

Introduction to Network Services 2 (RM3808)

Buyer's Guidance

About this Guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide you with a high level overview of the Network Services 2 framework (RM3808).

This document will help you follow best practice when purchasing Services required for telecoms and network estates.

The guide includes 'handy hints' and additional information to help you use the framework.

To help you easily identify these elements we have used the following icons throughout this guide:



Handy hints



Tools to assist you



Additional information



Template documents

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1.

Key Facts

If you are a public sector customer our Network Services 2 framework agreement is the perfect solution for all your telecommunication and network requirements. Whatever your network requirements, we are confident that we have got it covered.

Here are some of the reasons why:

- The framework is compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015
- 82 Suppliers (54% SMEs) across 10 Lots
- Two routes to market - direct award catalogue and Further Competition
- The framework uses the Public Sector Contract
- Optional schedules available at Call-Off Contract (subject to conditions)
- Suppliers are Cyber Essentials compliant
- Includes PSN (Public Services Network) and HSCN (Health and Social Care Network) compliant Suppliers
- Technology, equipment and solutions and optional goods and services that enhance or support the delivery of the Primary Services
- Reduced timescales - no further OJEU process needed
- Call off contracts can be up to a maximum of 10 years (subject to conditions on Lots and Call-Off Procedure)
- Flexible Call-Off Contract periods

2.

What is the Network Services 2 Framework?

The Network Services 2 framework agreement is an EU compliant and regulated route to market for public sector Buyers to buy telecommunications and network services and products, across 10 Lots.

Background

We have listened to the Market and our Buyers to structure and design, Network Services 2 to meet your needs. We've added additional Lots, reduced the number of routes to market, created longer call off terms (Lot specific) and increased the number of Suppliers on some Lots. We've also introduced an improved Lot structure to enable easier buying for technology and ancillary services.

Network Services 2 uses the Public Sector Contract, providing a plain English set of terms and conditions, which allows both Supplier and Buyer to navigate around the full suite of Schedules easily.

The framework can be used by the whole of the UK public sector and associated bodies and agencies, the voluntary sector, charities and/or other private organisations acting as managing agents or procuring on behalf of the public sector delivering services of a public nature. The OJEU can be reviewed [here](#)

3.

What Services are available?

Network Services 2 consists of 10 Lots offering a wide range of telecommunications and network services.



Refer to Framework Schedule 1 (Specification) for further Lot details



4.

How does the framework work?

Framework agreement

Network Services 2 is based on the Public Sector Contract (PSC). The PSC is a set of baseline contract terms and structure, which consists of four base components: Core Terms, Schedules, Framework Award Form and Call-Off Order Form.

- Core Terms - the main commercial terms applicable for both the framework and Call-Off Contract.
- Schedules -
 - Framework Schedules - applicable at the Framework Contract level and managed by CCS;
 - Joint Schedules - apply to both framework and Call-Off contract level; and
 - Call-Off Schedules - apply to Call-Off contracts made on the RM3808 framework between the Buyer and Supplier.
- Framework Award Form - the legal contract between CCS and the Suppliers; and
- Call-Off Order Form - the legal contract between the Supplier and Buyer.

Core Terms do not change, they form part of the framework and must be used on every Contract. Some Schedules are optional on both direct award and Further Competition.



Please refer to **Buyer's Guidance to the Public Sector Contract** for further guidance on when Schedules are applicable.

Call-Off Contract

The Call-Off Contract sits between the Buyer and Supplier and governs the purchase and delivery of the Services. It is entered into once the order has been signed by both parties.

The equivalent document to the Framework Award Form at the Call-Off level is the Order Form, which is incorporated into the Framework Contract as Framework Schedule 6 (Order Form Template and Call-Off Schedules). The Order Form covers all the elements and schedules that can be included in the Call-Off Contract between the Buyer and the Supplier.



For further information refer to Framework Schedule 7 (Call-Off Award Procedure)

Lot Structure

The structure of the Lots includes three elements: Primary Services; Technology, equipment and solutions and Ancillary services.

The Lot structure provides more flexibility by enabling you, the Buyer, to have multiple options when procuring Services on the framework.

A **Primary Service** from a given Lot, can also be procured as part of the delivery of a primary service in another Lot, but **ONLY** when it is exclusively as an enabler for the delivery of the primary service procured in that second Lot.

For example, where a Buyer is looking to procure security and surveillance services within Lot 12 and in order to deliver this service, it is necessary to add connectivity between the supplier's hosted service and the Buyer's location(s), this can be included as part of the solution, without the need for a cross-lot competition including Lot 1.

Note - this connectivity has to be exclusively for the delivery of the security and surveillance services and not for wider use by the Buyer.

The **technology, equipment and solutions** are listed as optional within each Lot which may be required in the delivery of the Primary Service in the same Lot, it can also be procured in a separate Lot if used for the exclusive delivery of a Primary Service in a separate Lot.

Ancillary Services can now be procured as a standalone requirement and does not need to be procured with a Primary service. An example of this is procuring Support and Maintenance within each Lot, providing they relate to the main Lot descriptions. ie you can't procure maintenance under Lot 3 to maintain services within Lot 9.



Please see Framework Schedule 1 (Specification) for full details on Lot structure.

5.

The 2 ways to buy

Direct award catalogue

Direct award from the catalogue offers OJEU compliant purchasing, without the need for Further Competition and as such it is suitable to meet a range of procurement needs. For example; simple, easily defined requirements or services where no additional benefit would be derived from a Further Competition procedure.

Suppliers provide a range of services and products from each Lot via our online catalogue (the 'eMarketplace').

Direct award contracts can be awarded on the basis of price only or a combination of price and quality elements. The maximum Call-Off Contract term for Direct Award is five (5) years across all Lots, with the exception of Lot 6 which is three (3) years.

Developing a clear Statement of Requirements will enable you to identify suitable Service Offers (i.e. entries in the catalogue) and to conduct a meaningful comparison between them in order to select the right Service Offer for you.



Direct award should **not** be used if;

- your procurement is complex and you require Supplier support;
- you want flexibility with optional Schedules.



Refer to the Buyers Guidance to Direct Award for further information on how to place a Direct Award and an eMarketplace guidance.



Refer to the Buyers Guidance to Creating your Statement of Requirements on steps to consider when building your requirements

Further Competition

This process allows Buyers to satisfy their requirements by formally engaging with all Suppliers within their chosen Lot with the intention of obtaining details of Services and associated pricing.

A Further Competition should be run when you require Suppliers to develop proposals and solutions to meet your Statement of Requirements.

Buyers are able to refine the Public Sector Contract Call-Off terms for a Further Competition, provided this is done in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations, thus giving more flexibility when defining the Statement of Requirements.

Further Competition is also the only route that enables you, the Buyer, to add Call-Off Special Terms to the Call-Off Contract.

Completing a Further Competition also gives you the option to run an eAuction or a multi-stage competition to identify the most economically advantageous tender. This option is not available via direct award.



Before you start the Further Competition process, we recommend that you undertake pre-market engagement, ensuring you engage with **ALL** Suppliers on your chosen Lot. This will give you the opportunity to ask questions to help refine your requirements. All engagement activities must be fair, transparent and open.



Please see **Buyers Guidance to Further Competition** for further information on how to conduct a competition and award to the successful Supplier.



Please refer to **Framework Schedule 7 (Call-Off Award Procedure)**.

6.

Aggregation

CCS develops and runs aggregated competitions (including the use of e-Auctions) for Buyers on a regular basis throughout the year. By aggregating demand, standardising specifications and running eAuctions, we regularly achieve savings on a variety of requirements.

We provide a managed Further Competition service for Buyers who have common purchasing needs for products and services. We aggregate demand and run the procurement process on behalf of Buyers.

Benefits and results:

- Buyers can achieve increased savings based on committed aggregated volumes;
- Simplification of the process leads to reduced procurement costs for the Buyer and reduced bidding costs for the Supplier;
- Aggregation reduces fragmented spend;
- Potential for standardisation to leverage greater savings;
- Adoption and consistent application of best practices including the use of standard documentation sets; mitigating risks and issues; and
- Support and guidance to Buyers throughout the process, conducting Further Competitions at no cost to the Buyer.

Aggregation Activities and Timelines:

CCS can run both generic (products and/or services suitable for multiple Buyers across multiple sectors) and sector specific (products and/or services suitable for multiple Buyers in a specific sector) aggregated competitions where there is a demand for common products and/or services.

Please contact CCS to explore opportunities for aggregation under this new framework. To enable prompt consideration please mark your request “NS2 aggregation”.

Full details on all our current and future aggregation opportunities along with recent aggregation case studies can be found via the link below;

<https://ccsheretohelp.uk/how-to-buy/aggregation/>

7.

Templates and documentation

All templates and documentation can be located within the NS2 webpage, located under the 'Documents' tab

8.

Contact us

Crown Commercial Service (CCS)



networkservices@crowcommercial.gov.uk



0345 410 222

Aggregation Team (CCS)



aggregation@crowcommercial.gov.uk



Technology Aggregation Opportunities

Webinars

Further support and training is available through scheduled webinars that provide an overview of the information given in this Buyer's guide and use of the templates. If this would be of interest please click on LINK or <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/technology-webinars-at-ccs-14738735974>

You can also learn more about what we offer online:



www.gov.uk/ccs



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