

Procuring language services via Public Sector frameworks

WHITE PAPER



Introduction

Frameworks are becoming more established within Public Sector procurement, as they represent a smarter way of purchasing, rather than going through a time consuming and costly tender for 'one-off' orders relating to recurrent contracts. They can, for example, optimise volume purchasing discounts and minimise onerous and repetitive purchasing tasks.

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What is a framework?

Framework Agreements are set up by Public Sector organisations.

They can be set up with one provider or several providers and set out the terms of contracts that may be awarded during the lifecycle of the agreement. They are suitable for repeat purchases, especially in situations where demand is irregular, or where the contracting authority requires flexibility to meet differing requirements.

The main difference between a contract and a framework, is that a framework does not include a commitment to purchase any goods or services. A contract can be made under a framework via 'calling off', and this is usually in the form of a 'direct award' or 'mini competition'.

When there are multiple providers on a framework, the contracting authority has two options when awarding call off contracts:

Option 1

When the terms of the framework are sufficiently precise to cover a call off, the contract may be awarded without re-opening a competition, this is known as a "direct call off".

Option 2

When the terms laid down in the framework are not precise or complete enough for a call off, a further competition, which is known as a "mini competition" should be held, with all those suppliers within the framework capable of meeting the requirement.

Frameworks are typically up to four years in length and a call off contract made under a framework can be made for up to four years in total. The call off term can exceed that of the framework, so for example, a call off contract could be made for four years in the second year of a four year Framework Agreement. This call off contract would still be valid after the framework expiry date.





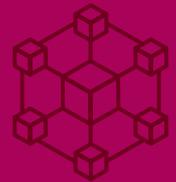
Thresholds

The European public contracts directive (2014/24/EU) applies to public authorities including, amongst others, central government departments, local authorities and NHS organisations.¹

¹ <http://www.ojec.com/thresholds.aspx>

The EU procurement rules apply to contracts above the specified thresholds:

- For contracting authorities that are central government organisations, the threshold is £106,047 and this includes government departments and executive agencies
- For contracting authorities that are sub-central government organisations the threshold is £164,176 and this includes local authorities and social housing providers



Central government authorities include:

- Department of Health National Health Service Business Services Authority
- National Health Service Trusts
- Welsh National Health Service bodies as well as Northern Ireland health bodies and Scottish health boards
- Clinical Commissioning Groups

You can read more about the classification of NHS bodies for the purpose of the EU procurement rules via the following link:

<https://www.bevanbrittan.com/insights/articles/2016/are-ccgs-sub-central-authorities/>

The regulations are also clear; the threshold value should include all goods and services within that category, for example interpreting and translation services including British Sign Language, telephone interpreting and all other language services should be treated as one value with regards to applying the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) regulations.



What are the main Public Sector Frameworks?

There are several high profile Public Sector frameworks within the UK, most notably:

Crown Commercial Service

Crown Commercial Service (CCS) brings together policy, advice and direct buying, which provides commercial services to the Public Sector and saves money for the taxpayer. One of CCS's priorities is to grow their wider Public Sector business to help more of their customers achieve value for money, with a target of delivering savings of between £200m and £250m across the wider Public Sector.

Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation

Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO), established in 1981, has the purchasing power to achieve savings to pass on to customers. ESPO is jointly owned by its six member authorities: Leicestershire County Council, Lincolnshire County Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Norfolk County Council, Warwickshire County Council, and Peterborough City Council.

Health Trust Europe

Health Trust Europe (HTE) is owned by the Hospital Corporation of America (HCA). HCA is the largest non-governmental healthcare organisation in the world and comprises of 170 hospitals, six of which are in the UK, and employs 233,000 people globally.

HTE is committed to strengthening provider performance and clinical excellence via an aligned membership model

London Procurement Partnership

London Procurement Partnership (LPP) is a membership organisation, founded and funded by NHS organisations. Working with their members, they support the NHS to make the most of its purchasing power and maximise investment in patient care - helping trusts to deliver the highest quality services while at the same time ensuring value for money.

NHS Commercial Solutions

Since their formation in 2007, NHS Commercial Solutions has considered itself to be the provider of choice for procurement and commercial services to the NHS and wider Public Sector. NHS Commercial Solutions is an NHS and non-profit organisation that only seeks to cover their operational overheads. Any savings they make go straight back into the NHS for further investment. They are a membership organisation, and work together with their members to pool their collective purchasing power and invest back into patient care.

NHS Shared Business Services

NHS Shared Business Services (NHS SBS) considers itself the market leader in business support services for the NHS, providing innovative finance and accounting, employment and procurement solutions, which deliver operational efficiencies, improved service quality and real cost savings for its clients.

Their vision is to help the NHS save money and enhance quality, so that the NHS can improve health, innovate to save lives, and deliver better outcomes with care and compassion. They are on course to achieve £1 billion of cost savings to the NHS by 2020, and to date, the organisation has delivered over £400 million in savings to the NHS.



Which organisations can procure from a framework?

Public Sector organisations that are able to procure from a framework include:

- National Health Service organisations
- Health and Social Care organisations
- Central government departments and agencies
- Local government organisations
- Police and emergency services
- Registered charities





What are the benefits of framework procurement?

Whilst there is a legal obligation for Public Sector organisations to procure goods or services over the OJEU thresholds, there are a number of benefits associated with purchasing from a framework. It ensures the quality of the provider is assured, and customers can access goods or services, which combine quality and cost efficiencies. The key benefits of purchasing from a framework include:

- Industry standards are in place such as ISO9001 and other industry specific accreditations
- Set terms and conditions that have been pre-agreed



Pricing has been standardised and economies of scale realised:

- Approved suppliers, who have been quality checked and have the minimum level of insurances
- The Service Specification must be adhered to throughout the life of the contract
- Agreed key service levels and key performance indicators



Collaborative procurement

For some time now, collaborative procurement has been considered a way of saving money and realising economies of scale. The standardisation of service specifications enables Public Sector organisations to combine demand for services and compare their costs.

Organisations should look to work collaboratively in order to leverage their increased spend and achieve greater savings via the mini competition process. Hospital trusts, clinical commissioning groups and councils all require language services in their own local area. It is often possible to achieve more favourable pricing structures by working together and creating a joint contract via standardised procurement processes, rather than procuring services separately.



What services can you procure from a framework?

Interpreting

For the non-English speaker, access to a professional, responsive interpreting service plays a pivotal role in enabling everyone to have access to important public sector services. Our interpreting services allow your clients to overcome language barriers and allow your highly trained staff to deliver an excellent service.



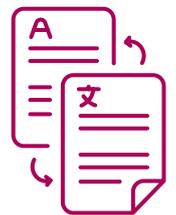
Interpreting is ideal for situations such as medical appointments, local authority meetings, confidential hearings and legal proceedings. The interpreter listens to the speaker in the source language, quietly takes notes and then reproduces the speech word for word in the target language.

At Capita TI, we offer a range of interpreting services including:

- Face-to-face interpreting
- Telephone interpreting
- British Sign Language (BSL)
- BSL video interpreting

Translation

Professional translation services enable you to communicate with members of the public and communities effectively. Capita TI provide translation services into and from over 180 languages for a number of public sector organisations including the NHS, police and central and local governments.



Translation is the process of rendering written communication from one language into another and can be undertaken by humans or machine.

It takes a high level of skill and expertise to deliver translation and proofreading projects in multiple languages. That's why we've taken the time to carefully select and approve a UK based network of talented, professional translators and proof readers.

Transcription

When it comes to converting important information, Capita TI understands just how important it is to get it right. Accuracy is essential and we recognise that our linguists often deal with life-changing information. There is no margin for error.



To ensure we transcribe to a high quality and supply the best level of service, we draw on our extensive pool of specialised linguists. This means we provide the right person, with the right sector knowledge in order to meet your diverse needs.

We understand you need a provider that is adept at working with each customer, to create a service that fits exactly with your existing processes and ways of working. Our rigorous processes ensure that integrity and security are consistently maintained, from initial request through to final delivery.

If you require further information regarding the services Capita TI offers, please email newaccounts@capita-ti.com



Conclusion

In the first instance, Public Sector organisations are advised to look to national framework providers, such as those listed previously, before conducting their own full OJEU procurement.

Many of the national frameworks are free of charge to access and have already followed a full OJEU process, which can take up to 9 months when undertaken separately.

Organisations accessing these agreements can do so with minimal time and effort, and take full advantage of the benefits listed previously, without the costs and time involved in an OJEU process.





Find out more about how partnering with Capita gives you the assurance of quality, global reach and trusted delivery on time, every time by visiting:

<https://www.capitatranslationinterpreting.com>



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