

LUPC's framework agreement tendering process

All of LUPC's framework agreements go through a rigorous tendering process, typically taking between six and nine months, and carried out in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and The Public Procurement (Amendment etc.)(EU Exit) Regulations 2020. If you've ever wondered what the process involves, we provide the detail for you here. Members are always welcome to participate and can see details of tenders in progress [here](#).

STAGE ONE: RESEARCH

Establish a tender working party (TWP)

Comprised of individuals from member organisations of LUPC (and other consortia where the framework is a national one). The TWP will provide input and be involved in all stages of the tender to ensure member needs are met, with the Senior Category Manager responsible for managing the end-to-end process and timescales.

Review current (incumbent) framework agreement

Where a tender is replacing an incumbent agreement, a review of this agreement is carried out to ensure lessons are learned so the new tender can be adapted accordingly.

Carry out market research/pre-tender market engagement

New and current suppliers, product and market developments, and revisions to regulations and legislation are reviewed to ensure thorough knowledge of the market. Sometimes, a Prior Information Notice (PIN) may be issued, including a questionnaire for suppliers to complete, and providing details of open supplier meetings to obtain feedback/input from the market.

Assess Sustainability considerations – Environmental, Social and Economic

This ensures the procurement and the resulting agreement is as sustainable as possible.

Complete the Sourcing Strategy for the framework agreement

This typically covers some or all of the below:

- Tender Working Party (TWP) Role & Input
- Business Need and Functional Requirements
- Scope of the framework
- Expenditure Analysis
- Main Suppliers in the Market
- Risk Analysis (SWOT/PESTLE/Porter's Five Forces Analysis)
- Framework Outline
- Strategic Tendering Options
- Standard Selection Questionnaire (SQ) and ITT Considerations and Evaluation Criteria
- Responsible Procurement
- Timescales

Determine which procedure to use

Typically, the Open or Restricted procedures are used

Submit an options paper to the LUPC Executive Committee

Once all of the elements above have been completed, a paper is written setting out a number of options for the framework agreement and a recommended course of action for sign-off by the Executive Committee.

STAGE TWO: TENDERING

Draft the tender documentation

Specification

The specification requires heavy input from members, and in particular, the end users of the framework agreement, and is the foundation on which the whole sourcing process is based. It is essential to ensure that sustainability issues are embedded into the specification.

Selection Questionnaire (SQ) and Invitation to Tender (ITT) questions

Determine what questions to ask at SQ and ITT stages.

Pricing schedule

Compile framework pricing templates/schedules to be used for the pricing element of the framework agreement.

Evaluation Methodology

Decide upon the award criteria (both pricing and quality), weightings and sub-weightings, along with a complete scoring methodology for each stage of the procurement.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Draft relevant KPIs including how they will be measured.

Terms and Conditions

Finalise the framework agreement terms and condition as well as the model contract for use by members at call-off stage.

Upload all documentation to the eSourcing portal, Mercell UK

This provides a full audit trail for the tender and allows suppliers to submit their tenders electronically.

Publish the tender

Advertise the framework tender by publishing a contract notice on [Find A Tender Service](#) and Contracts Finder, and publish tender documents via eSourcing portal, Mercell UK

STAGE THREE: EVALUATION

Bid clarifications and site visits

Bid clarifications may be required to ensure we are comparing like for like on a suppliers bid. The information obtained can be used to alter awarded scores if it is found that incorrect marks may have previously been awarded.

Occasionally, and in particular if a live site is acting as a case study for the tender process, a site visit of a reference site may be carried out to ensure that the quality of delivery is as required or as desired.

Evaluation of bids

Evaluation is undertaken by groups within the tender working party (ideally at least two evaluators and a moderator) and covers:

- Financial assessment of suppliers (financial standing and capability)
- Pass/Fail criteria
- Scored elements (including pricing submissions) of the SQ and ITT based on criteria, weightings and scoring methodology

Moderation meetings

These are held to reach a consensus score for each bidder, moderating material differences between individual scores, as necessary.

Final due diligence checks

The following is carried out for suppliers where the intention is to award an agreement:

- Supplier finances are re-checked
- Evidence of certificates e.g. insurance certificates, certificates of conformity, qualifications, etc. are sought

Award Recommendation Report

This is a complete record of the procurement process, listing every step, key dates, participants involved and results of the scoring, and fulfils LUPC's requirements under Article 84 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

STAGE FOUR: AWARD

Standstill letters

These are issued to successful bidders, and unsuccessful bidders are informed. Following the end of the standstill period (10 days) and providing no potential challenge is likely, award letters are issued to the successful suppliers and agreements are signed.

Contract Award Notice

These are published on Find a Tender Service within 30 days of contract award and on Contracts Finder within 90 days of contract award.