RM6094 Spark   Q2 July 2020

Welcome to the third edition of the *Spark supplier* newsletter. This newsletter will be published quarterly to all Spark suppliers, providing news from the Spark team.

Spark Overview

We continue to promote Spark to customers. Since issuing the last newsletter, we have met with and/or presented to Norfolk County Council, the Welsh Government, Leicester County Council and Transport for London
MCHLG, MAPS and NHS Trust Development Authority have awarded call off contracts to Spark suppliers in 2020.
The team will be arranging another customer specific knowledge share forum in the next few months. This is to share knowledge and best practice from other customers regarding their experience.
We will be discussing the experiences of customers who have successfully run further competitions, customer innovation requirements and how Spark could be used as a route to market to meet other customer requirements.
As of 14th July 2020, 188 suppliers have been appointed to Spark and 83% are SMEs.

Case Studies

Don't forget to provide us with a case study after signing your first call off contract so that we can share them on social media and in customer newsletters to help to promote you. For further details about case studies, please see page 9 of the Spark Suppliers Guide.
Please let the Spark Category Manager know that you have signed your first call off contract and she can send you the case study template.

Suppliers Guide

The Spark Suppliers Guide is available on the [CCS Spark webpage](#) under the Documents tab. The guide covers the major contractual obligations detailed in the DPS agreement such as MI reporting, compliance certificates and production of case studies. It explains how you can make updates to your Spark service offering and how customers can run further competitions using Spark. The guide also provides information on the additional support available to suppliers and communication with CCS.

Spark webinars for newly appointed suppliers

We are now offering monthly webinars for suppliers appointed to Spark. If you have not yet attended a webinar, please make every effort to do so. The webinars cover many topics including:

- How do customers award contracts?
- What to expect when you join the DPS
- Supplier contractual responsibilities
- Working together
- Support and training, feedback and communication

You will need to register to attend a webinar. Registration closes 2 days before each webinar. You will receive a link to access the webinar by email the day before it takes place. The webinar is not recorded but we will send out a copy of the slides, together with any Q&A after the webinar.

To register, please follow this link: **Spark DPS Webinar for newly appointed suppliers**

Supplier Profile Detail

We have invited all Spark appointed suppliers to provide a supplier profile, summarising the innovation they provide through Spark and how this could help customers.
The supplier profiles are available for customers to view and download from the CCS Spark webpage and will be updated monthly from now on. 45 of the 188 appointed suppliers have provided a supplier profile so far.
Profile information has been included within blogs published in the CCS customer newsletter and by Connected Places Catapult as well as in customer workshops.
If you have not already provided your supplier profile, it's not too late. Not only is it a great opportunity to be included in our marketing but we will use that information to talk to customers about the types of innovation provided by you.

Cyber Essentials (verified self-assessment)

A valid Cyber Essentials certificate must be emailed to the Spark Commercial Agreement Manager once obtained and every 12 months thereafter. You do not need a Cyber Essentials certificate to be appointed to Spark but will need one by the time of entering your first call off contract with a customer. From 1 April, Cyber Essentials certification will be completed using IASME's online portal. This can be accessed from your dining room table as easily as it would have been in the office. You may need to consult with your IT provider, but this is simple enough to do remotely via phone, email or chat software. The link to the website you need to use is https://iasme.co.uk/cyber-essentials/ - see section 3.

Self audit certificates

A self audit certificate should be emailed to the Spark Commercial Agreement Manager 12 months after you were appointed to the Spark DPS (the date on which you agreed to the terms of the DPS Agreement). The Spark Commercial Agreement Manager will email you, reminding you that the certificate is due. Even if you have transacted no business since being appointed, you must still complete the certificate. Your sample size of invoices will be zero and you can add a line into the certificate to state that you have transacted no business.

Management Information (MI) Reporting Management Information (MI) Reporting

MI must be submitted to CCS by the 5th working day of each month (or the nearest working day before the 5th day if it's a weekend or public holiday).

If there is no activity for a month, you do not need to download, complete and submit a reporting template. Instead simply click "Report No Business".

Failure to provide timely and accurate returns may result in you being invoiced an admin fee for the costs of chasing or rectification and/or you being removed from the framework. Should you have any difficulty accessing the RMI portal to submit a return or report no business, or need advice on how to do so, or if the person responsible for submitting MI within your organisation has changed, please contact report-mi@crowncommercial.gov.uk. The URL to access the RMI platform is: https://www.reportmi.crowncommercial.gov.uk/

Invoicing

Linked to the MI reporting, if you are awarded a call off contract by a customer following a Spark further competition, you must report the order in the next reporting month on the RMI portal. Please use a unique customer reference number for each separate customer order and for all invoices associated with that customer that you report. You should only report the order once. You should report an invoice you send the customer on the RMI portal in the next available reporting month and continue to report invoices for as long as you continue to invoice the customer.

CCS' MI team will send you an invoice for the management fee. If you need CCS to quote a PO on the invoice they send you, before you upload the reporting template on RMI, you have an option to upload a PO to cover one month's customer invoicing.

LinkedIn Group Membership

We have invited all appointed suppliers to join the pilot of a closed LinkedIn group for suppliers who have been appointed to Spark and will continue to invite newly appointed suppliers. Membership is optional but highly recommended. It is envisaged that the group will be used for a number of purposes including:

- discussing opportunities for collaboration
- sharing knowledge of relevant events with the group
- providing feedback about Spark and potential changes you may like to see in future iterations
- sharing experience about using the Spark platforms e.g. making updates to their offerings on the SRS platform - how to do it, how long it takes etc
- sharing useful, relevant CCS updates e.g. replacement of esourcing platform
- sharing details of events that might be of interest to suppliers.

Feedback

Feedback helps us get it right. If you can think of any improvements or if there's anything you would like to see in your supplier newsletter, please get in touch. To contact the team, email info@crowncommercial.gov.uk using "Spark newsletter" as your subject.

Spark team

The Spark team, available to support you and answer any queries you have, comprises:

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Spark: The Technology Innovation Marketplace
Looks after all customer and supplier support and education

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Technology Products and Services
Responsible for the Spark strategy and acts as a point of escalation when required