

EFAIRA Methodology Glossary

Every technical term in the EFAIRA methodology, defined in plain English for federal acquisition workforce training, agency CIO education, and contractor proposal staff onboarding.

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A. About this glossary

The federal AI acquisition vocabulary draws from at least four overlapping domains: federal acquisition language, AI technical terms, risk management frameworks, and federal cybersecurity. Terms that appear identical across domains often mean different things in each. This glossary defines the working terms in the EFAIRA methodology in plain English, with notes on where the meaning differs from adjacent vocabulary. Federal acquisition workforce trainers and educators may cite and integrate these definitions into agency training without commercial engagement with Encore.

B. Core EFAIRA Terms

G1 EFAIRA (Encore Federal AI Readiness Audit)

A 30-point methodology for assessing federal contractor AI capabilities against the readiness criteria that federal evaluators apply during proposal review. The methodology is published as a public good for the federal acquisition workforce.

G2 Readiness Receipt

The signed and hash-verifiable artifact produced at the end of an EFAIRA engagement. Documents the readiness scoring, the methodology applied, and the date of assessment. Contractors can cite the receipt in technical proposal volumes.

G3 Domain (evaluation domain)

One of the eight categorical areas within the EFAIRA methodology. Each domain groups related points that surface the same area of federal AI risk concern. Examples include AI use case disclosure, risk and impact assessment, human oversight, and data provenance.

G4 Point (evaluation point)

One of the 30 discrete assessment items within the methodology. Each point evaluates a specific aspect of AI readiness and contributes to the overall readiness scoring.

G5 Readiness threshold

The score level at which an EFAIRA point or domain is rated red, yellow, or green. Thresholds are calibrated against federal evaluator expectations rather than against an absolute technical standard.

G6 Hash verification

The cryptographic mechanism by which an agency can verify that a cited Encore Readiness Receipt is authentic and unaltered. The receipt's hash identifier is published in the citation and the agency can match the hash against the Encore verification endpoint.

C. Federal Acquisition Terms

A1 Section L (proposal preparation instructions)

The section of a federal solicitation that instructs contractors on how to prepare and submit their proposal. EFAIRA findings are designed to surface what would be addressed in response to Section L instructions for AI capabilities.

A2 Section M (evaluation factors for award)

The section of a federal solicitation that specifies the criteria the agency will apply during source selection. EFAIRA assessment language maps to typical Section M language for AI capability evaluation.

A3 Source selection

The federal process by which an agency selects the contractor for award. AI capabilities are evaluated under source selection criteria that may include AI-specific evaluation subfactors.

A4 Determinations and findings

The documented agency rationale for an acquisition decision. Acquisition practitioners may reference EFAIRA crosswalk PDFs in determinations and findings to ground AI acquisition decisions in published methodology.

A5 Past performance

The federal evaluation factor that considers the contractor's prior performance on similar work. Contractors who have engaged EFAIRA can reference the engagement as evidence of disciplined AI risk management practice.

D. AI Technical Terms

T1 Foundation model

A large pre-trained AI model that serves as a base for downstream task-specific applications. Foundation model dependencies must be identified in federal AI proposals because they introduce supply chain and capability assumptions that the agency needs to evaluate.

T2 Inference path

The end-to-end data flow from input through model invocation to output. Includes any human review checkpoints, downstream processing, and final delivery to the consuming system. Inference path documentation is required to evaluate the operational risk of an AI capability.

T3 Drift detection

The ongoing monitoring practice that surfaces when an AI capability's performance deviates from its baseline. Drift detection requires defined metrics, monitoring cadence, and threshold-triggered actions.

T4 Human-in-the-loop

An AI oversight model in which a human reviews every decision before it is acted on. Distinct from human-on-the-loop and post-hoc audit. Federal AI proposals must use the policy-accurate term for the oversight regime actually implemented.

T5 Human-on-the-loop

An AI oversight model in which a human supervises the AI capability and intervenes when intervention criteria are triggered. Less intensive than human-in-the-loop. Appropriate for higher-volume lower-stakes decisions.

T6 Post-hoc audit

An oversight model in which a sample of AI decisions is reviewed after the fact. Lowest oversight intensity. Acceptable for some use cases but not interchangeable with human-in-the-loop terminology.

T7 Bias screening

The practice of evaluating an AI capability for disparate performance across populations. Requires a defined fairness metric, a defined population set, and a defined screening cadence.

T8 Fairness metric

The specific quantitative measure used during bias screening. Common metrics include demographic parity, equalized odds, and predictive parity. Federal AI proposals must name the metric applied; bias screening without a named metric is methodologically incomplete.

T9 Model card / system card

A standardized transparency artifact that describes an AI model or system in plain language. Documents intended use, limitations, performance characteristics, and known risks. Required for transparency compliance under federal AI risk management policy.

E. Framework Terms

F1 NIST AI RMF Govern function

The first of four NIST AI Risk Management Framework functions. Covers organizational policies, accountability, and risk management practices. Most federal AI proposals address Govern function alignment in their risk management documentation.

F2 NIST AI RMF Map function

The second AI RMF function. Covers identification of AI context, risks, and impact across the AI capability lifecycle.

F3 NIST AI RMF Measure function

The third AI RMF function. Covers measurement of AI risks and performance against defined metrics.

F4 NIST AI RMF Manage function

The fourth AI RMF function. Covers ongoing management of AI risks throughout deployment and sustainment.

F5 OMB minimum risk management practices

The practices specified in OMB Memorandum M-25-22 that establish the federal floor for AI risk management. Contractors who fall below this floor are not competitively positioned for federal AI awards.

F6 CFIUS exposure (in AI context)

The Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States review applicability to AI capabilities with foreign ownership or control elements in the supply chain. Surfaces in federal AI acquisitions when the contractor's foundation model dependencies trace to non-US parties.

How to use this glossary. Open it as a reference alongside an EFAIRA briefing deck or a federal AI proposal evaluation. When a term appears that needs precision, this document defines the working meaning. For terms not defined here, consult the original framework or policy document.

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