

EVIDENCE VS. ASSERTION

HIGHLIGHTING GUIDE

ALQABBAT ADVISORY · SAUDI INDUSTRIAL EDGE COMPLIANCE SERIES ·
CHAPTER 1 TOOLKIT RESOURCE

PURPOSE

What does this guide do?

This guide trains your bid team to distinguish between evidence-based claims and assertion-based claims in Saudi industrial submissions. Assertions feel true internally. Evidence is what the procurement committee can verify. The difference determines whether your bid advances past Stage 2.

Take any section of your current Saudi bid submission. Apply the colour-coding below to every compliance-related claim. The ratio of evidence (green) to assertion (red) predicts your Stage 2 outcome more accurately than any confidence your team feels about the submission.

The Exercise

Print or open your latest Saudi bid submission. Use two highlighters (or digital markup colours):

■ **GREEN** = Evidence-backed claim (documented, dated, referenced, verifiable)

■ **RED** = Assertion (claim without supporting evidence referenced in the submission)

EVIDENCE VS. ASSERTION: THE TEST

For each compliance claim in your submission, apply this three-question test:

#	QUESTION	IF YES	IF NO
1	Is there a referenced document that supports this claim?	Continue to Q2	RED — Assertion
2	Is that document dated within the current NCA enforcement cycle?	Continue to Q3	RED — Stale evidence
3	Does the document answer a Saudi-specific requirement, not just an international standard?	GREEN — Evidence	RED — Wrong jurisdiction

COMMON ASSERTION PATTERNS

Phrases that feel strong internally but read as assertions to a procurement committee

ASSERTION (RED)	EVIDENCE EQUIVALENT (GREEN)
"We comply with all applicable regulations."	"Our NCA compliance declaration (Ref. NCA-D-2026-03, attached) covers domains 1–5 for this engagement scope."
"Our security controls are mature and well-established."	"Our OTCC evidence package (Ref. OTCC-EP-2026, attached) documents control implementation across all five applicable domains."
"We have extensive Saudi experience."	"We have delivered three engagements for Saudi industrial operators since 2022 (references available on request with named contacts)."
"We are committed to Saudisation goals."	"Our current Saudisation rate is 34%. Our 12-month plan targets 42% through four named Saudi engineering hires (plan attached)."
"Our ISO 27001 certification covers cybersecurity comprehensively."	"Our ISO 27001 certification (Ref. ISO-2025, attached) supports our ISMS maturity. Saudi-specific NCA domain mapping is provided separately (Ref. NCA-MAP-2026)."
"We will assign a compliance lead."	"[Named individual], NCA-certified, will serve as Saudi compliance lead. Qualifications, scope, and contact details are on page 3."

ASSERTION (RED)	EVIDENCE EQUIVALENT (GREEN)
"Our partner handles local requirements."	"[Partner legal name] provides localisation support under documented oversight agreement (Ref. PA-2026, attached). Compliance accountability remains with [your entity]."
"We are in the process of registering with IKTVA."	"Our verified SCV score is 28% (LCGPA-audited, Q4 2025). 12-month improvement plan targets 35% (roadmap attached)."

SCORING YOUR SUBMISSION

After highlighting, count your evidence-to-assertion ratio:

RATIO (GREEN:RED)	GRADE	ASSESSMENT
< 1:1	Critical	More assertions than evidence. This submission will not survive Stage 2 scrutiny.
1:1 to 2:1	Weak	Evidence present but assertions still dominate key sections. Remediation required before submission.
2:1 to 4:1	Competitive	Evidence-led submission. Assertions are limited to non-critical claims. Strong Stage 2 posture.
> 4:1	Defensible	Fully evidence-based. The procurement committee can evaluate and defend your submission without interpretation.

The Rule

Every red-highlighted claim is a question the procurement committee will ask that your submission does not answer. Every unanswered question is a reason to hesitate. Every hesitation costs you trust you cannot recover in a follow-up meeting.

The company says: “We are showing the strongest evidence we have.” But procurement is not asking for your strongest evidence in the abstract. It is asking for the most relevant evidence to its own risk lens. Those are not the same thing.

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