

Route-selection worksheet

Compare realistic pathways for one government customer or program. Use this as a decision tool, not a prediction of contract awards.

01 DEFINE THE OPPORTUNITY

Target agency / mission:

Specific opportunity / vehicle:

Eligibility and compliance gates:

02 ASSIGN WEIGHTS AND SCORES

Weight each criterion 1-3 (low to critical). Score each feasible pathway 1-5 (weak to strong fit). High scores for cost and risk mean those factors are manageable.

DECISION CRITERION	WEIGHT	PRIME	SUB	OEM / OTHER
Buyer access Can we credibly reach a decision-maker and meet the actual vehicle or competition rules?	—	—	—	—
Profit potential Will likely gross profit justify pursuit and delivery effort after partner fees and discounts?	—	—	—	—
Delivery readiness Can we perform our role and manage the obligations without overextending the team?	—	—	—	—
Past performance and proof Do we have customer evidence, qualifications, and relevant references?	—	—	—	—
Capture investment and speed Can we afford the pursuit, qualification effort, and expected time to first order?	—	—	—	—
Customer visibility and control Will we obtain access to stakeholders, feedback, and performance data?	—	—	—	—
Durability and strategic value Does this relationship support renewals, follow-on work, and future positioning?	—	—	—	—

03 CALCULATE AND VALIDATE

Multiply each route score by its criterion weight; sum all seven products. Maximum possible = 5 × total weights. Route fit (%) = weighted total ÷ maximum × 100. Eliminate any route that fails a non-negotiable eligibility or delivery gate.

WEIGHTED TOTALS

Prime:

Sub:

Other:

Worked example + interpretation

Hypothetical 20-person cybersecurity integrator targeting an agency without its own qualifying prime-contract access.

EXAMPLE SCORES: ONE OPPORTUNITY, THREE PATHWAYS

CRITERION	WT.	PRIME	SUB	OEM
Buyer access	3	1	5	3
Profit potential	3	3	4	4
Delivery readiness	3	2	4	5
Past performance	2	1	4	3
Capture investment / speed	3	1	4	3
Customer visibility / control	2	5	2	3
Durability / strategic value	3	4	3	4
WEIGHTED POINTS / 95 MAXIMUM		45	72	69

PRIME 45 / 95 47% route fit	SUBCONTRACT 72 / 95 76% route fit	OEM IMPLEMENTATION 69 / 95 73% route fit
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WHAT THE OUTCOME DEMONSTRATES

Subcontracting is the best near-term fit for this hypothetical pursuit: an established prime can provide acquisition access and delivery infrastructure. OEM implementation is also competitive and could be pursued in parallel. Prime status scores lower because the firm currently lacks a viable vehicle path and relevant agency proof—not because priming is inherently undesirable.

RECOMMENDED NEXT MOVES

30 days: validate vehicle, buyer, and partner interest. 60 days: negotiate scope, workshare, pricing, and customer visibility. 90 days: pursue the qualified opportunity and reassess the route as evidence changes.

NEED HELP CHOOSING YOUR ROUTE?

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