**ANNEX D**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)**

1. **When is the framework agreement available and when can I use it?**

You can use the framework agreement now. It was signed on 1st March 2016 and valid until 28th February 2018 (with options to extend based on the terms of the framework agreement). You can use the framework as a basis for ordering services at any time within this 4 year term

1. **There are 3 Lots – how do I choose between them?**

The Customer Guidelines contains descriptions of the services on offer for each Lot and see also Annex A the Framework Specification. Detailed below is a high level indication of service and how they may work for you

**Lot 1 – Merchant Acquiring Services and Merchant Acquiring Equipment**

LOT 1 is ideal if you have your own Payment Gateway and require a Merchant Acquirer and/or

You want to receive card payments face to face via Point of Sale (POS) terminal(s) and/or unattended POS terminal(s) like a car parking machine and/or via a call-centre or over the phone

**Lot 2 – Merchant Acquiring Services and Payment Gateway Services**

LOT 2 is ideal if you require a solution to accept card payments and Alternative Payment Methods via the internet and/or via a call centre or over the phone.

You either have your own supplier for Merchant Acquiring Equipment for face to face payments or require no Merchant Acquiring equipment for this service

**Lot 3 – Merchant Acquiring Services, Equipment and Payment Gateway Services**

LOT 3 is ideal if you require a solution to accept card payments face to face via Point of Sale (POS) terminal(s) and/or unattended POS terminal(s) like a car parking machine and/or via a call-centre and/or over the phone *and* you want to accept card payments and Alternative Payment Methods via the internet.

Under EU rules all suppliers in Lot 3 are capable of providing the services in Lots 1 and 2 so when doing further competitions in Lots 1 and 2 you **must** invite suppliers from Lot 3 who offer the same service.

1. **Is there a limit on the type of services I can award under a Call Off agreement?**

You can only use the framework agreement to purchase services that lie within the scope of the Lots (1-3) in the original OJEU contract notice contained within the Merchant Acquiring and Payment Gateway Services (MAPSG) framework agreement number RM3702.

This means that any other financial or banking related services should not be procured under this framework agreement or any Call Off agreement.

1. **Does the Call Off Agreement cater for all currencies?**

The specification details that the Supplier shall provide the contracting authority with the capability to transact in a wide range of currencies available from the currency markets. If you are unsure if a currency is not covered by the agreement you need to contact the Supplier to discuss and agree the way forward.

1. **What M A equipment is provided?**

The equipment included but not limited to, is:

Fixed Terminals

Mobile Terminals

PDQ Terminals

Bluetooth Terminals

Customer Activated Terminal

Wireless Terminals

Remote Wireless Terminals

Contactless Terminals

Imprinter Terminals

Unattended Terminals

Portable terminals

The equipment shall have the functionality to connect to the MA service so that the Contacting Body is not required to invest in a bespoke network or a new infrastructure again including but not limited to:

Fixed connection Internet connection, broadband, radio, GPRS, wireless and any emerging connectivity

1. **Direct Awards and Further Competition**
   1. **Do I always need to run a completion?**

Not always. If a competition is run, you must invite all Suppliers able to provide the services to bid for work. In most cases this means holding a competition amongst all the Suppliers in the relevant lot**.**

* 1. **Should choose a Direct Award or Further Competition?**

The driver for choosing which route is the most appropriate for your organisation is if your requirements are not directly covered by agreement specification and see Annex A of the Customer Guidelines

A Direct Award may be the best way forward when your requirements are met by the standard framework specification.

A Further Competition may be the best way forward when you need to bespoke requirements

e.g. If you are transacting business outside of the UK, the types of transactions by channel such as Debit or Credit Cards, the value of the transactions and the number of transactions or if there are specific types of MI required. This list is not exhaustive.

* 1. **What happens if only one Supplier shows an interest or has the capacity in bidding for a contract?**

Provided you have given all Suppliers in the relevant service category the opportunity to participate in the competition, you may issue a Direct Award with that Supplier. Bear in mind that the primary purpose of a competition is to achieve value for money and it is unlikely you will be sure of achieving this in a single tender situation. In cases where only one supplier is listed (see Lot 2) you can make a Direct award**.**

Please let us know if a Supplier will not respond to an invitation to tender as CCS have remedies which include terminating the appointment of that Supplier to the framework agreement.

* 1. **Do we have to observe a standstill period before we enter into a Further Competition?**

The standstill period applies when you set up a framework agreement. However, there is no mandatory standstill period for a call-off contract under a framework

1. **Does the Call Off contract need amending to cater for the law in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland?**

The contract is constructed to cater for the law across England & Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. However you will need to state in your requirements in any further competition documents so suppliers are aware.

1. **Is supplier evaluation scoring different for Direct and Further Competition Awards?**

The weighting for both quality and price are different between Direct and Further Competition Awards under this Framework and care should be taken to ensure the correct weighting criteria is applied.

The scoring you apply can be from a range of either 30 to 70 on price/quality (plus or minus 10%) for Direct Awards and 20 to 80 on price/quality or quality/price for Further Competition

See the detail on Award Criteria in the Evaluation matrix as shown in Customer Guide Section 9(e).

We recommend that you use the same framework as used in the Framework Award Questions

1. **Aggregating MA Contracts**

An organisation may have a number of merchant acquirer contracts which it wishes to aggregate. If these contracts have differing expiry dates would we need to go to Further Competition separately OR undertake a joined up Further Competition for both contracts?

You can undertake a single joined up Further Competition for all MA services and make clear to the supplier when each element of existing and expiring contracts will come on board. This is assuming that aggregating MA services will ensure your business is awarded in this manner to obtain the most economically advantageous supply arrangement.

1. **How long will it take to On Board my organisation?**

This will depend on the scale, size and complexity of your organisation. We have earlier asked all customers to provide detailed outlines of their anticipated service requirements which are shared with Suppliers to ensure that they can plan and organise to meet demand.

Typically we expect no issues with transition to the new arrangements but let us know if your encounter any issues

1. **Managing the Relationship**
   1. **How do I provide CCS with feedback on the performance of the Supplier?**

Under the governance provisions of the framework agreement, the supplier will provide a monthly service report to the contracting body and periodic reports to CCS. These reports are reviewed and agreed at regular meetings. These meetings are a forum to discuss compliance with the Standards.

* 1. **I am in dispute with the Supplier, can I ask CCS to assist?**

Under the Call Off agreement, each contracting body may, itself, resolve any disputes with the Supplier.

However if you feel that the particular issue would benefit from being escalated to CCS then you can refer the dispute to the dispute resolution process under the framework agreement. This has the advantage of dealing with problems that might affect a number of contracting bodies.