

SASE RFP TEMPLATE 2026

80+ vendor evaluation requirements

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This template provides structured evaluation criteria for SASE vendors. Requirements are categorized by priority: P1 (Critical), P2 (High), P3 (Medium). Use P1 criteria to create your shortlist and P2/P3 for final scoring.

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1. Pre-RFP Checklist

Complete these before issuing your RFP. Vendors without this context will submit generic architectures.

- Define deployment scope: SSE-only, full SASE, or phased approach
- Document user populations: office, remote, contractors, OT/IoT
- List top 20 SaaS applications by traffic and business criticality
- Identify compliance requirements: SOC 2, HIPAA, PCI, GDPR, NIS2, DORA
- Catalog existing infrastructure: SD-WAN, firewall, proxy, VPN, IdP
- Define success metrics: latency targets, uptime SLA, deployment timeline

Assign final scoring weights before vendor responses arrive

2. SSE Security Requirements

Priority: P1 — Critical (shortlist eliminators)

Requirement	Priority	Verification Method
TLS 1.2/1.3 decryption with configurable bypass	P1 – Critical	Measure throughput per PoP under load
SWG URL filtering with GenAI categories	P1 – Critical	Request category list, verify GenAI date
CASB for top 20 SaaS in inline + API mode	P1 – Critical	Test API integration depth per app
ZTNA with clientless access for contractors	P1 – Critical	Test clientless with real app in PoC
DLP: pattern, ML classification, OCR	P2 – High	Run test data through engine in PoC
Remote Browser Isolation for high-risk sites	P2 – High	Test with interactive apps, not static
DNS-layer security with threat intel	P2 – High	Ask for intel source and update freq
Inline sandbox, sub-60s verdict	P2 – High	Test custom benign binary, measure time

IPS: 10K+ signatures, CVE coverage

P3 – Medium

Request signature count, CVE coverage

TLS 1.3 ECH handling

P3 – Medium

Ask explicitly how ECH traffic is handled

3. SD-WAN & Networking Requirements

Requirement	Priority	Verification Method
App-aware routing, 5K+ signatures	P1 – Critical	Test with your actual apps, not demos
Sub-second failover across transports	P1 – Critical	Disconnect link during PoC, measure
MPLS, broadband, LTE/5G, satellite	P2 – High	Verify tested vs. theoretically supported
Zero-touch provisioning for branches	P2 – High	Deploy test branch with ZTP only
QoS with per-app bandwidth policies	P2 – High	Verify QoS through SSE pipeline
Branch-to-branch policy enforcement	P3 – Medium	Ask if b2b traffic is inspected

4. Management & Operations

Requirement	Priority	Verification Method
Single console for SSE + SD-WAN	P1 – Critical	Ask: one console or two branded portals?
RBAC with granular permission scoping	P1 – Critical	Test creating read-only scoped role
Full API coverage for config + reporting	P1 – Critical	Request API docs, verify coverage
Multi-tenant for MSP / multi-BU	P2 – High	Test tenant isolation in PoC
SIEM log export: syslog, CEF, native	P2 – High	Verify format, granularity, latency
Change tracking + config rollback	P2 – High	Roll back a change, verify immediately
DEM with hop-by-hop latency	P2 – High	Ask: base license or add-on?
Terraform provider support	P3 – Medium	Check completeness vs. full API

5. SLA & Support Requirements

Requirement	Priority	Verification Method
99.999% uptime SLA	P1 – Critical	Read the SLA: exclusions? credit calc?
Latency SLA with ms commitment	P1 – Critical	Get SLA in writing, per region
24/7 support, <15 min P1 response	P1 – Critical	Test support response during PoC
Dedicated CSM for enterprise	P2 – High	At what spend level is CSM included?
Incident RCA process documented	P2 – High	Request examples of past RCA reports
Planned maintenance advance notice	P3 – Medium	Ask for maintenance history

6. Pricing & Licensing Requirements

Requirement	Priority	Verification Method
Clear per-user/site pricing, no hidden fees	P1 – Critical	Request complete SKU list with prices
DEM, DLP, CASB in base license	P1 – Critical	Verify which features need separate SKUs
Flexible user-based + site-based mix	P2 – High	Ask if you can mix models
True-up provisions in writing	P2 – High	Get overage terms before signing

3-year TCO projection

P2 – High

Ask vendor to model your user/site count

Exit terms: data portability, migration

P3 – Medium

Read exit clause — some need 12mo notice

7. PoC Scorecard

Run the PoC with your own users, apps, and network — not a vendor-controlled demo environment. Define pass/fail before testing.

Scenario	Pass Criterion	Score (1–5)
TLS inspection latency	< 5ms added latency p95 on Office 365	/5
ZTNA access (managed device)	App accessible < 3s, no VPN needed	/5
ZTNA access (BYOD/unmanaged)	Clientless access functional	/5
DLP data detection	PII test file blocked in < 10s	/5
Failover time (WAN link down)	Traffic restored < 1 second	/5
Management console usability	New admin policy created < 15 min	/5
Support response time	P1 ticket response < 15 minutes	/5

8. Red Flag Responses

Disqualify vendors who give these responses:

- "Our throughput is X Gbps" — without specifying if TLS inspection is enabled
- "We have a PoP in every region" — without providing specific locations with latency SLAs
- "DLP is available" — without confirming it is in the base license or stating the add-on cost
- "We support all SD-WAN features" — without demonstrating sub-second failover in your PoC
- "Our CASB covers thousands of apps" — without confirming API-mode support for your apps
- "99.9% uptime guaranteed" — anything below 99.99% is unacceptable for production
- Refusal to provide references from customers in your industry with your use case

9. Scoring Matrix

Weight each category based on your deployment priority. Suggested weights for SSE-first deployment:

Category	Max Score	Your Weight	Weighted Score
SSE Security	30	—	—
SD-WAN & Networking	20	—	—
Management & Operations	20	—	—
SLA & Support	15	—	—
Pricing & Licensing	15	—	—
TOTAL	100	100%	—

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