2025**

The Approach to Market – two stage process

1 Exposure Draft

- Stakeholders provide feedback to the department on key policy areas and tender arrangements.
- Questions and requests for clarification can be forwarded to the department.
- Tender responses must not be lodged in response to the Exposure Draft.

2 Request for Tender

- The formal, structured invitation for potential providers to bid to deliver services under the NPA program

Indicative Timeline

Date	Key element
30 August 2024	Publication of the Exposure Draft for the National Panel of Assessors 2025-2028 Request for Tender (RFT) on AusTender and engage.dss.gov.au
6 September 2024	Exposure Draft Public Briefing
27 September 2024 (5.00 pm Canberra time)	Closing date for comments on the Exposure Draft
October/November 2024	Release of the RFT
October/November 2024	RFT Public Briefing
November/December 2024	Closing date and time for responses to the RFT
March 2025	Notification of tender outcomes
April 2025	Commencement of the transition period to the new NPA program
1 July 2025	NPA service delivery commences

We invite you to join the discussion

Use QR code or go to:

<https://app.sli.do/event/uXcTz5xxLX2PcThewuVTYw>



Overview of National Panel of Assessors (NPA) program

NPA Providers will continue to deliver three types of assessment services:

Supported Wage System (SWS) assessments

Ongoing Support Assessments (OSA)

Workplace Modifications Services (WMS) assessments.

Respondents will be required to have:

- ✓ an understanding of employment supports for people with disability, including people with high support needs
- ✓ qualified and experienced Assessors (as per the mandatory qualifications and skills)
- ✓ strong communication skills to ensure high quality assessment services.

Mandatory Qualifications and Skills

Skills

- high level communication skills with the ability to consult and provide advice in a sensitive and appropriate manner
- ability to complete assessments to a high standard
- ability to produce detailed written reports on completion of assessment
- ability to assess barriers and negotiate appropriate solutions to meet the needs of people with disability, and
- technical skills related to the relevant process of assessment.

OSA / SWS qualifications

- psychology
- rehabilitation counsellor
- vocational training, or
- other diploma or higher-level qualification which the Provider considers is relevant to providing the required assessments (and which is approved by the department as outlined below).

WMS qualifications

- occupational therapist
- physiotherapy
- nurse
- medical practitioner
- exercise physiologist, or
- rehabilitation counsellor

Performing Assessment Services

Program Change

- Under the new program, it is the responsibility of the NPA Provider to approve their individual Assessors.
 - NPA Providers must gain approval from the department in writing if a potential Assessor has qualifications that are not on the approved list of qualifications.

- NPA providers will be subject to performance assurance activities by the department to ensure all Assessors are suitably qualified.

Supported Wage System assessments

- The Supported Wage System (SWS) is an industrial relations mechanism that has been in place since 1994.
- The SWS enables employers to pay a productivity-based wage to people whose work productivity is reduced because of disability.
- This assessment can only be undertaken by a qualified independent NPA Assessor.



Ongoing Support Assessments

An NPA Assessor will undertake an assessment of a new program participant to determine:

- The level of support they require in employment, which could be;
 - None – where the OSA recommends the NSDEP Participant does not require Ongoing Support
 - Flexible Ongoing Support
 - Moderate Ongoing Support
 - High Ongoing Support
- The review interval for the next assessment (1, 2 or 5 years)

Workplace Modification System Assessments

NPA Assessors will conduct an WMS assessment for people with disability to identify barriers to accessing or performing their work

WMS assessments will recommend equipment, modifications and other support, funded through the Employment Assistance Fund, to remove the identified barriers

Respondents can also bid to deliver specialist WMS assessments which can be undertaken by an Assessor who has specialist skills in a particular disability

Coverage

Program Change

- NPA Provider numbers will be capped in each Employment Services Area

- Respondents will still be able to bid to deliver services to the entire ESA or to provide partial coverage.

Performance Management

- NPA Providers will be required to adhere to:
 - ✓ the NPA performance framework
 - ✓ the *Disability Services and Inclusion (Code of Conduct) Rules 2023*
 - ✓ Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
 - ✓ the National Standards for Disability Services (NSDS), and
 - ✓ performance discussions with the department.



Fees

	Payment Type	Amount (GST Inclusive)
OSA	OSA fee	\$475.36
	SWS assessment fee	\$679.10
SWS	Additional SWS assessment payment if the assessment is conducted in a Remote Jobs and Economic Development Program region	\$475.36
	Approved additional fee for assessments that exceed 5 hours	\$135.82 per additional hour up to a maximum of 4 additional hours
	Approved additional fee for SWS assessments conducted in a Remote Jobs and Economic Development Program region that exceed five hours	\$230.89 per additional hour up to a maximum of 4 additional hours
WMS	WMS assessment fee	\$135.82 per hour up to a maximum of 5 hours
	Approved additional fee for assessments that exceed 5 hours	\$135.82 per additional hour up to a maximum of 4 additional hours
	Additional travel costs (for which travel time will not include time used for assessment or reporting services)	\$56.59 per hour for travel time, up to a maximum of 8 hours per day, where a return trip exceeds 200 kilometres

Key changes from current program

Changes

1. NPA Providers will be responsible for approving individual Assessors

2. NPA Provider numbers will be capped in each ESA

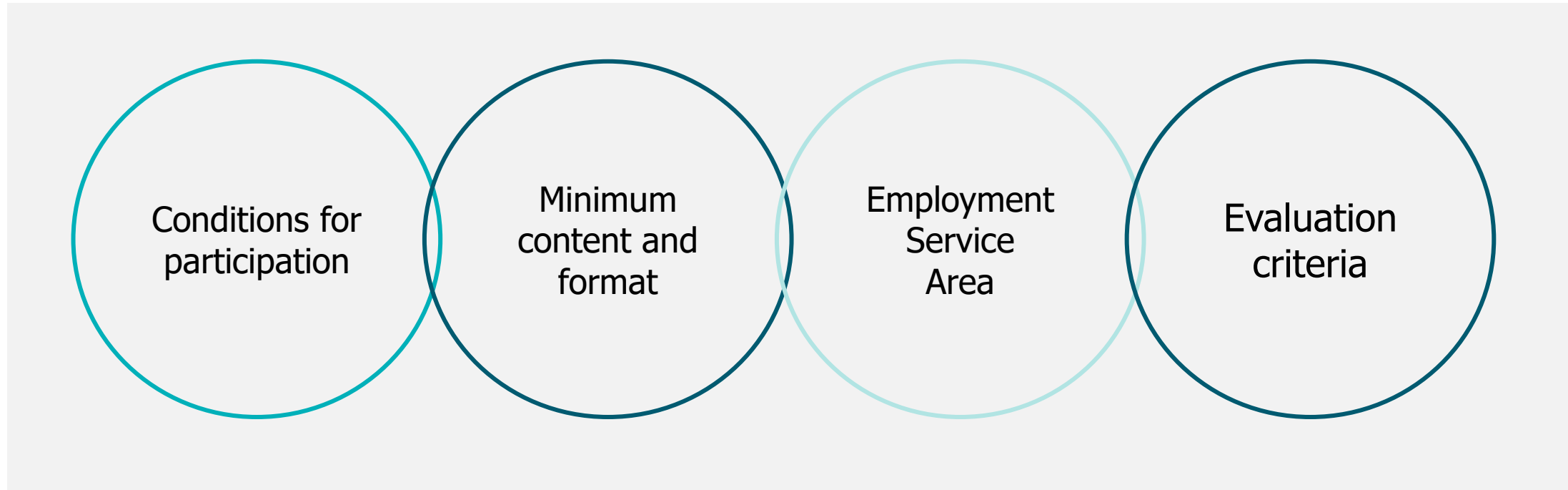
We invite you to join the discussion

Use QR code or go to:

<https://app.sli.do/event/uXcTz5xxLX2PcThewuVTYw>

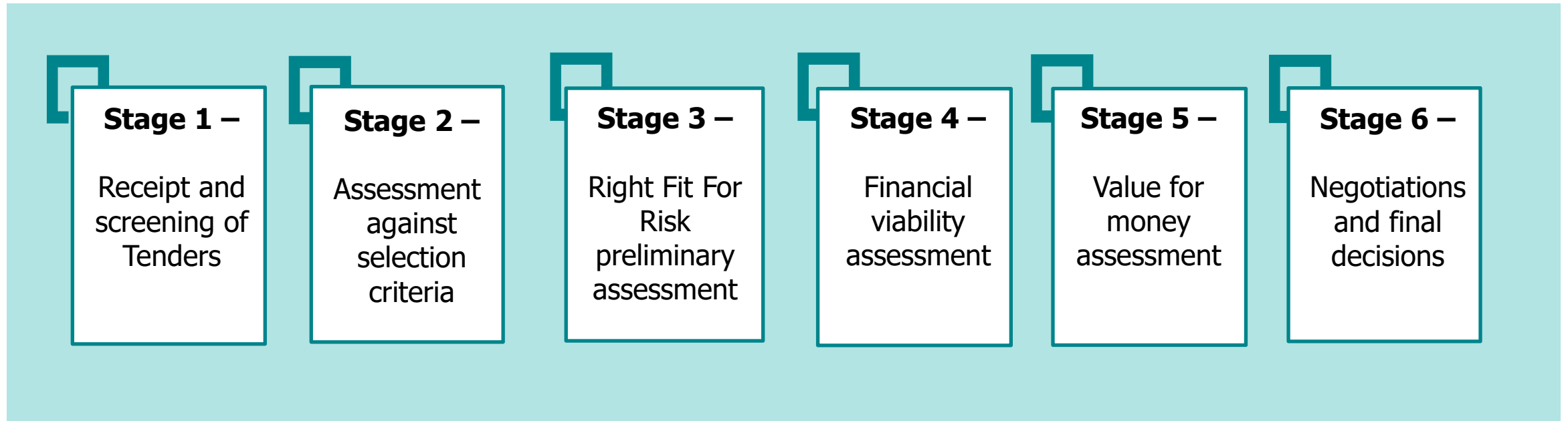


Request for Tender (RFT) process – Lodging a Response



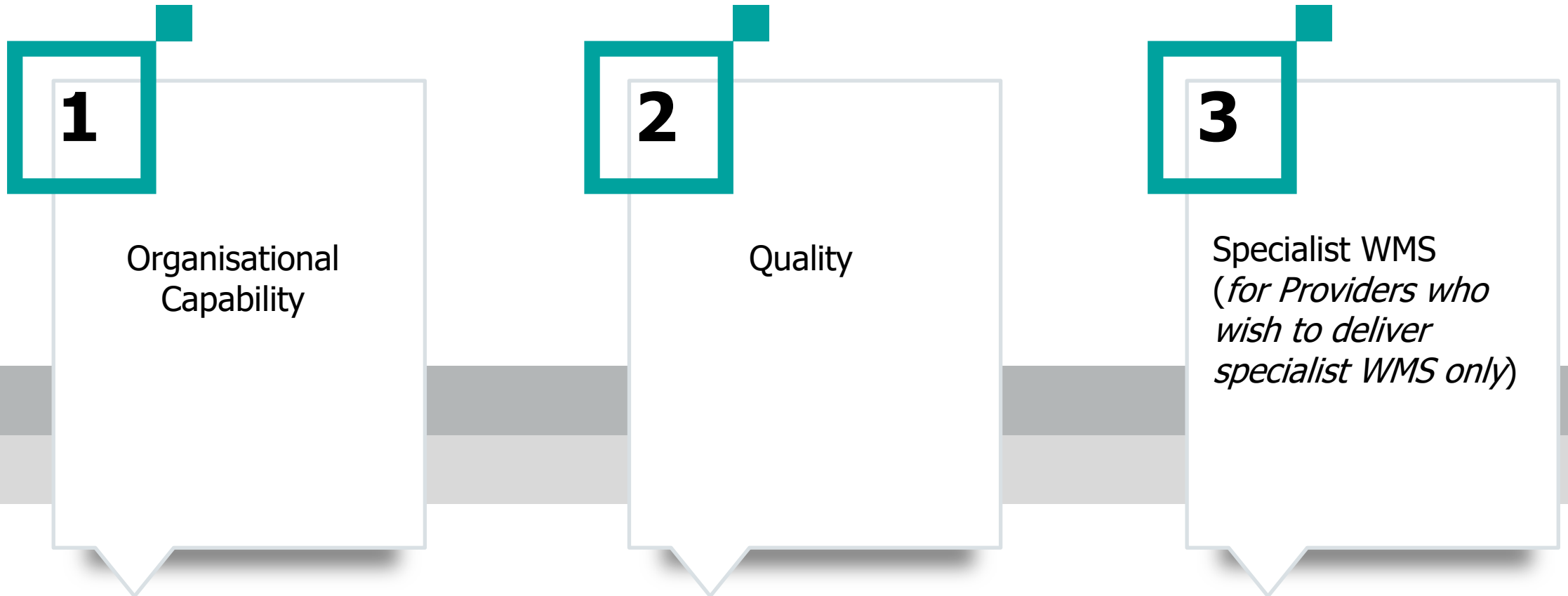
Request for Tender (RFT) process – Evaluation of Responses

Staged approach to evaluation:



How will tenders be assessed?

- Proposed selection criteria:



Organisational Capability (SC1)

Describe your organisation's capability to deliver OSA/SWS Assessment Services and/or WMS (as applicable) Assessment Services.

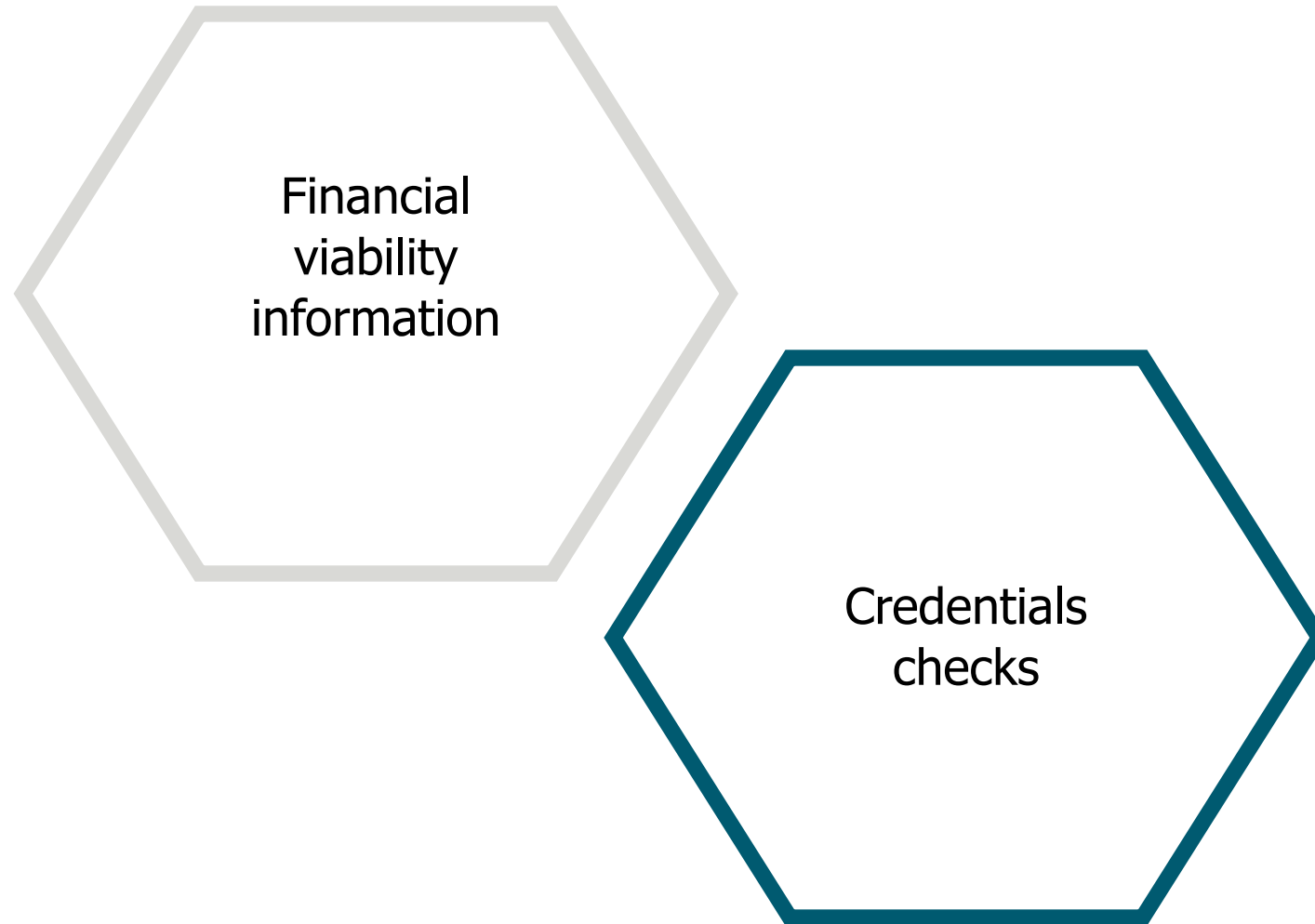
Quality (SC2)

Describe how your organisation will provide and maintain quality Assessment Services, including any Assessment Services provided by Subcontractors (if applicable).

Specialist WMS (SC3)

Describe your organisation's capability and specialist knowledge to be able to deliver Specialist WMS Assessment Services.

Financial viability and other checks



Legal and other matters



Conditions of lodgement

Indigenous Procurement Policy

Legal and policy requirements

Probity

Consultation and Feedback

We want to hear feedback from stakeholders

Feedback, comments and questions on the **Exposure Draft** can be submitted to:

DESConsultations@dss.gov.au

- The department has issued a Companion Document to suggest questions to which stakeholders and potential respondents may wish to provide feedback.
- Submissions need to be made before 5.00 pm (Canberra time) on 27 September 2024 to ensure they will be considered in preparation for the Request for Tender.



We invite you to join the discussion

Use QR code or go to:

<https://app.sli.do/event/uXcTz5xxLX2PcThewuVTYw>



Thank You!

Get in touch



www.dss.gov.au



DESConsultations@dss.gov.au

