

# RFI - Northmore Gordon

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### # RFI

According to the Northmore Gordon glossary, RFI stands for "Reason For Investigation." This term is used in energy project assessment to document and communicate why a particular technical area, equipment, or operational aspect needs closer examination as part of an energy audit or feasibility study.

### ## Related guidance

Government schemes

Certificate services

Certificate trading

Measurement and verification

Energy audits

What to do after an energy audit

### ### What does RFI stand for?

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### ### How does a Reason For Investigation (RFI) support energy audit scope and decision-making?

An RFI links a proposed investigation to the real business decision it will serve. Rather than investigating every aspect of a site, an energy audit's scope is matched to specific decisions: finding avoidable waste, ranking investments for capital approval, or examining a particular system before replacement. Documenting the RFI ensures the audit delivers the depth and evidence needed for that decision without unnecessary cost.

### ### What role does RFI play in an opportunity register from an energy audit?

For each proposed measure in an opportunity register, the RFI establishes why that area warrants investigation. It documents the boundary, estimated energy effect, assumptions, implementation dependencies, and evidence quality. This structured approach helps prioritise which opportunities deserve capital investment and clarifies what evidence must be collected before design or procurement decisions are made.

### ### How does identifying an RFI early affect project planning and measurement requirements?

Identifying the RFI early—during the project brief stage—allows measurement planning to begin while meaningful baseline data can still be obtained. This is especially important for schemes like NSW ESS's PIAM&V; pathway, where baseline measurement procedures must be established before the

implementation date. An RFI clarifies what must be recorded, who gathers the evidence, and what conditions will be assessed.

### What types of RFI commonly arise in industrial and commercial energy investigations?

Common RFIs in industrial and commercial settings include concerns about high energy bills with unclear causes, questions about equipment replacement timing (boilers, refrigeration, compressors), potential for heat recovery or electrification, and uncertain operating profiles affecting load calculations. Australian Government sector guides identify investigation areas for food and beverage manufacturing, animal processing, and other priority sectors; each area has a corresponding RFI.

### How does Northmore Gordon use RFI to establish appropriate scope for energy optimisation work?

We recommend submitting a project brief that documents the business problem, site details, available evidence, and the intended decision. This brief articulates the RFI for the engagement. Based on the RFI, we establish proportionate starting scope—whether that is an energy audit, utility benchmarking, feasibility study, measurement plan, or targeted investigation of a specific system. This approach ensures the work matches the actual decision required.

### How should an RFI be documented if funding or environmental certificates are being considered?

When certificates are being investigated, the project brief should state the RFI separately from the funding pathway assessment. The RFI clarifies what technical investigation is needed; a separate finding addresses pathway suitability, missing evidence, and unresolved conditions for certificate schemes like Victorian Energy Upgrades or NSW Energy Savings Scheme. This separation ensures the technical merit and the commercial viability are assessed independently.

### What is the relationship between RFI and measurement and verification planning?

The RFI informs measurement and verification planning by establishing the project boundary, baseline conditions, and what energy-use variables must be documented. If the RFI is "does this heating-system replacement deliver the estimated savings?", the M&V; brief must specify the measurement boundary, baseline heating load, post-implementation consumption, and adjustments for operating-condition changes. Early clarity on the RFI ensures baseline evidence is preserved before work commences.

### How can an RFI help prevent wasted audit effort and ensure proportionate investigation?

By clearly stating the RFI—the actual business decision the investigation must serve—organisations avoid commissioning excessive detail or unnecessary analysis. An energy audit type does not by itself promise a construction-ready design or fixed-price equipment quotation unless those outputs are specifically agreed. The RFI ensures the audit depth, measurement approach, and deliverables are proportionate to whether the decision is screening, detailed feasibility, or system replacement.