



Office Supplies

Frequently asked questions (RM3723)



Crown
Commercial
Service

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About CCS

Who are CCS?

CCS is an executive agency of the Cabinet Office. Our overall priority is to provide an integrated commercial and procurement service for the UK public sector, delivering value for the nation through outstanding commercial capability and quality customer service.

What do CCS do?

CCS's role in the relationship is to:

- Award agreements to successful suppliers
- Provide guidance to customers on using the frameworks
- Monitor overall customer satisfaction with suppliers' on-going ability to meet customer requirements
- Collect and analyse Management Information from both suppliers and customers
- Provide regular updates to customer and suppliers, which may include news items, details of any contractual changes and Management Information

Who on the category team can I contact?

If you have any questions relating to the RM3723 Crown Office Supplies agreement, please contact Jackie Jones or Angela Critchley in the CCS Office Supplies category team by emailing info@crowncommercial.gov.uk or call our Help Desk on **0345 410 2222**.

What advice can they give?

The CCS Office Supplies category team can help identify the most appropriate contractual route for your requirement and provide practical advice and guidance on how to access the agreement, but the ultimate decision rests with the customer.

In cases where there is high risk, uncertainty, or complexity, you are strongly advised to seek appropriate specialist legal and commercial advice from within your own organisation.

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About the framework agreement

What is the framework agreement?

A framework agreement is a contractual vehicle that allows you to order goods and services under the terms and conditions specified in the framework agreement without having to go out to tender yourself. CCS enters into framework agreements with suppliers so that purchasers in the public sector may obtain value for money, whilst being assured that their procurement is compliant with UK and EU legislations.

CCS carries out procurements in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

Using framework agreements saves you time and money and ensures that the terms and conditions of the contract are robust and follow best practice.

Who can use the framework agreement?

The RM3723 Crown Office Supplies agreement can be accessed by any central government or wider public sector organisation identified in the following OJEU Contract Notice:

<http://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:2454-2016:TEXT:EN:HTML>

This framework agreement will expire 30/03/2020.

What are the benefits of using the framework?

Procuring office supplies can be a costly and time consuming process. The RM3723 Crown Office Supplies agreement provides the following benefits:

- Timescales and costs to customers are reduced through a more efficient procurement process
- The framework is compliant with the new EU procurement directives enacted as UK procurement regulations
- There is no need to re-draft and/or/re-negotiate terms and conditions as these are agreed at framework level
- Customer satisfaction with suppliers' performance is monitored on an on-going basis by CCS and action is taken if required
- Competitive prices based on the combined volumes of customers, including wider public sector organisations and all central government departments
- A single price for the whole of the public sector with transparent fixed costs
- Compliance with Government Buying Standards for sustainable procurement. www.gov.uk/government/collections/sustainable-procurement-the-government-buying-standards-gbs
- Complements the existing Wider Public Sector Office Supplies agreement (RM3703) www.crowncommercial.gov.uk/agreements/rm3703

Who are the suppliers?

Lot 1	Lot 2
Banner Group Ltd	XMA Ltd

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Accessing the agreement

Should I use RM3723 or RM3703? What are the differences?

RM3723 Crown Office Supplies is open to Central Government departments, their arms length bodies and to wider public sector organisations e.g. local government, health, education, emergency services, third sector, etc. RM3703 Office Supplies for the Wider Public Sector is open to wider public sector organisations only.

RM3723 is a direct award to one supplier in either Lot 1 or Lot2 providing your requirements match the core product price lists and delivery service options outlined in the specification available on the RM3723 web page: www.crowncommercial.gov.uk/agreements/RM3723

RM3703 you can also direct award based on the criteria outlined in the specification available on the RM3703 web page: www.crowncommercial.gov.uk/agreements/rm3703

or you can define your own core list and service requirements and run a further competition with the six framework suppliers and award based on the most economically advantageous tender.

How do I access the Crown Office Supplies agreement? (RM3723)

Access through this agreement is through direct award as there is one supplier in each Lot, so there is no need to run a further competition. You can directly award a Call Off contract to the supplier in either Lot 1 or Lot 2 to meet your needs. To place a direct award Call Off contract, you should:

1. Confirm that the goods and delivery of purchased goods specification (schedule 2) meets your requirements
2. Confirm that you will only purchase from the core product list in place for each Lot and that one of the delivery service options meets your needs
3. Determine that all of the terms of the framework agreement and the Call Off terms are appropriate to your requirements and do not require any amendments, except where you have identified special terms as per the above
4. Complete and agree your Call Off contract with the supplier(s)
5. Confirm details of your Call Off contract with the category team

How long can a Call Off contract be?

This framework is due to expire 30/03/2020 however your contract may extend beyond the date of expiry. If your intention is that your contract would exceed the expiry of the framework, you may wish to consider your own commercial and legal advice on the appropriate length of award.

This framework will be replaced by RM6059 in early 2020.

Can the Call Off contract be amended?

Yes. The order form – which is set out as a template ready to populate is contained in the model Call Off contract which is available on our website. There is flexibility to supplement or refine the Call Off contract with special terms.

Special terms provide scope for further tailoring where the Call Off contract does not provide contractual cover for your requirements. Under EU procurement rules, special terms must be used sparingly as a mechanism for supplementing or refining aspects of a Call Off contract. They must not seek to redefine the underlying commercial parameters of the contractual relationship. You should always seek professional advice before considering the use of these terms.

How can I access the core product price lists?

Full details of each supplier's core product price list and pre agreed percentage discount levels from their wider catalogue can be found on the eSourcing tool (registration required).

To register for access to the eSourcing tool, please complete the online registration form www.crowncommercial.gov.uk/esourcing-register

If you are already registered, log on to the eSourcing tool see below link https://gpsesourcing.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/emptoris/sso_login.jsp#

You may also like to read the guidance to using the eSourcing tool www.gov.uk/government/publications/esourcing-suite-guidance-for-customers

If you are already registered or once registered, log on to the eSourcing tool and follow the instructions below to access the pricing: https://gpsesourcing.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/emptoris/sso_login.jsp#

- Hover over the tab at the top of the home page called “RFx(s)”, then click “Manage RFx(s)”
- Click the tab “Templates” on the left hand side, towards the top of the page
- Click “Search” (Binoculars icon on the right hand side of the page)
- Type in “RM3723” in the box which says “Name” and press enter
- Click the relevant Lot i.e. RM3723/L1 for Lot 1 or RM3723/L2 for Lot 2
- Click “RFx Attachments (3)” at the top of the page or “Attachments” on the left of the page, towards the bottom of the list
- Click the blue link for Lot 1 or Lot 2 under the “Content” title
- Download the price file

You can also register to access the online catalogues through the Government eMarketplace where you can browse and shop online.

www.gov.uk/guidance/emarketplace-a-guide-for-public-sector-buyers

The catalogue available is called:

RM3723 Banner Crown Office Supplies

RM3723 XMA Crown Office Supplies

There is no formal sign up required apart from completion of your Call Off contract, simply quote RM3723 to access the arrangement.

What do I do once I have awarded my Call Off contract to the supplier(s)?

Once your Call Off contract is in place, please ensure you email info@crowcommercial.gov.uk to confirm for us:

- which Lot you have awarded under
- estimated contract value
- estimated savings achieved
- start date of your Call Off contract
- duration of contract
- option to extend i.e. +1

How much does it cost to access the agreement?

There is no joining fee or charge for customers to access agreements via CCS.

What do I do if I have a problem with a supplier?

Under the Call Off contract, each Contracting Body may, itself, resolve any disputes which it may have with a supplier.

If however you feel that the particular problem could be better dealt with having been escalated to CCS then you may refer this dispute to the dispute resolution process under the framework agreement. This has the advantage of dealing with problems that might affect a number of different Contracting Bodies.

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About your requirement

What happens if the products I want aren't listed on the RM3723 core product price list? Can I add my own products?

The Lot 1 and Lot 2 core product price lists are the same for all Contracting Bodies accessing the Crown Office Supplies agreement and cannot be amended, however there is non-core catalogue in place with a discount structure off the Manufacturers Recommended RETAIL Price (MRRP) that customers using the agreement can use.

If you are a wider public sector customer and your requirements do not fit with the RM3723 core product price lists, then you should consider conducting a further competition using the RM3703 Office Supplies for the Wider Public Sector agreement, where customers can tailor and compete their requirements with the six suppliers.

Contact us

For further information about
the Office Supplies agreement please contact:

0345 410 2222

info@crowcommercial.gov.uk

www.crowcommercial.gov.uk

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 **Crown Commercial Service**