



Postal Goods, Services & Solutions

Customer guidance (RM6017)



Crown
Commercial
Service

working in partnership



Framework reference: RM6017

Agreement start date: 01 December 2019

Agreement expiry date: 30 November 2023

OJEU Contract Notice: [2019/S 096-232275](#)

Purpose of this guide

This guide for RM6017 provides information on three key areas:

- It sets out the key benefits of the goods, services and solutions that are available within RM6017.
- It sets out the various processes that you will follow to obtain postal goods and services under the framework agreement.
- It shares the high level procurement process undertaken, to provide assurance that your needs have been accommodated, during the specification and tender process.

Introduction to Crown Commercial Service (CCS)

We're the biggest public procurement organisation in the UK. We help organisations across the whole of the public sector find the right commercial solutions for over £15 billion of spend each year.

We cover everything from temporary staff and electricity to laptops and cars. Our customers include NHS trusts, local authorities, police forces, emergency services, schools, colleges, government departments, housing associations and charities across the UK.

We know that tight control over budgets and resources is a key priority and we want to help you save time and money when buying everyday goods and services, so that you can focus on the things that really matter to your organisation.

You can use our commercial solutions free of charge, and we're committed to helping you achieve maximum value by leveraging our commercial expertise and national buying power.

As we're an Executive Agency of the Cabinet Office, we also lead on developing and implementing the UK's public sector procurement policy and delivering government's commercial policy priorities.

Why choose us?

- we put our customers first, working in partnership to help you achieve best value
- we help our customers save millions of pounds every year
- we're making public sector procurement simpler
- we're making it easier for smaller businesses to win contracts
- we're committed to continuously developing our commercial expertise and seeking innovative solutions for our customers

We recognise the need to transform business processes to align with the public sector digital agenda. Our commercial agreements encompass new technologies and products to support you with achieving best value and innovation, while future proofing your processes.

What you can buy through this framework

This agreement has been designed to meet every element of your mail services and information management needs, supporting development and implementation of your strategy no matter where you are in your postal services journey. Also known as RM6017, the framework was developed in collaboration with YPO and ESPO and ensures 'value for money' for public sector organisations whilst providing access to a wide range of postal goods, services and solutions. This includes franking machines and mailroom equipment, collection and delivery services for both UK and international mail, security screening and audit, efficiency reviews and consultancy services to enable development of your postal services strategy. For buyers who wish to drive efficiencies by transforming the flow of outbound and inbound mail and communications, the agreement provides a variety of products and services to move from a paper based mailroom to a digital environment. This includes Hybrid Mail solutions, scanning of your inbound mail for storage and digital distribution and, outsourced and managed service options, all of which incorporate new technologies and innovation to support customer aspirations for a paper lite, 'digital by default' office.

Who can use this framework

All UK public sector and government organisations can use this agreement which include, central government departments and their agencies, the wider public sector and the third sector. For more information about who can access this framework, please refer to the contract notice.

Benefits of using the framework

Flexible, fast and simple to use:

- **Compliant:** Compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
- **Enhanced Lot Structure:** Buyers can access goods and services for all of their postal services requirements. From a single supplier option for basic 'plug & play' franking machines to complex outsourced solutions and services to support digital transformation. Buyers have flexibility to choose the right lot or combination of lots to best fit their needs.
- **Fast:** The framework provides a streamlined route for all buyers to access a comprehensive range of external suppliers through a further competition process or direct award for maximum speed and convenience. Further competitions typically take a minimum of 8 weeks to conduct, however this depends on the size and scale of the requirement.
- **Simple Call-Off Contract Terms:** Buyers can select the CCS schedules needed to meet their requirements using the Public Sector Contract. This contains simplified, concise terms and conditions which are easier to use and understand and includes a fully guided Order Form. Customer guidance and a toolkit will be available to help you gather your mail profile and develop your bid pack to communicate your requirement.
- **Pre-defined Terms and Conditions:** Call-Off terms have been established in line with commercial best practice to provide legal protection for buyers and suppliers. Comprehensive lease terms and franking meter terms have been developed specifically for this agreement. All framework suppliers have signed and accepted that only CCS terms will apply to Call-Off Contracts.

- **Flexibility:** The framework has been designed to cater for a wide range of buyers. The lot structure and ability to tailor further competitions will ensure this supports your own delivery considerations such as SME's and your own social value priorities.
- **Social Value:** Buyers can request suppliers tailor their offer to match the buyer's social value priorities and deliver measurable local benefits such as, operating an efficient and sustainable mailroom, communication with end users that supports diversity and inclusion, improved competency and capacity in the Postal market.
- **SME's:** The framework enables SMEs to bid for public sector contracts, supporting the Government's aspiration for £1 in every £3 to be spent with SMEs by 2022. 50% of suppliers on the agreement are SMEs.
- **Reduce Costs:** The framework provides opportunity for collaboration and aggregation of buyers' requirements to drive volume discounts and access to zonal and regional pricing. Pre-discounted franking machines, mailroom equipment and other services make use of the latest technologies to increase production and reduce floor space, freeing up valuable resource.
- **Environmental & Sustainability:** The framework supports Government Buying Standards and sustainable procurement by helping you to reduce your carbon footprint through digitisation and new energy efficient equipment and services. Remanufactured equipment options are also available to minimise environmental impacts.
- **Innovation:** Through regular and pro-active supplier and market engagement, emerging trends and technologies will be incorporated into the framework as quickly as possible. The agreement has been designed to enable suppliers to add new innovations in goods and services over the lifetime of the framework.

How the framework is structured

The Postal Goods, Services and Solutions Framework (RM6017) commenced on 1 December 2019 and will expire on 30 November 2023.

You can choose from 10 goods and service options (known as 'lots'):

- **Lot 1: Low to Medium Volume Franking Machines & Associated Consumables**

Single Supplier Lot

Small range of low to medium volume franking machines and consumables, for both lease and outright purchase. Machines will frank up to 200 items per day, are simple to operate and require no installation as they are 'plug & play' out of the box. Basic maintenance is included and additional service wrap options are also available.

- **Lot 2: Franking Machines, Mailroom Equipment & Associated Consumables**

Multi Supplier Lot

Full range of low, medium and high volume capacity franking machines, mailroom equipment (including X-Ray machines) and associated consumables and software for both lease and outright purchase. Includes basic maintenance and additional service wrap options.

- **Lot 3: Collection and Delivery of Letters, Large Letters, and Parcels (UK)**

Multi Supplier Lot

Collection and delivery service for all mail items for delivery within the UK. Services include:

- High Volume Services
- Low to Medium Volume Services
- Sorted and Unsorted Services
- Secure Services
- Collection Services
- Services to manage undelivered items
- Track and Trace Services
- The provision of consumables and equipment

- **Lot 4: Collection and Delivery of Letters, Large Letters & Parcels to International Destinations**

Multi Supplier Lot

Collection and delivery service for all mail items for international delivery which includes EU, Non EU and Rest of World destinations.

Services include:

- Premium Services
 - Standard Services
 - Economy Services
 - Sorted and unsorted Services
 - Secure and tracked Services
 - Collection Services
 - Services to manage undelivered items
 - The provision of consumables and equipment
- **Lot 5: Audits, Efficiency Reviews & Niche Consultancy**

Single Supplier Lot

Provision of independent audit and consultancy services for mailroom operations and associated document and data management. Offers help and support to develop and implement your postal services strategy.

There are 3 levels of service:

- Level 1 – Mailroom & Production Audits
Audit services to provide in depth and informative reviews of your current facilities.
- Level 2 – Efficiency Reviews
Efficiency reviews of your current facilities, production and output techniques, equipment, and ergonomic design of your mailroom and services currently used.
- Level 3 – Niche Consultancy Services
Supplier to develop and implement improvement strategies across your organisation to deliver efficiencies and maximise the benefits.

- **Lot 6: Business Process Outsourcing, Mailroom, Document and Data Managed Service**

Multi Supplier Lot

Provision of a wholly outsourced service for on/off site mailroom management, digital mailroom management and document and data management services.

To deliver efficiencies, benefits and transform the management of document workflow, delivering a paper-lite strategy and increasing the use of digital technologies.

- **Lot 7: Hybrid Mail, Digital and Transformational Communications**

Multi Supplier Lot

Provision of hybrid mail, digital and transformational communications in the following levels:

- Level 1 - Hybrid Mail (Click, Print, Post Solution)
- Level 2 - Hybrid Mail, including SMS, email communications and secure web-based communications
- Level 3 - Omni-Channel E2E Hybrid Mail, including inbound communication

- **Lot 8: Inbound Delivery Services (delivery of physical mail items)**

Single Supplier Lot

Provision of an inbound delivery service for mail items, packets and parcels being returned to your site(s) from your end users/customers.

Services include:

- Timed Delivery Services
- Pre-Sorted Deliveries
- Reply Services
- Numbered Box Services
- Tracked and Signed for Services

- **Lot 9: Mail Opening and Digital Scanning Services (On-site and Off-site)**

Multi Supplier Lot

Provision of mail opening and digital scanning services, which can be carried out either at your premises (on-site) or at the supplier's premises (off-site), or a blend of both.

Services include:

- Mail opening services
- Scanning services
- Electronic distribution of items within the buyer organisation
- Archiving services and solutions (physical and digital)
- Indexing services
- Secure destruction of physical items
- Banking services for cashable items received by the buyer

- **Lot 10: Security Screening Services**

Multi Supplier Lot

Provision of security screening services for a variety of inbound mail items, including documents and parcels for a range of hazardous items and materials.

The supplier is required to provide up to level 3 British Standards Institution Mail Screening and Security Specification (PAS 97:2015) as a minimum.

Call-Off Contracts can be let for a maximum period of six years on lots 1 and 2 and seven years on lots 3 to 10 (inclusive of any implementation and/or optional extension periods).

Framework prices

Following an eAuction at the framework tender stage, Lot 1 provides a pre-discounted list of franking machines, consumables and additional options available from a single supplier.

For lots 2 to 10, the framework prices established at framework tender stage are the maximum prices a supplier can charge for goods and services and will apply for all direct awards made by buyers. These maximum prices could be improved on during a further competition process however, they must not be exceeded.

The pricing for this agreement is considered to be commercially sensitive and could prejudice the commercial interests of suppliers if the information was made publicly available. Framework prices are accessible by specific request from info@crowcommercial.gov.uk

Supplier assurances undertaken

CCS has carried out an open competition in compliance with all public procurement regulations to appoint suppliers to this agreement. The procurement process undertaken was in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (the Regulations), specifically the Open Procedure (Regulation 27 of the Regulations) and the requirements relating to Framework Agreements (Regulation 33 of the Regulations).

The award evaluation criteria for all ten (10) lots was based on the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT) and was defined in the OJEU Contract Notice in accordance with Regulation 67, as follows:

- Lot 1 was determined as 100% Price. Bidders were required to meet a minimum quality threshold in order to proceed to an eAuction.
- Lots 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, and 10 evaluation criteria were 60% Quality and 40% Price.
- Lots 5 and 6 evaluation criteria were 70% Quality and 30% Price.

In order to comply with the mandatory requirements of the framework, all suppliers have provided documentary evidence of the following insurance and standards. CCS will continue to monitor all suppliers and ensure compliance with each of the below for the lifetime of the agreement:

- Employer's (Compulsory) Liability Insurance: £5,000,000
- Public Liability Insurance: £2,000,000
- Professional Indemnity Insurance: £1,000,000
- Product Liability Insurance (Lot 1 & 2 only): £2,000,000
- ISO 27001 certificate or equivalent, including statement of applicability (SoA) (for the supplier and all key subcontractor(s))
- ISO 9001 certificate or equivalent (for the supplier and all key subcontractor(s))

Any other due diligence or assurance outside of the above list that may be necessary to meet your specific requirements should be undertaken at the Call-Off stage according to your internal guidelines.

Agreement and performance management

CCS will manage the performance of this agreement by undertaking regular reviews with suppliers to:

- monitor framework Performance Indicators, complaints, implementation and 'go live' progress and monthly data provision
- identify opportunities for greater contractual efficiencies, value for money and supplier continuous improvements
- identify areas where buyers can improve efficiency

CCS will work closely with our buyers to:

- share supplier feedback on potential efficiencies, supporting savings and best buying practice
- gain feedback on supplier performance to support performance management and ensure customer satisfaction
- act as an escalation point for contractual or performance issues - CCS will work with both you and your supplier(s) to resolve issues / concerns

How you can buy through this framework

At CCS we know that Postal requirements, operations and profiles vary greatly across the public sector. With this in mind, there is flexibility for you to determine how to contract for your goods and services to obtain the best value solution for you. The starting point for buyers wishing to purchase postal goods, services or solutions is to determine which lot they should use - see the lot descriptions above.

Buyers must consider their organisation's requirements in accordance with this guidance and the requirements of the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

This agreement supports both direct award and further competition. All buyers must undertake either a direct award or a further competition. Guidance to decide on which process to choose is given below and in the [Decision Tree on page 12](#).

Direct Award

- Direct award means the award of a contract directly to a supplier without the need for a further competition. This is available for all ten lots of the agreement.
- This means that the contract is awarded based on price only.
- A direct award may only be made if buyers can determine that:
 - **Framework prices are acceptable:** lot 1 is a single supplier lot with pre-discounted prices. For lots 2 to 10 (inclusive), buyers must accept the maximum framework prices in the catalogue/price schedule;
 - **Only core goods/services are required:** the buyer's requirements can be met by the suppliers' catalogue/price schedule and description of the mandatory/core requirements as set out in Framework Schedule 1 (Specification); and
 - **Standard Call-Off terms are acceptable:** all of the terms of the proposed Call-Off Contract are laid down in the framework agreement, are suitable for the buyer and do not require amendment or any supplementary terms and conditions.
- **Please note:** Buyers should be able to demonstrate and evidence that the selected supplier demonstrates best value for money in line with their organisation's criteria and/or process and be prepared to give feedback against this criteria to all bidding suppliers.

Advantages of direct award include:

- Contracts may be entered into more quickly than when further competitions are conducted.
- An ideal solution for less-complex requirements and smaller expenditure Call-Offs.

Further Competition

- A further competition is when the identified suppliers who can meet a buyers requirements on a particular lot compete against each other for the contract.
- A further competition must be used if the direct award criteria is not met.
- Buyers who have significant volume or more complex requirements may further compete their requirements to determine which supplier will provide best value for their organisation.
- A buyer can undertake a further competition between all suppliers in an individual lot to refine their requirements. This could include the provision of buyer-specific processes, services and/or additional commercial benefits, but **must be compliant** with Public Contract Regulations and **must not substantially change** the original terms of the procurement.
- Both commercial (price) and quality criteria are tested in a further competition.
- Buyers shall award a Call-Off Contract in accordance with the Further Competition Procedure set out in Framework Schedule 7 (Call-Off Award Procedure) if all of the terms of the proposed Call-Off Contract are not laid down in framework agreement and the buyer:
 - Requires the supplier to develop additional proposals or a solution in respect of such buyer's postal goods and services requirements; and/or
 - Needs to amend or refine the terms of the agreement to reflect its postal goods and services requirements to the extent permitted by and in accordance with the Regulations and guidance.

Advantages of further competition include:

- Buyers can add to the mandatory/core specification if they have bespoke requirements.
- Buyers only need to evaluate suppliers on how they propose to deliver their specific requirements as the supplier's capability to meet the mandatory/core requirements in the framework agreement have already been assessed in the original tender.
- Allows buyers to be specific on the terms and conditions they choose for their Call-Off Contract.
- Enables supplementary terms and conditions to be incorporated into the Call-Off (to the extent permitted by the Procurement Contract Regulations 2015 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-sector-procurement-policy>).
- Enables a competitive environment for pricing and potential improvements on supplier's maximum framework prices.
- Enables buyers specific social value requirements to be addressed and incorporated.

Further competition evaluation criteria:

Lots 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9 and 10:

Criteria Number	Criteria	Percentage Weightings (%)
1	Quality (including added value / innovation, social value, approach to delivery of the services, implementation, use of supply chain / partners, environmental characteristics)	60% (tolerance of +/- 15%)
2	Commercial (including value for money, price, delivery date and delivery period, period of completion)	40% (tolerance of +/- 15%)
Total Weighting		100%

Lots 5 and 6:

Criteria Number	Criteria	Percentage Weightings (%)
1	Quality (including added value / innovation, social value, approach to delivery of the services, implementation, use of supply chain / partners, environmental characteristics)	70% (tolerance of +/- 15%)
2	Commercial (including value for money, price, delivery date and delivery period, period of completion)	30% (tolerance of +/- 15%)
Total Weighting		100%

Please note: The full award criteria can be found in Framework Schedule 7 (Call-Off Award Procedure); Part 2; Annex B.

Further competition guidance notes:

- You will need to prepare further competition documentation including an ITT (Invitation to Tender), a timetable for your competition, your specification / statement of requirements, the scoring methodology and evaluation criteria you will use to evaluate bids (see evaluation criteria above).
- If you include a draft Order Form, completed as far as possible, this will help save time in getting your order placed with the successful supplier at the end of the further competition process.
- Ensure you allow suppliers sufficient time to prepare and submit their bids and to encourage maximum supplier response. Only ask for information that is relevant to your requirements.
- During your bid evaluation, you must treat all suppliers equally and fairly. It is also vital that you evaluate the bids in the same way you stipulated in the further competition documentation.
- Further competition documentation should not duplicate what is in the standard terms and conditions and should only cover any modifications or enhancements to these (to the extent permitted by the Procurement Contract Regulations 2015).
- If you wish to modify any of the standard terms and conditions within the Call-Off Schedules, you will need to edit these up front, and share with the suppliers for agreement as part of your ITT.
- Suppliers can decline to participate in a competition if they wish, as this can be a costly exercise for them, given they have already completed the full OJEU-compliant tender process. If you have amended the agreement to reflect your organisation's requirements, it is possible that some suppliers may not be able to meet all of these non-mandatory/non-core requirements or modifications. In any case, CCS would expect a reason to be provided by any suppliers who decline to bid.

Have you considered an eAuction?

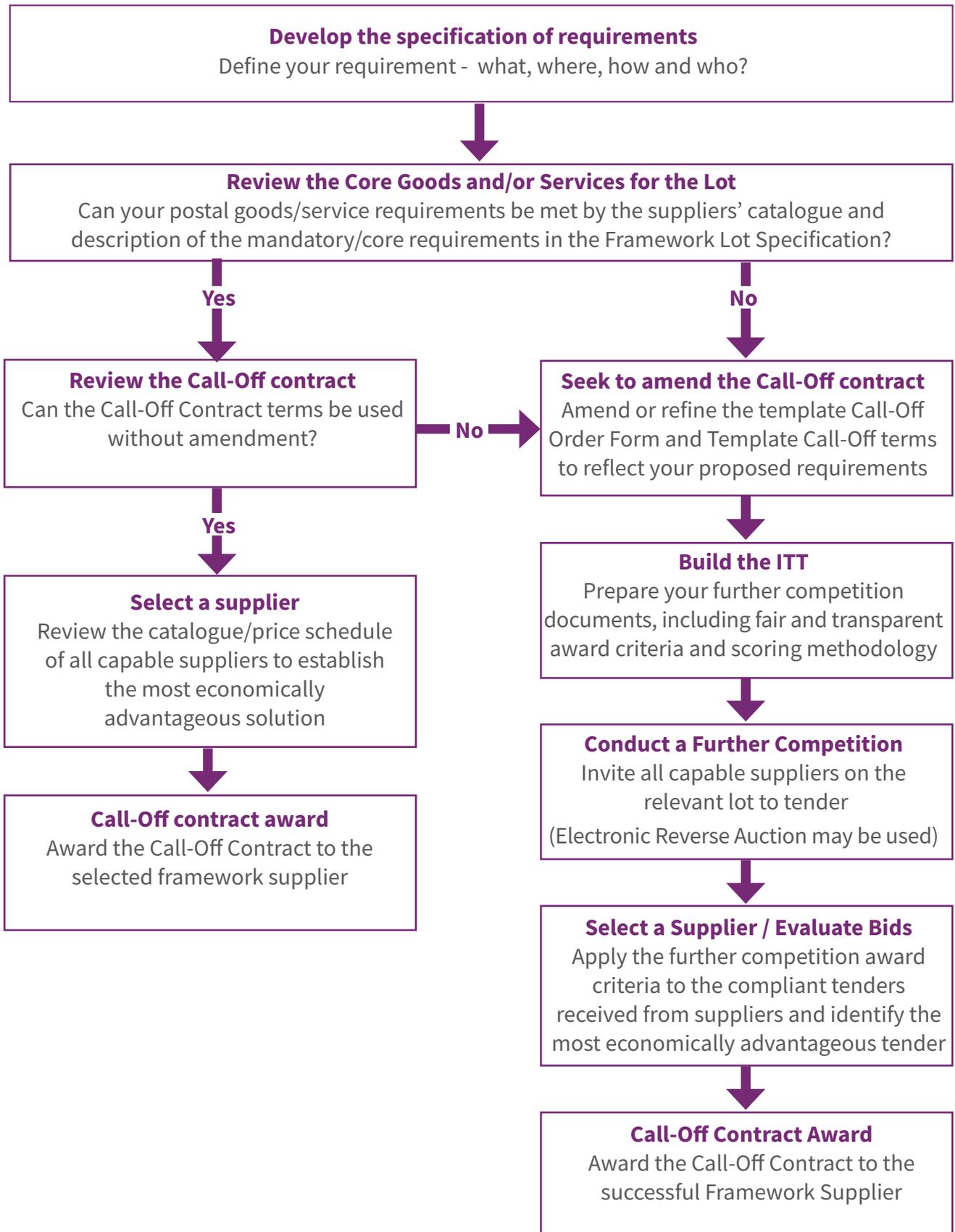
Buyers can also choose to compete price by using an Electronic Reverse Auction.

Please contact the team on eauctions@crowncommercial.gov.uk should you wish to find out more about this option.

Have you considered aggregating your requirements?

You may choose to join with other public sector organisations that you work closely with, and who have similar postal goods and/or service requirements to you, to carry out an aggregated further competition. For more information on how you can run an aggregated further competition, please contact info@crowncommercial.gov.uk

Postal Goods, Services and Solutions Decision Tree



Buyers can run their own further competition using the template provided in the CCS eSourcing tool or their own template and/or processes. The CCS eSourcing tool is a free online procurement tool to help you manage your further competitions, creating a clear audit trail, and supporting the delivery of the further competition in line with the Regulations. Further information and access to the eSourcing tool can be found [here](#).

If you wish to find out more about the system, its capabilities, and the benefits of using this, please contact the CCS eEnablement team at: enablement@crowcommercial.gov.uk

CCS can manage a further competition on a buyer's behalf if certain conditions are met. Buyers would need to provide a completed statement of requirements in order for CCS to support and would need to provide subject matter experts for technical evaluation of suppliers' bids.

If you require additional support and procurement guidance on running a further competition or conducting a direct award, please contact us at info@crowcommercial.gov.uk

Finalising the Call-Off Contract

The Call-Off Contract is an agreement between the buyer and supplier and governs the purchase and delivery of the goods and/or services. It is entered into once the order has been placed (i.e. at the end of a further competition or direct award process).

The Call-Off Contract will be created using CCS standard terms and conditions. Suppliers have already agreed to the terms in the Framework, Joint and Call-Off Schedules that govern this agreement. You should use Framework Schedule 6 (Order Form Template and Call-Off Schedules) to provide a summary of your purchase.

Buyers' should note the following:

- You must use the correct version of Framework Schedule 6 for the lot you are accessing.
- Some Schedules will need to be completed with the specific details of your contract, for example Call-Off Schedule 5 (Pricing Details) and Call-Off Schedule 20 (Call-Off Specification).

If you are making a direct award, you should contact the successful supplier to begin completing the Order Form and Call-Off Contract. Once completed, you should send this to the supplier for signature.

If you are following the further competition route, it is best practice to run a ten day standstill period once you have completed your evaluation process to identify the most economically advantageous tender. You should send out an intention to award notice to the successful supplier and an unsuccessful award notice to other suppliers that submitted a response. These letters should provide details of the scores awarded for each weighted criteria compared to the successful potential provider and a rationale for each score. The rationale should be objective, and care needs to be taken to ensure that scores and rationale is in line with the further competition documentation.

Once the ten day standstill period is complete, you should then send an award letter and begin finalising / completing the Order Form and Call-Off Contract with the successful supplier before sending to the supplier for signature.

Contact us

If you would like help deciding which service or buying option will best meet your specific needs please get in touch with our postal category experts:

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 **@gov_procurement**

 **Crown Commercial Service**