



</ agc XML >
Information Exchange

**THE ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS OF AMERICA
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF BUILDING SCIENCES**

agcXML

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
USE CASE**

**VERSION 1.0
MARCH 4, 2009**

The agcXML Project

The Associated General Contractors of America

Electronic Information Systems Committee
Mr. William A. Cobb, Jr, Chair

agcXML Task Force
Mr. John Nabholz, Chair

Monique Valentine
Chief Financial Officer
agcXML Project Staff Contact

Project Team

National Institute of Building Sciences

Henry L. Green, Hon. AIA
President

buildingSMART alliance

Dana K. Smith, FAIA
Executive Director

agcXML Review and Validation Committee

Dan Bailing, Chair

Technical Team

Michael Tardif
agcXML Project Manager
Dr Thomas Liebich, AEC3
Thomas Froese, Ph.D., P.E.
Yimin Zhu, Ph.D.
Francois Grobler, Ph.D.
Technical Adviser

March 2009

agcXML Example Use Case: Request for Proposal

Michael Tardif
National Institute of Building Sciences
June 6, 2008

1. Name

Request for Proposal (RFP)

2. About This Use Case

This use case is intended to describe a simple transaction between two parties that is commonly known as a Request for Proposal. The purpose of the use case is to provide a framework for defining the information that is commonly exchanged in a simple RFP transaction.

Throughout the agcXML project, existing transaction media—commonly accepted standard contract forms published by the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC), and the Engineers Joint Contract Documents Committee (EJCDC)—are used as the basis for developing use cases. It is not the intent of the project to create electronic versions of paper documents. However, to the extent that these standard contract forms codify customary practices and workflows in the building industry, they are useful for defining the data set that is typically exchanged in a particular business transaction.

The work of this project has revealed that while certain business processes or transactions are widely regarded as “standard” or “customary,” little documentation of these business processes actually exist. “Request for Proposal” is a good example. While RFPs are commonly issued by many parties and at many stages of the building design and construction process as a first step in the procurement of specialized goods or services, only two standard RFP forms exist, both published by the AIA, for the procurement of Land Survey (AIA Document G601) and Geotechnical (AIA Document G602) Services. These are highly detailed forms containing lengthy lists of prescriptive requirements for these services. The development of a use case and schemas for these specialized services does not meet the intended purpose of the agcXML project. However, it is possible to use these forms to develop a “generic” use case and schema for Requests for Proposals.

3. Desired Outcomes

The standardization of RFP data exchange using agcXML is intended to produce both tangible and intangible benefits for the building design and construction industry. The potential benefits include:

- A standardized data format that will permit reliable electronic transfer of RFPs among parties regardless of the project management, proposal generation and tracking, or other software applications used by individual parties. More specifically, a standardized data form may eliminate the need for a sending

party to reduce structured data generated by one software application to an unstructured data format (such as an e-mail message, a text document, or an image document), and for a receiving party to then translate the unstructured data back into a structured format in another software application, all due to incompatible and proprietary data formats.

- A standardized data format that will enable rapid comparative analysis of multiple proposals.
- Shortened RFP preparation, transmission, evaluation, and response cycle time.
- Reliable electronic transfer of select project data contained in RFPs for use in other, subsequent business tasks or transactions, such as the preparation of Agreements between buyers and sellers of goods and services, actual procurement of goods and services, and the logging/tracking of procurement and fulfillment transactions.
- A standardized data format that will enable incorporation of building product procurement data directly into building information models.
- An enhanced cost/benefit ratio and increased viability of direct electronic data transfer methods over manual (paper/mail/fax) or document-based data transfer methods, thereby promoting adoption of e-commerce by more players in the building industry.

4. Summary Classifications

4.1. Type of transaction

An RFP is typically a request from an organization wishing to procure goods or services related to the design and construction of a facility. It may be advertised as available to any interested respondent by public notice, may be distributed to a select group of invited or pre-qualified respondents, or may be sent by the requesting party to a single organization.

4.2. Stage of project

RFPs may be issued at any stage in the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of a facility.

4.3. Discipline

All disciplines, including clients/owners.

4.4. Data content

Typically a description of the goods or scope of services to be provided and the time allotted for a response.

5. Purpose

5.1. Description of the business processes (context)

Any party wishing to procure goods or services might issue a Request for Proposals to furnish those goods or services. RFPs are most commonly issued to procure services or a combination of services and goods when the value of the goods/services to be provided is based at least in part on the esoteric or proprietary knowledge, skill, or expertise of the party providing the goods/services. Proposals submitted in response to RFPs are likely to be evaluated on the basis of expertise or a combination of expertise and price.

For goods and services that are generally accepted as commodities, the purchasing party is more likely to issue a Request for Pricing (in lieu of a Request for Proposals), and the responses are more likely to be evaluated solely on the basis of price.

A Request for Pricing may be considered a limited or specific use case of the Request for Proposal.

5.2. Purpose of the transaction

The purpose of the RFP transaction is to provide a mechanism for any party wishing to procure goods or services to define the scope of the desired goods/services in sufficient detail to enable respondents to prepare and submit proposals that can be evaluated on their comparative merits according to objective criteria.

This communication is treated formally so that the process can be managed (e.g., timeliness of the response can be controlled), and to ensure that the same information is available to all prospective respondents. In certain cases, it may be part of a formal procurement/bidding business process in which questions or requests for clarification by prospective respondents are compiled and made available to all prospective respondents.

In certain circumstances, particularly if the procuring party is a public entity, the RFP and the responses may be part of the public record and may constitute part of the subsequent project record.

6. Actors and Roles

Any party wishing to procure goods or services may issue a Request for Proposals to any party or parties.

7. Preconditions and Start point

In most cases, there are no preconditions to the issuing of a Request for Proposals. For certain public entities, RFPs may not be issued unless the expenditure of funds has been authorized by legislative action or unless the public entity issuing the RFP has the demonstrable ability to raise sufficient capital to complete the work by issuing bonds.

The use case starts when any party identifies a need to procure goods or services through a price- or qualifications-based selection process.

8. End point

The transaction ends when the requestor has received a satisfactory response (proposals) from one or more respondents.

9. Measurable Result

The requestor receives one or more responses (proposals) that satisfy the requirements of the Request for Proposals.

10. Flow of Events/Activity Descriptions

1. A project stakeholder identifies a need for specialized goods or services.
2. The Requestor prepares a Request for Proposals. This will describe the scope of goods/services required, and will typically reference a specific project or part of a project.
3. The requestor initiates the distribution of the RFP as described in the generic information/document distribution use case.
4. The responder prepares a proposal, again according to the generic information/document distribution use case.
5. The requestor receives the response, confirms receipt, and distributes it to other parties as necessary.
6. The Requestor accepts a proposal and enters into negotiation with the successful responder for procurement of the goods/services.

11. Alternative Flow of Events

1. None.

12. Use Case Relationships: Inclusion and Extension

This use case extends the Generic Information/Document Distribution use case. The RFI distribution process can be quite flexible, and all of the alternative flows described in the Generic Information/Document Distribution use case are possible for the RFI. Most of the specific configurations will be specified in the contract documents, while some will be subject to the judgment of the participants based on the context of individual RFI's (e.g., a general contractor may exercise judgment about which RFI responses should be forwarded to each subcontractor).

13. Controls

Requests for Proposals precede actual contractual agreements. In most cases, they not be subject to a complete set of transaction controls including security, acknowledgements, non-repudiation, and so forth. However, the actions of any party to an RFP transaction (request, response, comment, attachment) must be attributable to their source, non-editable by others, and non-removable.

14. Data

The generic information/document distribution use case defines generic document and distribution data requirements. In addition to these generic data, RFPs may include a “response requested by” date.

The content of the RFP should include a sufficient description of the desired goods or services to enable responders to prepare and submit firm proposals.

In addition to references in the body of an RFP, either the request or the response may include attachments that form part of the content of the RFP or the proposal. The name or title of an attachment, the original authorship of the attachment (if other than the attaching party), the identity of the attaching party, and any modifications made to the attachment by the attaching party must be tracked.

Attachments, or data referenced by links to remote sources of information, must be static—non-editable beyond the moment that they are referenced.

15. Outstanding Issues

None at this time.