

General

Is the budget highlighted the upper limit within the Contracts Finder advert? / Could you please confirm the budget for this? I note that the description lists 'Please note £20,000 is not intended as an approximate or maximum contract value. Contracts Finder requires a minimum value to be entered.'

We do not have an estimated budget for the system, but want to see what range of costs are quoted for the specified requirements.

The tender documents state: "*Our Procurement Policy, Procedure and Guidance are provided, for your reference*" – I cannot see these, could you please provide them?

Apologies, these were not included with the invitation to tender. These have now been added to the Contracts Finder advert.

You mention local hosting as an option. Please can you clarify if you require a SaaS model or a local hosted model?

We would consider both options but our preference would be for a SaaS model.

e-Procurement Portal

Is an evaluation tool required?

We did not include an evaluation tool in our specification, as we had not considered this option. It would be useful, but will not be considered an essential element of submissions. If this is something you can provide then please note this and set out the additional benefits and any additional costs involved.

Is Contract Register part of the requirements?

A contract register is not a necessary part of the requirements, but we would be interested in discussing the options for extending the contract to include this, either initially or at a later date.

The database of suppliers referred to in part 2 of the detailed requirements would enable us to keep information about current suppliers, including insurance cover, up-to-date. If you have a contract management solution that you feel would be the best way of addressing that element of the specification, you might want to recommend that within your proposal and explain the additional functionality and cost entailed. Otherwise you might want to include a contract management module as an optional extra, with a quote for providing that in addition to the specified requirements. But a contract register is not an essential requirement.

Req 3.2, please clarify if you require all the OJEU procurement routes and all the legal forms with online validation to help the buyer to fill in the OJEU forms with direct integration to TED via the Simap API to ensure the forms are error free?

We have not included online validation / integration to TED as essential requirements, but this would be beneficial and you should specify whether you can offer this. Please outline the benefits and any additional costs entailed and this will all be considered in our evaluation.

Req 3.13, please clarify if you require online contract negotiation and contract agreement/sign off in the system for a complete audit trail?

This is not a requirement. However, if it is something you would recommend we do, please set out the benefits and any additional costs.

Legal Advice and Training

Req 1.4 states "...provide advice on this". Please can you clarify if you require the supplier to provide legal advice on EU Procurement rules and regulations?

We do not require detailed legal advice, but we do expect the supplier to have a good understanding of procurement rules, to the extent that they can advise us on key steps that needs to be followed and issues that we might need to consider.

We have a clarification regarding section 5 - 5.3 of the E-Procurement System tender from our Procurement expert when asking him to assist with one of your question requirements. Your question in **YELLOW**, In-tend clarification in **GREEN**:

Question: 5.3 - All staff need to be given training on procurement rules in general, as well as specific training on how to use the e-procurement system. It would be useful if the supplier could work with the Governance Officer to shape the training materials and content, and potentially to deliver training.

We would have to assume there should be a basic level of Procurement knowledge in place already however if not, are we training absolute beginners that have to be up to speed on EU procurement regulations in two days for example? (two days being 'introduction to Procurement regulation' and 'EU procurement regulation') or are they expecting a longer engagement as it is not possible to fully train beginners in EU compliant procurement in 2 days.

I would say they would need someone to hand hold them on their projects for 6 months in order to become more proficient, we review every OJEU level tender they propose to put out and guide them or we get involved in every EU procurement earlier to help them develop tender docs from scratch which over

time become templates for them to re-use. If this is the case we would need to look at a cost for a more managed service.

I would expect to work with the selected supplier to develop a plan for training, but your recommended approach would be useful as a starting point. The level of existing knowledge varies, but I would say that many staff who will be using the procurement system will have a limited understanding of the Regulations. However, I would not expect the training provided as part of this contract to give all staff a full understanding of procurement law.

Most of our procurement exercises fall below the EU thresholds, and above threshold procurements are usually done via a framework or by a third party who we would expect to understand the Regulations (e.g. a broker or agent). There are only a few staff who need to fully understand the Regulations and they will receive specialist training separately. You may wish to identify what training you can provide along these lines within your submission.

Broadly speaking I would expect the training to briefly summarise the rules and principles for procurements above and below the EU thresholds, refer to our Policy and let people know where they can find out more should they need to. I would expect most staff to complete training in around 2 hours.

With regard to the more hands-on, managed approach you discuss in the second part of your question, I would not expect suppliers to include this level of training and support. However, if this would be your recommended approach, you can explain this in your submission and potentially include it as an optional addition to the contract, and obviously there can be further discussion.

Req 5.3, please clarify if you require legal training on procurement rules as we are a software company. Providing legal training on procurement rules should normally be provided by legal professionals as otherwise it may invalidate the professional indemnity insurance a software provider has.

As above, we are not expecting the supplier to provide detailed legal training, but to provide a brief overview of procurement rules alongside training on how to use the system.

Database of Suppliers

Req 2.2., please can you clarify the data fields indicated include multiple insurance cover levels and therefore multiple renewal dates e.g. Product Liability, Employers Liability, Professional Indemnity?

Yes. We would need the cover level and renewal date for each of these types of insurance cover.

Req 2.3, please can you clarify that you require bespoke data fields and the system needs to be flexible to include any data field from suppliers you require.

Yes. We need to be able to define different data fields for different supplier types.

Req 2.6, please can you clarify if it would be sufficient if the system can hold the multiple insurance cover expiry dates (as per requirement 2.2) and provide reports in excel format? We currently do not have an automatic alert system for insurance dates as clients have very different needs for alerts so we offer a report which you can run yourself with insurance cover expiry dates for all the different types of insurances entered by the supplier.

Yes, that would be sufficient.

Re 2.7, please clarify if you will allow suppliers to update this information themselves. Supplier data is owned by the supplier and should be entered by the supplier. For the buyer to enter such information may present legal issues and may impact on GDPR. In addition there would need to be a data migration exercise as you are requiring bespoke data fields as per Req 2.3. We suggest the suppliers should enter all this information themselves and confirm legally that it is correct.

The requirement states: We would like to be able to upload an existing spreadsheet of supplier information to the new system in a quick and easy way.

The spreadsheet referred to is the existing register of suppliers held by the Development Team. We have recently gathered the data from suppliers and would not wish to ask them to provide the same information again in a different system. We understand that a data migration exercise would be required.

However, we would be interested to discuss the potential legal and data protection issues, to inform our approach. Going forward we would expect suppliers to check and update the information themselves, and potentially we could require them to confirm the data we enter into the new system.