# Intro

This guide will help you to selecting the right criteria when selecting a new Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) software. The goal is to find the right Business Process Management tool.

Whether you are implementing you own recommended SOP software or passing it on to the client or another consultant is, of course, entirely up to you.

Regardless of implementation method and partner you must be able defend your choice on the long run. Did the end-users like the choice? Is it being used daily? Did it ultimately solve the business need?

This guide will help you to make a better tender material for selecting SOP software.

# IMPACT

The following chapters of business requirements are divided into 6 sections.

We will use “business requirements”, “demands” or “selection criteria” interchangeably, as each organisation tend to use their own vocabulary.

All sections are different areas of selection criteria when choosing new software:

**I** Innovation & Design

**M** Management & Financial

**P** Performance & Operation

**A** Assurance & Continuity

**C** Cost

**T** Transparency & Ethics

All sections are different areas of selection criteria when choosing new SOP software.

# “Need to” or “nice to”

When you have chosen the selection criteria, you need to consider how to rate the replies to your tender material.

When vendors reply to your tender material, you need a comparison model ready to select the best candidate. With a comparison model you can argue for the choices and and tell deselected vendors on a factual basis why they were chosen or deselected.

For End users everything is usually “need to” (eg. “My needs are generic and essential and very important”) rather than “nice to” (eg. “I would prefer this over than, but let’s be open to different solutions”).

A “need to”-criteria means that if a Vendor does not meet the criteria it is a reason for deselection.

A “nice to”-criteria means that you rate the incoming Vendor reply and chose the highest rating. You can then deselect vendors with the lowest combined rating.

Rating give you flexibility to do internal weighing of replies from the tender stakeholders.

When you receive the vendors replies, you will quickly see that only few, and often none, can deliver everything on every requirement. Having only “need to”-criteria will make it much harder to follow your own comparison model. Ratings on “need to”-criteria is much easier to work with and will ensure a fair selection.

**Example of a “need to”:** *“The Vendor must be ISO27001 certified”*.

**Argument for “need to”:** Information security is important and an ISO27001 certificate is a way ensuring that the Vendor handle data and information wisely.

**Argument for “nice to”:** An ISO27001 certificate is expensive (> $100.000) and a lot of companies cannot afford the certification, but adheres to ISO standard anyway. Doing a deep dive into the amount of data breaches, how they handle data daily, cases with local data authorities etc. will answer the same root question and you can use a rating scale rather than a simple “Yes/No”.

# Impact criteria

## Innovation & Design

### Innovation

The aim of the section is to understand how innovative the Vendor currently is and what can be expected from the future. Is innovation driven by the Vendor’s own strategy or external customer requests? Will the Vendor still be the best choice in 3 to 5 years?

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Business requirement** | **Recommended Vendor answer form** | **Recommended internal selection criteria** |
| Have you company participated in any accelerator programmes? | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Please describe your technology roadmap. | Text / Slides | Rating (1-5) |
| What is your average time to market for releasing new features? (For each release size: major, minor, micro) | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Have you ever been awarded or recognised publicly for your SOP software? | Yes/No | Rating (1-5) |
| What value adding services do you offer besides the core SOP software (eg. APIs, Dashboards, mobile apps, integration options)? | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Can you provide specific API endpoints (payload, data, data scheme etc.) to meet the technical requirements for our Company? | Yes/No | Rating (1-5) |
| Are you willing to develop special features to your platform base on our requirement specification? | Yes/No | Need to (Yes/No) |
| Please briefly describe your 3 latest releases | Text | Rating (1-5) |

### Design

Design requirements falls within two areas:

1. Technology / Architecture. Is the SOP software ready to scale and meet future requirements, or will you meet barriers in the architecture preventing further development.
2. User interface. Can the end-users (both process creators and process consumers) intuitively use the SOP software out of the box or do you need certifications/training/education to use it?

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Business requirement** | **Recommended Vendor answer form** | **Recommended internal selection criteria** |
| Please describe your platform architecture (monolithic, microservices etc.). Please highlight your considerations on scalability. | Text / Slides | Rating (1-5) |
| Do your user interface (UI) adhere to any publicly known standards, that can make user adoption easier? | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Can your user interface (UI) be modified to meet our Company Corporate Identity (colors, logoes etc.)? | Yes/No | Rating (1-5) |
| Do you offer separate company branded login portals? | Yes/No | Rating (1-5) |
| Please describe your platform architecture (monolithic, microservices etc.). Please highlight your considerations on scalability. | Text / Slides | Rating (1-5) |
| Do your user interface (UI) adhere to any publicly known standards, that can make user adoption easier? | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Can your user interface (UI) be modified to meet our Company Corporate Identity (colors, logoes etc.)? | Yes/No, text | Rating (1-5) |
| Do you offer separate company branded login portals? | Yes/No, text | Rating (1-5) |

## Management & Financial

### Management

The Management questions should address where the headquarters (HQ) and the c-level of the Vendors is located and how capable they are to deliver strategy, stability and progress to the company.  
Furthermore, it is good to know the ownership structure and management experience of the company – mainly to understand the stability, but also to get transparency regarding Vendor’s current and future strategy.

As it is an evaluation of Vendors management in relation to your client’s needs, all selection criteria should be a rating.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Business requirement** | **Recommended Vendor answer form** | **Recommended internal selection criteria** |
| Where is your company HQ located? | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Please describe your company ownership? | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Who holds the majority of the company shares? | Text / Slides | Rating (1-5) |
| For how long has the current CEO been in this position? | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Is the company primarily owned by the founder? | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Will you provide a single point of contact (Key account manager or Customer Success Manager) for the duration of the contract | Yes/No | Rating (1-5) |
| What is the development teams average tenure? | Text | Rating (1-5) |

### Financial

The core of the financial questions is twofold, and any questions should predominantly revolve around this:

1. Will the Vendor continue to be in business for the duration needed by you?
2. Anything behind Vendor’s finances that can either affect the Vendor strategic decisions during the contract or something that will look bad upon you (and your end-client) if it became public knowledge.

As for the Management criteria we recommend, again, that you rate most of the incoming answers according to the needs. With regards to tax havens, we believe that it should be a deselection reason if any profit is channelled to tax havens.

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| **Business requirement** | **Recommended Vendor answer form** | **Recommended internal selection criteria** |
| Have your company ever endured a fiscal year with a loss of EBIT? Why, why not? | Yes/No, text | Rating (1-5) |
| Please describe how you company is funded? | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Are any of your legal owners located in tax havens? | Yes/No | Need to |
| What percentage of the turnover is put into development of the software? | Text | Rating (1-5) |

## Performance & Operation

### Performance

This section should contain all technical and quality requirements you have for the SOP software, so it fits the needs of the organisation.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Business requirement** | **Recommended Vendor answer form** | **Recommended internal selection criteria** |
| Please describe the nature of the SOP software. Is it browserbased or installed locally? | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Where is the process repository saved (online, on-premise or locally)? | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Please describe how users collaborate on SOP creation and improvement | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Does your SOP software have a shared comment section pr. procedure? | Yes/No, text | Rating (1-5) |
| Can users create common tags or labels to flag comments for follow up? | Yes/No | Rating (1-5) |
| Please describe how comments to procedures are handled in the SOP software | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Can you draw, save and edit process diagrams with swimlanes for roles and activities | Yes/No, text | Rating (1-5) |
| How are organistional roles handled? Does different roles provide different access to processes | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Does the SOP software have a change log for procedures and owners? | Yes/No, Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Does the SOP software provide the option of rolling back to past versions? | Yes/No, Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Do work instructions include the option of links, videos, images and file attachments? | Yes/No, Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Can you execute SOPs, so a set of predefined tasks are given to the right roles in a case management form? Please describe how this is done. | Yes/No, Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Can the SOP software delegate tasks on a recurring basis (scheduled)? | Yes/No, Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Can you fetch documentation (eg. Reports or dashboards) regarding scheduled tasks? | Yes/No, Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Please briefly describe a case flow (execution of processes) and the documentation it generates | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Can the SOP software integrate with Microsoft Sharepoint or similar filesharing service? | Yes/No | Rating (1-5) |
| Please describe how rights management are for each process. Ownership, editor rights and membership | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Please describe how data can be pulled from the SOP software (for dashboards etc.). | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Does the SOP software provide a unified numbering system? Does it adhere to any public standards? | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Can parts of SOPs be linked or reused in other SOPs? Please describe. | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Please describe if and how content can be reused across the SOP software. | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Is there a mobil app where processes or workinstructions can be accessed without the use of the SOP software? | Text | Rating (1-5) |

### Operation

Operational requirements outlines anything performance related, but non-technical.

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| **Business requirement** | **Recommended Vendor answer form** | **Recommended internal selection criteria** |
| If you have an browserbased system please describe the data warehouse from which you deliver the SOP software. | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| What is the average responsetime on the platform? | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| What was the uptime of the platform for the past 12 consecutive months? | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Does the SOP software integrate login with Microsofts Single Sign On (SSO)? If no, please describe other user verification methods provided? | Yes/No, text | Rating (1-5) |
| Please describe how user licences are added or changed during the operation of the software | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Please describe the integration options that your SOP software provides. | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Does the SOP software deliver a tamperfree Audit trail? | Yes/No | Rating (1-5) |
| Do you provide an online chat, email and/or phone support service for technical questions? | Yes/No | Rating (1-5) |
| What is the average response time for online support? Is this true for all timezones? Please describe. | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Do you provide additional services such as implementation services, training etc.? | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Can you import processes from other software solutions? (ex. Visio). If not, do you have a service? | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Please describe the language provided out of the box and if you can translate into a desired language? | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Can processes and workinstructions be shown in different languages or does it require a separate process for each language? | Text | Rating (1-5) |

## Assurance & Continuity

### Assurance

If you are satisfied with performance and operational deliveries from Vendor, it is crucial that this level is maintained (or improved) throughout the duration of the contract. Assurance requirements revolve around how the Vendor approaches business risks and risk mitigation.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Business requirement** | **Recommended Vendor answer form** | **Recommended internal selection criteria** |
| How often are Major releases made within 12 months? | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Describe the content of latest Major release | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| How often are Minor releases made within 12 months? | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Describe the content of latest Minor release | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| How often are Micro releases made within 12 months? | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Describe the content of latest 5 Micro release | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Do your company have a management system or follow a set of predefined best practices? (ex. ISO 9001) | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Please describe your management system (ISO9001 etc.) | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Is your company ISO27001 certified or work with a risk-based approach to information security? | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Please describe your approach to information security | Text | Rating (1-5) |

### Continuity

Continuity regarding SOP software is, broadly speaking, a matter of backup, contingency planning and disaster recovery. Are the processes, backup servers etc. in place to prevent unnessecary downtime in the event of a breakdown.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Business requirement** | **Recommended Vendor answer form** | **Recommended internal selection criteria** |
| Do you have recovery processes in place for restoring your service? | Yes/No | Need to |
| Please describe your recovery process | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Do you have a separate repository for source code? | Yes/No | Need to |
| Please describe who has access, and the process for deploying code from test to production | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Do you have a separate backup service for customer data? | Yes/No | Need to |
| Please describe your backup process? | Text / Slide | Rating (1-5) |
| For how long do you retain backups? | Text | Rating (1-5) |

## Cost and Value creation

### Cost

This is simply to understand the cost structure for the SOP software. Knowing this the Total Cost of Ownership can be calculated.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Business requirement** | **Recommended Vendor answer form** | **Recommended internal selection criteria** |
| Please describe your license plans and what is included/excluded in this. | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Are there any additional cost to be expected in the duration of the contract (ex. Support, traffic etc.)? | Yes/No, Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Are there any costs related to the Assurance and continuity (ex. Cost of backup recovery etc.) | Yes/No | Rating (1-5) |
| Please describe the offered rebates in relation to contract duration and/or user volume | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Please describe your payment tems | Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Please describe you development cost (consultants, developers etc.) | Text | Rating (1-5) |

### Value creation

Value creation is any other options for providing monetary value or rebates outside of the actual cost.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Business requirement** | **Recommended Vendor answer form** | **Recommended internal selection criteria** |
| Do you have a collaboration regarding Microsoft Azure consumption agreements? | Text | Rating (1-5) |

## Transperancy & Ethics

### Transperancy

If you are satisfied with performance and operational requirements it is crucial that this level is maintained (or improved) throughout the duration of the contract. Assurance requirements revolve around how the Vendor approaches business risks and risk mitigation.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Business requirement** | **Recommended Vendor answer form** | **Recommended internal selection criteria** |
| Can an external auditor, upon request and at the cost of the customer, get access to Vendors management system and processes? | Yes/No, Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Can an external auditor, upon request and at the cost of the customer, get access to Vendors source code? | Yes/No, Text | Rating (1-5) |

### Ethics

If you are satisfied with performance and operational requirements it is crucial that this level is maintained (or improved) throughout the duration of the contract. Assurance requirements revolve around how the Vendor approaches business risks and risk mitigation.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Business requirement** | **Recommended Vendor answer form** | **Recommended internal selection criteria** |
| Are your employees free to join unions? | Yes/No, Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Do you have policies to ensure gender equality within the company? | Yes/No, Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Do you measure carbon footprint for the delivery of the SOP software? | Yes/No, Text | Rating (1-5) |
| Do you have a Coporate Social Responsibility policy? | Yes/No, Text | Rating (1-5) |