**Specialist Personal Protective Equipment (SPPE)**

**National Emergency Services Framework**

**ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INTERESTED SUPPLIERS**

**Section 1 – Explanatory Notes**

#### Purpose

* 1. The purpose of this Engagement Questionnaire is to provide an overview of the Specialist PPE Project (SPPE) to all potential Suppliers interested in the upcoming framework. The document is also intended to provide an update of work undertaken to date relating to technical and commercial working documents, as well as stakeholder and market engagement.
	2. Furthermore, interested Suppliers are requested to complete Section 2 (Supplier Engagement Questionnaire) for the purpose of enabling the SPPE Technical and Commercial Leads to gain a better understanding of the views of the market and assist SPPE Project Board in making informed decisions regarding the future and direction of this Project.

#### Specialist PPE Project Background Information and Project Objectives

*Project Background*

2.1 The SPPE project is identified as a key deliverable for the Fire Commercial Transformation Programme under the Clothing Category Strategy developed and owned by Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) on behalf of the UK Fire and Rescue Sector. Through analysis, the strategy recognised that there is significant third party spend across the Sector on specialist protective clothing, but the Sector approaches the market in a fragmented way, leading to disparate prices, terms and conditions and a variation of specifications. Recognising the potential for wider collaboration across the blue light agencies, the purpose is to deliver national multi-supplier arrangements open to all UK emergency services focussing on the following PPE garment types:

* Hazardous Material
* Urban Search and rescue (USAR)
* Wildland Fire
* Water Rescue
* Generic PPE – standardised garments to use across a variety of environmental scenarios (e.g. animal rescue, working at height)

2.2 Non-clothing and any other ancillary equipment, including but not limited to the following) will not form part of the project scope due to the fact that these can or will in future be able to be sourced by way of alternative national arrangements:

* Emergency Response Equipment, which will be part of another national Framework Agreement led by West Midlands FRS);
* Respiratory Protective Devices (RPD), which will be included in a Framework Agreement being established by Devon and Somerset FRS;
* Marauding Terrorist Firearm Attacks (MTFA) garments and equipment, which will be included in a Framework Agreement being established by NHS colleagues; and
* Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Powered Air Purifying Respirator kit.

2.3 Whilst KFRS are the Lead Contracting Authority this is very much a collaborative Project with a number of Fire and Rescue Services taking joint responsibility for delivering the Framework.

2.4 The project will deliver a fully EU compliant National Specialist PPE framework agreement (Lots 1-4) and a Dynamic Purchasing System (Lot 5). The objective is to achieve maximum value through economies of scale, as well as efficiency through optimisation of the supply chain and improved use of product technology; as well as seeking to address the current fragmented procurement approach undertaken by the Sector. It will also provide clarity around future purchasing intentions allowing potential suppliers to understand the future direction for the Sector as a customer, and shape their investments with a degree of certainty and reduced risk premium.

2.5 Quality is a priority for the Sector given the intended use of the products. Wearer safety and comfort is paramount, and as such, the Project is developing a set of evaluation criteria that will predominately focus on quality of proposed products. Quality should however not be offered at a premium price. The collaborative Project affords Suppliers the opportunity to benefit from strategic commercial engagement with the Sector as one customer, significantly reducing the inherent cost of dealing with a fragmented customer-base. The Project Team will therefore factor evaluation criteria that will require suppliers to propose the right quality products at the right and reasonable price.

*Project Objectives*

2.6The Project’s key objectives are listed below:

* Set up a national Framework Agreement and Dynamic Purchasing System which satisfies the Sector’s needs, whilst having full consideration to, and embedding where possible, individual requirements and aspirations;
* Secure Best Value by achieving aggregation of spend through collaboration and standardisation;
* Explore opportunities for innovation and incorporating them into a set of output-based specifications; and
* Develop the market by opening the contract opportunity to ‘hard to reach’ supplier groups, such as Small and Medium Enterprises (‘SMEs’) and local suppliers, whilst ensuring that service delivery levels are not compromised. The SPPE Project Team acknowledges that the process of further developing and shaping the market will be ongoing and this new Framework Agreement will lay the groundwork for the future.
* Give full consideration to communities, groups or people with protected characteristics who could be disproportionately impacted by the Project and who may require additional considerations to be made for them.

*Market Interest*

2.7 Having full regard to the Project objectives, the SPPE Project Board wholly understands the importance of maintaining high levels of market interest and has been working hard to make the Project as attractive to the market as possible prior to commencing the process. To date, one hundred and fourteen (114) suppliers have expressed an interest in the contract opportunity following release of the Prior Information Notice (‘PIN’). Market engagement and transparency is an ongoing focus for the project, and some preliminary market engagement has already taken place for the purpose of identifying the level of market interest;

1. exploring various procurement routes to deliver the most optimum commercial outcome; and
2. creating a forum for robust supplier and stakeholder management

2.8 Further analysis of information gathered at preliminary market engagement events has enabled the SPPE Project Team to develop working specification documents and produce a draft procurement strategy, which was presented to the SPPE Project Board in October 2019.

2.9 The draft procurement strategy was presented at the Supplier and Stakeholder Engagement event on 27 November 2019 and this document and enclosed questionnaire builds upon the information shared at that event in order to allow the Project Team to further understand the market and allow suppliers to provide input regarding the proposed strategy.

#### Project Governance Arrangements

* 1. A National Project Board has been established consisting of representatives from the following FRSs:
* Scottish FRS
* Bedfordshire
* Essex
* East Sussex
* Surrey
* Hampshire
* Hertfordshire
* West Midlands
* Tyne and Wear
* Leicestershire
* South Wales
* Norfolk
* London
* Hereford & Worcester
* Avon
* Suffolk
* Cumbria
* Royal Berkshire

Other blue light services also have an open invitation to participate in the Project Board.

The Project Board and Commercial and Technical Leads are also working alongside other organisations such as RNLI, DEFRA and national groups.

#### Draft Procurement Strategy Overview

* 1. An overview of the proposed sourcing strategies for each Lot is provided at **Appendix A**.

#### Indicative Project Timetable

* 1. The current Project Timetable can be found at **Appendix B**. Interested Suppliers are advised that this is a live document containing indicative dates and may be subject to change. Whilst the SPPE Project Board is keen to ensure that diversion from critical paths of the Project Timetable is kept to a minimum, supplier feedback is crucial to ensuring that the timetable does not compromise the quality of the output and create any perceived barriers to competition.

#### Work Delivered to Date

*Technical Specifications*

* 1. The SPPE Technical Leads are currently in the process of producing the draft technical specification documents for each lot in consultation with subject matter experts across the Sector on the basis of a set of national standards. Discussions with Equality and Inclusion teams are ongoing to ensure that the results of the Equality Impact Assessments undertaken by the SPPE Project Team are embedded in the specification outputs.
	2. Good progress has been made to date in respect of Lot 1 (Hazardous Material), Lot 2 (USAR), Lot 3 (Wildland Fire) and Lot 4 (Water Rescue), albeit national standards and guidance documents are constantly under review. More specifically, KFRS is actively engaging with the NFCC Inland Water and Unstable Services Group and also monitoring announcements from DEFRA on a new Code of Concept.
	3. With regards to Lot 5 (Generic), the SPPE Project Team has identified a list of items and further engagement with FRS’s is taking place.
	4. Engagement with Inclusion groups to ensure considerations are given to protected groups where feasible to do so.

*Commercial Considerations*

* 1. Feedback from previous supplier days held in February/March 2019 have helped to inform Lot structures and the inclusion of ensemble offerings due to the needs to meet intra and interoperability considerations of kit.
	2. Also based on this feedback, the requirements identified under Lot 5 (Generic) will be made available to the market by way of establishing a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS), which will be subject to a separate procurement route but which will run concurrently to the procurement of the Framework Agreement for Lots 1-4. The key anticipated benefits from the use of a DPS are summarised below:
* Flexibility for suppliers on the basis that they will be able to apply to join the DPS at any point during its validity period;
* Potential to maximise cost savings for blue light customers through increased competition;
* Opportunity to stimulate and further shape the SPPE market; and
* Potential to increase access to harder to reach suppliers, such as Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and local providers.
* Lot 5 Generic offers potential for SME inclusion, allows for new market entrants and value for money through mini-competition. This Lot to be done as a Dynamic Purchasing System.

#### Next Steps

*Analysis of FRS requirements and further Market consultation*

* 1. Following receipt of the completed Supplier Engagement Questionnaire, the SPPE Project Team will analyse the identified requirements, and review against the working specification documents and, where relevant, the draft procurement strategy.

**Appendix A – Procurement Strategies**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Garment type/Primary Lot** | **Sub-Lot** | **Proposed Procurement Strategy** |
| **1. Hazardous Material** | 1. Gas Tight Suits
2. Chemical Protection
3. Chemical gauntlets
 | A single supplier will be awarded for each sub-lot |
| **2. USAR** | 1. Chainsaw Items
2. Hot Gas Cutting Items
3. DVI
 | A single supplier will be awarded for each sub-lot |
| **3. Wildland Fire** | Ensemble – consisting of the following items:* Helmet
* Flash Hood/Snood
* FR Coveralls
* Gloves
* Boots
 | This lot has greater intra and inter-operability between items. A single supplier offering a complete ensemble is therefore required, also offering ensemble items for individual purpose.Suppliers bidding for this Lot must be able to supply all items in the ensemble.  |
| **4. Water Rescue** | Ensemble – consisting of the following items:* Dry Suits
* Life Jackets – 275 newton
* Life jacket 150 newton
* Personal Flotation Devices
* Water Rescue helmets
* Skull Cap
* Gloves
* Thermal protection Bear Suit
* Boots
 | This lot has greater intra and inter-operability between items. A single supplier offering a complete ensemble is therefore required, also offering ensemble items for individual purpose.Suppliers bidding for this Lot must be able to supply all items in the ensemble. |
| **5. Generic** | 1. Boots
2. Helmets
3. Gloves
4. Thermal Base Layers
5. Hi-Viz Jackets
6. Coveralls
7. USAR Technical PPE
8. Safety Eye Wear (Non-prescription safety glasses and goggles)
 | Dynamic Purchasing System. This Lot affords the widest selection of suppliers and SMEs. This will now be offered as a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) requiring Participating Authorities to run mini-competitions for each sub-lot.This Lot will be subject to a separate OJEU notice, however will be completed in parallel with the Framework for primary lots 1-4.  |

**Appendix B – Indicative Project Timeline**

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**Section 2 – Supplier Engagement Questionnaire**

Suppliers are requested to complete and return the Questionnaire to SpecialistPPE@kent.fire-uk.org no later than close of business on **Friday 13 December 2019** in order that responses can be considered in relation to the further development of the specifications and procurement strategy.

Please use as much space as is required and remember that these responses do not form part of the tender response and will not be taken into consideration as part of any future tender evaluation process – this is a real opportunity to provide honest and meaningful feedback on the proposed approach.

Suppliers should note that feedback and questions will be shared with other interested Suppliers as part of our obligation to ensure transparency, although all information will be anonymised for these purposes. Should any part of your response contain commercially sensitive information please clearly state this next to the relevant piece of information or question.

Suppliers must not provide any general marketing material as part of their response.

Pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (General Data Protection Regulation) and the Data Protection Act 2018 to the extent that it relates to processing of personal data and privacy, it is acknowledged that the Processor will, in relation to any Personal Data processed in connection with this Supplier Engagement Questionnaire:

1. Process that Personal Data only in accordance with Table 1 below;
2. Ensure that it has in place protective measures, which are appropriate to protect against a Data Loss Event, defined as any event that results, or may result, in unauthorised access to Personal Data held by the Processor in connection to the Supplier Engagement Questionnaire.
3. Ensure that the Processor Personnel do not process Personal Data except in accordance with this Table 1 below;
4. Ensure that the Processor Personnel takes all reasonable steps to ensure the reliability and integrity of any Processor Personnel who have access to the Personal Data and ensure that they are informed of the confidential nature of the Personal Data and do not publish, disclose or divulge any of the Personal Data to any third Party unless directed in writing to do so by the Controller.

***Table 1: Processing, Personal Data and Data Subjects***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Details** |
| Identity of the Controller and Processor | Controller: The Supplier completing the Engagement QuestionnaireProcessor: Kent Fire and Rescue Service as the Lead Contracting Authority |
| Subject matter of the processing | Controller Personnel and Controller’s Supply Chain Personnel |
| Duration of the processing | From the date of submission of the Supplier Engagement Questionnaire until release of the Contract Notice in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) |
| Nature and purposes of the processing | Nature of processing:1. Collection;
2. Dissemination to members of the SPPE Project Board;
3. Storage; and
4. Retrieval

Purposes of the processing:1. Market research and analysis in preparation of the delivery of a procurement exercise in accordance with prevailing procurement legislation and best practice
 |
| Type of Personal Data being Processed | Personal Data will include the following:1. Name
2. Work e-mail address;
3. Work telephone number;
4. Sex;
5. Place of work;
6. Electronic identification data. i.e. IP address;
 |
| Categories of Data Subject | Data Subjects will include the following:1. Controller current personnel (including but not limited to Directors);
2. Controller’s Supply Chain current personnel;
3. Controller’s representatives (including but not limited to Consultants)
 |
| Plan for return and destruction of the data once the processing is completeUNLESS requirement under union or member state law to preserve that type of data | All electronic and hard copies of the data will be disposed of six (6) months from the date of publication of the Contract Award Notice on Contracts Finder. |

**Q1. Supplier Details**

Please complete the table below. Please note that this information is optional and responses may be provided anonymously if preferable.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Supplier Name** |  |
| **Contact Person Name:**  |  |
| **Contact Person Email:** |  |
| **Contact Person Number:**  |  |
| **Lots Interested in** | **LOT 1** |  |
| **LOT 2** |  |
| **LOT 3** |  |
| **LOT 4** |  |
| **LOT 5** |  |

**Q2. Lot Structure**

The proposed Lot Structure is outlined at **Appendix A**. Please provide your feedback in relation to whether you agree or disagree with this proposed approach, including any comments and reasons as to your response.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | **Agree** |  | **Disagree** | **Comments** |
| **Lot 1** |  |  |  |  |
| **Lot 2** |  |  |  |  |
| **Lot 3** |  |  |  |  |
| **Lot 4** |  |  |  |  |
| **Lot 5** |  |  |  |  |

**Q3. Framework/DPS/Contract Duration**

**a.** For Lot 1-4 it is proposed that the Framework Agreement is let for 4 years, with Participating Authorities being able to award call-off contracts for up to 8 years, this is to align with the expected reasonable life of the products. Please provide your feedback in relation to whether you agree or disagree with this proposed approach, including any comments and reasons as to your response. The Project Team welcome further information in relation to the life expectancy of the products to be made available under the Frameworks.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Agree** | **Disagree** | **Comments** |
| **Lot 1** |  |  |  |
| **Lot 2** |  |  |  |
| **Lot 3** |  |  |  |
| **Lot 4** |  |  |  |

**b.** For Lot 5 it is proposed that the Dynamic Purchasing System is let for 4 years with the option to extend for up to 4 years (8 years total); with Participating Authorities being able to award call-off contracts for up to 4 years, this is to allow review of requirements and potential technical refresh. Please provide your feedback in relation to whether you agree or disagree with this proposed approach, including any comments and reasons as to your response. As per (a) above, the Project Team welcome further information in relation to the life expectancy of the products to be made available under the framework.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Agree** | **Disagree** | **Comments** |
| **Lot 5** |  |  |  |

**Q4. Tender Evaluation**

In order to ensure that the framework agreement is awarded to the Most Economically Advantageous Tender, the Project Team are currently considering the Quality/Cost ratio of **75% Quality: 25% Cost**. Do you have any comments in relation to this proposed approach?

Please note that Lot 5 will be treated differently, as the DPS will focus on Selection only and no costs will be provided at the Invitation to Tender stage.

Please note that Lot 5 will be treated differently, as at the Initial Set up Stage of the DPS, suppliers will only be evaluated against the criteria contained within the Selection Questionnaire. Following establishment of the DPS, Participating Authorities will be able to source their requirements by inviting all suppliers admitted into the DPS to respond to an Invitation to Tender document. It is proposed that a Quality/Cost ratio of **75% Quality: 25% Cost** be applied under the DPS call-off contract process, with a +/- 10% tolerance.

Quality and Price under the DPS call-off contract process will be 75% and 25% respectively with a +/- 10% tolerance.

**Supplier Comments:**

**Q5. Wearer Trials**

It is intended that wearer trials will take place as part of the overall tender evaluation process. This will require Suppliers to provide KFRS with 10 full sets of samples for all items to be considered. These will be trialled by nominated front-line personnel in a pre-determined manner as set out within the Invitation to Tender documentation. Do you have any comments in relation to this proposed approach?

We intend to offer both a measuring day and a fitting day with a suggested 10 weeks gap between to allow for manufacturing. There is an expectation that these garments are from your usual size range and not bespoke to the wearers for the trials.

Again, Lot 5 will be treated differently and no wearer trials will be carried out prior to admission to the DPS, however these may be requested by individual Participating Authorities as part of the call-off process.

**Supplier Comments:**

**Q6. Samples Following Contract Award**

In the past when National Framework Agreements have been let, our experience has been that individual FRS’s will subsequently request samples as part of their own internal governance process prior to awarding a call-off contract. Successful suppliers as part of this process (with the exception of Lot 5) will be required to retain the 10 sets of samples as outlined in Q5 above and make these samples available from day 1 of the framework agreement in order to market these to the FRS Sector by way of roadshows and individual FRS meetings. Do you have any comments in relation to this proposed requirement?

**Supplier Comments:**

**Q7. Supplier Performance Information**

Please complete the following information in relation to all products you are considered offering as part of any future tender response. Again, this will help to inform the specifications and proposed procurement strategy.

* Indicative Lead Times
* Minimum Order Values if applicable
* Warranty Period to be offered as standard (included in cost of garment)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Garment type/Primary Lot** | **Sub-Lot** | **Indicative Lead Times** | **Minimum Order Value** | **Warranty Period** |
| **1. Hazardous Material** | Gas Tight Suits |  |  |  |
| Chemical Protection |  |  |  |
| Chemical Gauntlets |  |  |  |
| **2. USAR** | Chainsaw Items |  |  |  |
| Hot Gas Cutting  |  |  |  |
| DVI |  |  |  |
| **3. Wildland Fire** | Ensemble  |  |  |  |
| **4. Water Rescue** | Ensemble |  |  |  |
| **5. Generic** | Boots |  |  |  |
| Helmets |  |  |  |
| Gloves |  |  |  |
| Thermal Base Layers |  |  |  |
| Hi-Viz Jackets |  |  |  |
| Coveralls |  |  |  |
| USAR Technical PPE |  |  |  |
| Safety Eye Wear  |  |  |  |

**Q8. Equality and Diversity**

The Project Board is committed to promoting a culture of inclusion and diversity across the FRS Sector and wish to ensure that all aspects of inclusion and diversity are embedded within its requirements to ensure that the needs of framework users are met wherever possible. We are therefore keen to understand latest market thinking and innovations with regards to sizing and labelling of garments. We are looking for suppliers who can provide a range of PPE in sizing that is commensurate with a range of body types and physiological differences. In addition, we would like to be able to accommodate differing manifestations of religious belief and or life changes (maternity and menopause). Please provide comments in relation to how your organisation is able to accommodate these factors in sizing and labelling garments, or how you are working to give consideration to incorporating such factors in the future?

**Supplier Comments:**

**Q9. Sustainability and Social Value**

The Project Board is committed to achieving Sustainability and Social Value. The Project Board are therefore considering potential criteria and obligations for the framework providers to deliver against throughout the life of the framework and subsequent call-off orders. In order to ensure that the obligations and associated measures are reasonable and proportionate to the potential value of the Lots, it would be incredibly helpful if suppliers can provide further information as to potential approaches to sustainability and social value in relation to the following themes:

* Economic
* Social
* Environmental

**Supplier Comments:**

**Q10. Project Timeline**

The current Project Timetable has been provided at **Appendix B**, please provide details of any concerns or dates in relation to this timeline that may cause difficulty.

**Supplier Comments:**

**Q11. Suggested product standards/specification**

At the Supplier and Stakeholder Engagement Day we outlined our suggested product standard/specification requirements for each of the items within each sub lot. Please provide your feedback in relation to whether you agree or disagree with this proposed approach, including any comments and reasons as to your response.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Agree** | **Disagree** | **Comments** |
| **Lot 1** |  |  |  |
| **Lot 2** |  |  |  |
| **Lot 3** |  |  |  |
| **Lot 4** |  |  |  |
| **Lot 5** |  |  |  |

**Q12. Warranty**

At the Supplier and Stakeholder Engagement Day we outlined a proposal for our warranty terms and expectations (life of garments i.e. 8 years). Please provide your feedback in relation to whether you agree or disagree with this approach, including any comments and reasons as to your response. We would particularly like to hear your definition of “fair, wear and tear”.

**Supplier Comments:**

**Q13. Compatibility**

At the Supplier and Stakeholder Engagement Day we outlined our approach to compatibility. Please provide your feedback in relation to whether you agree or disagree with this approach, including any comments and reasons as to your response.

**Supplier Comments:**

**Q14. Accredited Certification**

At the Supplier and Stakeholder Engagement Day we outlined our approach to certification. Please provide your feedback in relation to whether you agree or disagree with this approach, including any comments and reasons as to your response.

**Supplier Comments:**

**Q15. Any Other Comments**

At the Supplier and Stakeholder Engagement Day did you have any other concerns, comments, questions or areas for consideration? Please outline these below.

**Supplier Comments:**

**END OF QUESTIONNAIRE**