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Mini Tender Guide for Public Sector Clients

Conducting a Mini Competition Under the National Framework Partnership Framework or DPS

This guide supports public sector contracting authorities in running mini competitions using the National Framework Partnership framework. It is fully aligned with the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015) and incorporates principles and requirements from the Procurement Regulations 2024 where applicable (e.g., transparency, digital notices, open competition, simplified documentation).

1. Confirm Framework Access

In line with PCR 2015, Regulation 33 on the use of framework agreements, your organisation must ensure it is entitled to call off from the National Framework Partnership framework and that such usage is consistent with your internal governance arrangements.

Key Actions:

• Verify that your organisation is listed or described in the Contract Notice (OJEU/Finder's Notice).
• Types of eligible public sector clients include:
- Local authorities
- NHS Trusts
- Housing associations
- Government departments
- Education institutions (schools, colleges, universities)
• Review the Contract Award Notice and internal approval mechanisms.

National Framework Partnership operates as an agent for:
- Hyde Housing Association

2. Engage National Framework Partnership

Following PCR 2015 Regulation 33(11), mini competitions must be carried out in accordance with procedures laid down in the framework. Engaging National Framework Partnership at the outset ensures compliance and controlled document access.

What to Do:

• Complete the Initial **Confidentiality Agreement (Step 1)** on the National Framework Partnership framework page.

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• Receive secure access to:
 - **Step 2: Specification** Template
 - **Step 3: Cost Matrix** Sample

3. <u>Define Requirements for the Expression of Interest (EOI)</u>

In accordance with PCR 2015 Regulation 18 (Principles of procurement: equal treatment, non-discrimination, transparency), you must clearly define and fairly communicate your needs.

What to Include in the Call-Off Form (Step 4):
• Project title, overview, and purpose
• Estimated contract value (including VAT)
• Proposed contract term (start/end dates)
• Key deliverables or milestones

Evaluation Preparation:
• Evaluation criteria and sub-criteria with weightings
• Confirm compliance requirements (e.g., insurance, accreditations)
• Decide delivery route:
 - Your own procurement portal, or
 - National Framework Partnership's e-platform
• Optionally, express preferences for supplier shortlisting based on:
 - Experience and capability
 - Financial standing
 - H&S performance
 - Local delivery presence
 - Framework workload

4. <u>Prepare Mini Tender Documentation</u>

All documentation must support a fair competition and meet minimum content requirements outlined in PCR 2015 Regulation 22–56.

Essential Documents:

• Invitation to Tender (ITT)
• Specification
• Pricing Schedule
• Evaluation Criteria and Matrix
• Method Statement
• TUPE Information (if relevant)
• Form of Tender
• Draft Call-Off Contract

Requirements:

• Submission deadlines and format
• Contact details for clarifications
• Rules for clarification queries
• Timetable
• Award process and scoring methodology

5. Issue the Mini Competition

In accordance with PCR 2015 Regulation 33(11), the mini competition must be issued fairly and equitably to all eligible suppliers under the relevant lot.

Steps:
• Distribute documents via your portal or National Framework Partnership's
• Invite either:
 - All suppliers under the applicable lot
 - A justified and compliant shortlist (based on your EOI)
• Allow a reasonable period for submission (usually 2–4 weeks depending on complexity)
• Establish and communicate a clarification window:
 - Log and respond to all questions
 - Share answers with all invited suppliers
 - Maintain a clarification record

6. Evaluate Tender Responses

Evaluation must be consistent with your published criteria and comply with PCR 2015 Regulation 67 and Regulation 84.

Evaluation Protocol:
• Appoint an appropriate panel (technical, financial, ESG, etc.)
• Use the Evaluation Matrix for scoring
• Record scoring rationale for each response
• Hold moderation meetings if necessary
• If interviews/presentations were pre-notified, conduct them fairly
• Finalise rankings and inform National Framework Partnership of the recommended supplier

7. Award and Notify

Following PCR 2015 Regulation 55, and observing best practices from the 2024 reforms, award must be communicated clearly and fairly.

Actions:
• Notify the preferred supplier of provisional award
• Send debriefs and scores to all bidders at the same time
• Observe a 10-day standstill period (if required) before contract execution
• Issue the Call-Off Contract once the period expires

• Inform National Framework Partnership to update audit records

8. Contract Management

Effective contract management is a legal and commercial requirement under PCR 2015 Regulation 84(7).

Key Actions:
• Hold a mobilisation meeting
• Establish KPIs and SLAs
• Conduct regular performance reviews
• Document variations or supplier performance concerns
• Use National Framework Partnership to support supplier interventions or mediation
• Retain all records for audit and future reference

Quick Tips from National Framework Partnership:

• Use the latest template packs—updated for legal and framework compliance
• Engage your procurement, legal, and technical teams early
• Keep a detailed and secure audit trail
• Build in reasonable timelines for supplier responses
• Use National Framework Partnership's team for document checks, clarifications, and compliance support

Please refer to legal terms in our document 'Mini Competition Terms & Conditions'