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## **Scottish Procurement and Commercial Directorate**

### **National Postal Services Framework (SP-19-035)**

#### **Buyer's guide and Call-Off Procedures –**

Version 1.3 – 5 February 2024

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## **1. Buyer's Guide Introduction**

This buyer's guide provides guidance to public sector organisations on accessing and utilising the national Postal Services Framework.

## **2. Foreword and acknowledgements**

Scottish Procurement aims to deliver benefits to the people of Scotland through improved value for money for taxpayers, improved goods and services for all our citizens. We achieve this via effective collaboration with our customers throughout the procurement cycle and by developing strategies that contribute to the Scottish Government's purpose of sustainable economic growth.

Scottish Procurement would like to acknowledge the ongoing work, support and contribution from sector representatives.

## **3. What is a framework agreement?**

A framework agreement is a general term for an agreement or arrangement between a supplier or suppliers, on one hand, and a contracting authority or contracting authorities, on the other, which sets out the terms and conditions under which "call off contracts" can be made throughout the term of the agreement. A framework agreement does not bind any contracting authority to purchase goods, services or works - a contracting authority can decide to use the framework agreement if it represents value for money and meets its operational requirements. If a contracting authority considers that the framework agreement does not provide value for money or meet its operational requirements, it can choose to award a contract outside the framework, subject to its own procurement/competition rules and policies.

## **4. Framework Introduction**

Scottish Procurement has awarded a framework for the supply of postal services (framework reference SP-19-035).

The framework consists of 2 lots:

- Lot 1 – One stop shop - Physical, hybrid, scheduled/bulk (print and post) and digital mail
- Lot 2 - Hybrid, scheduled/bulk (print and post) and digital mail

The framework agreement has been awarded to:

- Lot 1 - Royal Mail Group
- Lot 2 - Critiqom Ltd.

## **5. Framework start date and duration**

The agreement commences on 1 July 2021 and will expire on 30 June 2025

## **6. Who can access the framework?**

The framework agreement is available to all Scottish public bodies (for example central government, local authorities, health bodies and special health boards, higher and further education, police fire and rescue) and Scottish third sector bodies (for example registered charities and voluntary organisations).

Note: It is the responsibility of any buying organisation wishing to use this framework agreement to satisfy itself that it is eligible to do so. Entitlement can be established from the terms of the [contract notice](#) and guidance on this can be found in Annex A of [Scottish Government Guidance on Framework Agreements](#) . If there is any doubt, legal advice should be sought.

Buyers are reminded of the obligations contained in the [Procurement Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) in relation to the award of contracts valued equal to or greater than £50,000 including those awarded as a result of a framework call-off/mini competition.

In particular, buyers should note that in accordance with Section 23(2) the award of contracts must be publicised on the Public Contracts Scotland website and in accordance with Section 35 contracts must be registered in the contracting authority's "contracts register".

Your attention is also drawn to the requirement to provide feedback in accordance with Section 32 and Section 33.

## **7. Framework contract management**

Strategic aspects of the framework are managed by Scottish Procurement, who are responsible for regular supplier review meetings covering areas such as pricing, key performance indicators (KPIs), innovation and escalated issues. Framework public bodies are required to manage the day to day operational aspects of their contract with the supplier.

Scottish Procurement is committed to managing, monitoring and developing supplier performance and understanding whether our contracts are delivering and meeting the needs of our customers, and customer feedback is an essential part of the process.

Day to day problems relating to aspects such as orders and invoice payments should be managed by the organisation. However, there may be occasions where an issue should be escalated to Scottish Procurement to resolve.

## **8. Key performance indicators (KPIs)**

Full KPIs can be found at schedule 1 of the entire agreement document.

## **9. Framework sustainability and community benefits**

Tenderers were asked to provide details of their proposals to support Scottish Procurement to meet the Scottish Government's overall community benefits policy and the sustainable procurement policy. Tenderers responded positively, proposing a number of different benefits including:

- use of electric forklift trucks and pallet trucks;
- supply of paper from sustainable chains;
- actively promoting carbon capture programmes including national tree planting;
- recycling of white paper related waste;
- targets to be net zero carbon business;
- reductions of energy consumption;
- a percentage of electricity supply is from certified renewable sources;
- water-based inks are used where possible
- apprenticeship schemes;
- graduate programmes;
- participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme;
- recruitment processes are more inclusive and accessible;
- targeting recruitment at non-employed people;
- disability confident employer status;
- volunteering work to contributing to schools and education;
- support and advice to 3rd sector organisations.

## **10. Framework pricing**

Framework pricing will be reviewed in line with Royal Mail (as the universal service provider) price reviews (normally letters in January and parcels/packets in April). Price increases for 'physical mail' will be made in line with the % increase made to the relevant Retail price.

The percentage discount offered on Retail prices for each physical mail product will remain the same, or improve upon, the framework agreement percentage discount throughout the lifetime of the contract.

The prices contained within the Pricing Schedule for 'hybrid and scheduled mail' are firm from commencement until the date at which the Royal Mail Access price increase takes effect. Any new prices shall not exceed the published Royal Mail price for the Access Price element of the pricing and shall not exceed the percentage increase or decrease in the most recent annual change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) at the time of the Price Review and as published by the Office for National Statistics, for the Non Access Price Element of the pricing.

All pricing communications will be issued by Scottish Procurement to sector centres of expertise, for onward communication.

Information regarding pricing and terms and conditions can now be found on the [Knowledge Hub](#)

If you are not registered to access this site and are eligible to use the framework please

complete the [registration form](#) and send to the Scottish Procurement contact (detailed at paragraph 14).

## **11. Framework scope overview**

The postal services framework consists of two Lots:

- Lot 1 - One Stop Shop for Physical, Hybrid, Scheduled/Bulk (Print & Post) and Digital Mail Services, and:
- Lot 2 - Hybrid, Scheduled/Bulk (Print & Post) and Digital Mail Services

### **Physical mail**

A next day or a 2 plus day collection and delivery service is available Scotland wide with no geographical bias.

### **Hybrid mail**

A hybrid mail service allows users to develop mail items at the desktop. The software allows users to produce, format and issue the e-file to a central production area whereby the supplier or their sub-contractors will produce the physical items. The items are produced in a secure manner and to an agreed format ensuring that the most optimum tariff available is achieved. The items are then sent to Royal Mail for delivery via their final mile delivery service.

### **Scheduled/Bulk (Print & Post) Mail**

Scheduled/regular bulk mailings are fulfilled by the secure transfer of the address file and the data files (the mail template and structure) to the fulfilment location. The mail is developed, printed, sorted and delivered to the final destination to an agreed timeframe.

### **Digital Mail**

Additional and alternative options to physical print of mail items, including but not limited to:

- SMS (text messaging) communications;
- E-mail communications;
- Secure web-based communications.

### **Consultancy**

- Suppliers will provide the necessary resource, where requested, to work with framework public bodies to:
- carry out analysis of their current mail methods and processes;
- positively challenge the status quo in order to bring benefits and efficiencies to the framework public body, and;
- work with and support the framework public body through the period of implementation of any proposed changes.

Consultancy advice is required for all services provided for the framework public body. Advice must, where appropriate, consider the framework public bodies existing mail processes and organisational infrastructure and consider how to deal with existing legacy goods and/or services and processes effectively.

## 12. Call-off procedures

Framework public bodies must agree to operate the framework agreement in accordance with the procedures set out within this document.

A call-off contract can be for a 'single order' or a "duration contract" for a period of time to cover one or more orders. A call-off contract must be awarded prior to the expiry of the framework. The period of a call-off contract for a "single order" or a "duration contract" may continue notwithstanding that the framework agreement has expired or terminated.

**Note: Framework public bodies conducting a call-off for a "duration contract" must use the contract exclusively for the scope of their requirement, subject to the Terms of Supply clause 5 (break).**

The framework public body shall complete schedule 5 – Standard Terms of Supply, of the framework agreement (a word version is available to download from the Knowledge Hub) for the period they wish to call-off from the framework.

Framework public bodies will be required to complete the relevant blank schedules within schedule 5 as appropriate, with their own organisational requirements including those in Schedule 5.9 covering Data Protection, UK GDPR etc.

Framework public bodies will be responsible for their own data protection impact assessments (DPIA).

Once schedule 5 is completed and has been signed by both parties this will form the terms for the call-off contract between the framework supplier and that particular framework public body under this framework agreement.

## 13. Framework service providers

Lot 1 - Royal Mail Group contact details -

Helpline (Desk Based Support, Public Sector) - [shane.walker.support@royalmail.com](mailto:shane.walker.support@royalmail.com)

Telephone: 03456 097788

Willie Beaton (Strategic Account Director) - [willie.beaton@royalmail.com](mailto:willie.beaton@royalmail.com)

Telephone: 07889 070095

Rhodri Meredith (Account Manager Scotland) - [Rhodri.meredith@royalmail.com](mailto:Rhodri.meredith@royalmail.com)

Telephone: 07976 695 637

Lot 2 – Critiqom Ltd contact details -

Helpdesk - [CustomerSupport@critiqom.com](mailto:CustomerSupport@critiqom.com)

Telephone number to be confirmed when normal office working resumes

David Rodgers (Senior Account Development Manager) - [david.rodgers@critiqom.com](mailto:david.rodgers@critiqom.com)

Telephone - 07788 236401

Agnes Williamson (Head of Customer Services) - [agnes.williamson@critiqom.com](mailto:agnes.williamson@critiqom.com)

Telephone - 07917 702113

Gerry Crawley (Director) - [gerry.crawley@critiqom.com](mailto:gerry.crawley@critiqom.com)

Telephone - 07973 307522

#### **14. Scottish Procurement points of contact**

Paul Brydon – Senior Portfolio Specialist

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