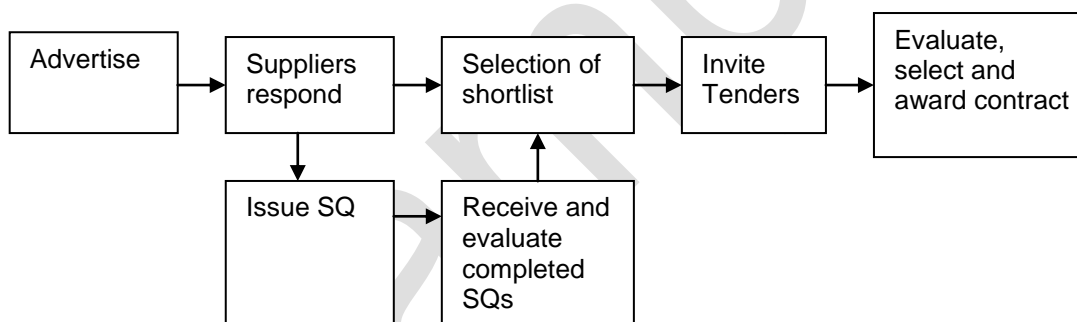


Supplier Questionnaire – Guidance for Completion

Introduction and Purpose

Sometimes when the Council advertises a requirement asking suppliers to express an interest in tendering, it includes an initial sifting stage in the overall tendering process. This is called “long listing” or “Pre-Qualification”. Its purpose is to fairly reduce the number of competing suppliers to a manageable number. This is particularly appropriate where the Council anticipates that a large number of suppliers are likely to want to bid.

In order to evaluate suppliers’ ability to meet the advertised requirement we will ask them to submit information about themselves. We usually focus on the supplier’s capabilities and resources. We then examine each supplier’s response and decide which firms we will issue the Invitation to Tender (ITT) to on the basis of this high-level evaluation. The simple document that asks firms to provide the information needed to carry out the process is called a Supplier Questionnaire (SQ). The flow chart below illustrates how Pre-Qualification fits within a simple competitive procurement process.



The document which this guide accompanies is designed specifically for procurements of a lower complexity and a financial value below the OJEU threshold. We want to simplify the Pre-Qualification process for suppliers and buyers alike. We have done this by making the necessary questions easy to answer and evaluate, and by not asking suppliers to provide lots of additional information with their response to the SQ. This is effectively known as “self-certification”. The Council may ask for clarifying information supporting the response at the Tender stage but it doesn’t have to be submitted with the SQ.

When the Council wants to assess suppliers’ suitability to tender for a particular contract it needs to consider a wide range of information about the interested firms. The SQ tries to gather all of the necessary information while not making too much work for those responding to it.

The specific areas in which the SQ seeks information are described below.

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Section 1 - Organisation Identity and Basic Details

A buyer will need some basic contact details for each supplier and some background information about who they are.

Section 2 - Financial Information

The Council needs to know about a possible supplier's financial situation. It will want to be sure that the firm has the financial resources and stability to carry out the required work, and that they are likely to be around to complete the contract satisfactorily. The Questionnaire therefore asks for some basic company financial information to allow the Council to assess a supplier in this area. You don't need to provide copies of accounts when answering the Questionnaire. If you are invited to tender you can provide them then.

Section 3 - Business Activities

The Council will want to know what a potential supplier's main lines of business are when deciding if that supplier should be invited to tender. It will also want to be sure the firm is likely to have sufficient resource to perform the contract properly or if the supplier would intend to sub-contract. Section 3 of the Questionnaire asks for information to help the Council carry out this assessment.

Section 4 - References

When a supplier wants to be invited to tender for a contract the Council will want to know if it has done similar jobs of a similar size to a good standard in the past. The Questionnaire therefore asks for details of up to three previous jobs done by the firm. The more similar these are to the Council's current requirement the better.

The Council will also want to know about any problems the supplier has had on previous contracts. It may be there are reasonable explanations in justification so it is best to be honest and open in answering these questions rather than have details scrutinised later.

Section 5 - Insurance

With the best will in the world there are sometimes problems with contracts for one reason or another. The Council needs to know that possible suppliers have the necessary insurance policies to adequately cover any such problems.

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Section 6 - Quality Assurance

Quality management is all about making sure that work is done in a planned, controlled way to ensure that the results are satisfactory. There are various schemes and standards that define how a firm can make sure it meets its customers' needs.

The Council want to know if possible suppliers have thought about how they can make sure their work is up to the mark in terms of quality. This may mean the firm indicating it has been formally checked against a recognised standard (benchmarked) or it may involve the firm giving a description of how it makes sure its work is done repeatedly to high standard.

Section 7 - Health and Safety

The Council will want to be sure that a supplier takes care to ensure the health and safety of its workers and others when carrying out its work. This will be especially important for construction work, for example. There are also legal requirements in this area that the Council will need to know that the supplier meets. The Questionnaire therefore asks suppliers to provide some information about their policies on health and safety.

Section 8 – Equality and Diversity

Public bodies have a special responsibility to make sure that all members of the community are treated fairly and without discrimination both in the field of their work and as users of services. Public bodies also have a public duty to pay due regard to the promotion of equal opportunities if it is relevant to the contract. Requirements on suppliers will vary according to the size and the degree of relevance of the content of the contract to equalities groups. The Council will therefore want to know that a possible supplier accepts its legal duties in this area and takes them seriously.

Section 9 - Environmental Management

Some business operations can have a big impact on the environment, but all firms can help to ensure that they minimise any harmful effects of their work on the environment, for example by recycling where appropriate and properly disposing of hazardous materials.

A firm's policies in this area will be more important for some types of contract than others, but the Questionnaire provides for the Council to gather information from suppliers in this area.

Section 10 - Professional & Business Standing

Public bodies have a duty to maintain high standards of professional behaviour and honesty. They need to be sure that potential suppliers can

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show that they meet the same standards. The Questionnaire asks suppliers to answer some important questions on this subject.

Example

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Section 11 – Requirement Specific Questions

The Council will inevitably have some questions to ask of suppliers which fall outside of the above categories and relate specifically to the subject matter of the procurement they are currently undertaking (for example, typical delivery lead times, or interoperability with existing IT systems). Any such questions are appropriate for inclusion in this section.

Section 12 – Declaration

This is simply the confirmation to the Council by the supplier that the information provided is valid and correct and is the final section of the Questionnaire with the exception of explanatory notes and supplementary modules.

Optional Modules for inclusion by the Council:

The following 3 Modules may be issued alongside the core SQ as appendices.

They will be used when aspects of a particular procurement require more in depth information. For example, there might be specific Health & Safety issues around working at height, for tree work, or about equalities issues around providing transport for children with special needs.

Carrying out an Ethical Impact Assessment in the first stage of the procurement cycle (Identifying Need) will indicate what these issues might be and, therefore, what optional modules will need to be included in the Questionnaire.

Module 1 – Additional Financial Questions

The questions in this Module build on those already asked in Section 2 of the core Questionnaire and go into greater depth with respect to profit and loss, Parent Companies and guarantees.

Module 2 – Additional Health and Safety Questions

The questions in this Module build on those already asked in Section 7 of the core Questionnaire and ask for details of the supplier's Health and Safety processes.

Module 3 – Additional Equality and Diversity Questions

The questions in this Module build on that already asked in Section 8 of the core Questionnaire and ask for details of the supplier's policies on, and

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approach to, Equality and Diversity for its staff and in its provision of works, goods and services.

Example

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Supplier Questionnaire – Module 1

Additional Financial Information			
<p>This section asks for some financial figures about your organisation, (and the ultimate holding company if there is one). If you are able to answer these questions, the Authority will not usually need to ask you to send accounts at this stage.</p> <p>Please provide the figures for the two most recent years (if available).</p>			
		Applicant	Parent Company consolidated (if applicable)
1.	Please indicate the turnover of the organisation for the past two years.	£..... for year ended __/__/____ £..... for year ended __/__/____	£..... for year ended __/__/____ £..... for year ended __/__/____
2.	What was the pre-tax profit (or loss) for the last two years?	£..... for year ended __/__/____ £..... for year ended __/__/____	£..... for year ended __/__/____ £..... for year ended __/__/____
3.	What was the organisation's net worth / shareholders funds (or net liabilities) at the date of the latest accounts?	£..... at __/__/____	£..... at __/__/____
4.	If requested, could you provide accounts to support these figures?	Yes / No	
5.	What is your present cash and credit position?	£..... cash (overdraft) at __/__/____ Available credit facility £..... at __/__/____	£..... cash (overdraft) at __/__/____ Available credit facility £..... at __/__/____
6.	If asked would you be able to obtain a guarantee or performance bond?	Yes / No	
7.	If you could obtain a guarantee or performance bond, please state from whom.		

Example

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Supplier Questionnaire – Module 2

Additional Health & Safety Questions				
			Please delete as appropriate	If “Yes” could you provide details if asked?
1	Health and Safety Policy			
1.1	Does your organisation make sure it complies with the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974?		Yes / No	Yes / No
1.2	Does your organisation take steps to identify which of the regulations under the Act apply to your business?		Yes / No	Yes / No
1.3	Does your organisation have processes and procedures to ensure that these regulations are followed?		Yes / No	Yes / No
1.4	Does your organisation have a written Health and Safety Policy? (if “No” please skip to section 2)		Yes / No	Yes / No
1.5	Is this reviewed periodically?		Yes / No	Yes / No
1.6	Is there a signed current copy?		Yes / No	Yes / No
1.7	Does it define Health and Safety responsibilities for all staff?		Yes / No	Yes / No
1.8	Does it define Health and Safety responsibilities according to role?		Yes / No	Yes / No
2	Staff competence			
2.1	Does your organisation train staff in Health and Safety? (if “No” please skip to section 3)		Yes / No	Yes / No
2.2	Does your organisation train staff in Health and Safety according to their particular job?		Yes / No	Yes / No
2.3	Does your organisation provide the following types of training?	Health and Safety induction	Yes / No	Yes / No
		Hazard awareness	Yes / No	Yes / No
		Accident reporting	Yes / No	Yes / No

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		Other training depending on nature of work and risk assessment	Yes / No	Yes / No
2.4	Does your organisation keep Health and Safety training records for staff?		Yes / No	Yes / No
3	Consulting staff			
3.1	Does your organisation have a clear process for consulting staff on Health and Safety matters (for example, a Health and Safety committee)? (if “No” please skip to question 4)		Yes / No	Yes / No
3.2	Is this consultation process set out in your Health and Safety procedures?		Yes / No	Yes / No
3.3	Does your organisation have a staff Health and Safety representative(s)?		Yes / No	Yes / No
3.4	Does your organisation have clear arrangements for staff to report Health and Safety risks and issues to managers?		Yes / No	Yes / No
4	Risk Assessment			
4.1	Does your organisation have a risk assessment process? (if “No” please skip to question 4.6)		Yes / No	Yes / No
4.2	Does your organisation record the findings?		Yes / No	Yes / No
4.3	Are they regularly reviewed?		Yes / No	Yes / No
4.4	Does your organisation produce method statements of how to work safely, based on risk assessments?		Yes / No	Yes / No
4.5	Does your organisation have procedures to make sure staff understand these method statements?		Yes / No	Yes / No
4.6	Does your organisation have method statements and procedures to cover the use of all plant, machinery and equipment (if this applies)?		Yes / No N/a	Yes / No
4.7	Does your organisation apply a risk assessment to each new type / process / machinery / area of work?		Yes / No	Yes / No

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5	Health and Safety advice		
5.1	Does your organisation have access to competent Health and Safety advice? (Either within the organisation or external)?	Yes / No	Yes / No
5.2	Do you belong to any safety organisations eg RoSPA, British Safety Council?	Yes / No	Yes / No
6	Accident Records		
6.1	Does your organisation report incidents and accidents when required under RIDDOR ₂ ?	Yes / No	Yes / No
6.2	Does your organisation keep RIDDOR records (copies of reporting forms)?	Yes / No	Yes / No
6.3	Does your organisation keep statistics of accidents / incidents?	Yes / No	Yes / No
6.4	Does your organisation keep statistics of sub-contractors accidents (if this applies)?	Yes / No N/a	Yes / No N/a
6.5	Does your organisation make sure you learn from incidents /accidents and change your working practices as necessary?	Yes / No	Yes / No
7	Health Risk Management		
7.1	Does your organisation have a nominated manager to whom any employee health problems can be reported?	Yes / No	Yes / No
7.2	Does your organisation provide any necessary personal protective equipment to staff free of charge?	Yes / No	Yes / No
8	Health and Safety Enforcement		
8.1	Has your organisation had any HSE or Local Authority Improvement or Prohibition Notice or warning letter in the last three years?	Yes / No	Yes / No
8.2	Does your organisation keep records of all such Notices / warnings for three years	Yes / No N/a	Yes / No
8.3	If your organisation has had any such Notices or warnings has it put things right to prevent it happening again?	Yes / No N/a	Yes / No

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1: “Details” may be copies of up to date and relevant documents and / or other oral or written statements

2: RIDDOR - Reporting of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995

Additional Health & Safety Questions for the Construction Sector			
		Please delete as appropriate	If “Yes” could you provide details if asked?
1	Does your organisation make sure your managers and supervisors understand the duties under the CDM ₁ Regulations?	Yes / No	Yes / No
2	CHAS		
2.1	Are you a member of the CHAS (Contractors Health and Safety Assessment Scheme)?	Yes / No	Yes / No
2.2	If you are a member of CHAS, what is your registration number?	Yes / No	Yes / No
2.3	Have you applied for CHAS membership if you are not already a member?	Yes / No	Yes / No

1: CDM = Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994

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Supplier Questionnaire – Module 3

Additional Questions on Equality and Diversity		
1	Is it your policy as an employer to comply with the Race Relations Act 1976 as amended by Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and is it your practice not to treat one group of people less favourably than others because of their colour, race, nationality, national or ethnic origin in relation to decisions to recruit, train or promote employees?	Yes / No
2	Is it your policy as an employer to comply with the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, and Equal Pay Act 1970 as amended by the Equality Act, 2006, and not treat any group less favorably because of their gender, marital status or gender reassignment in relation to decisions to recruit, train, promote or remunerate employees?	Yes/No
3	Is it your policy to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 in Employment?	Yes / No
4	Is it your policy to comply with The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 and The Employment (Age) Regulations 2006 and not treat any group less favorably in employment because of their sexual orientation, religion or belief or non-belief or age?	Yes / No
5	Is it also your practice not to discriminate in breach of Equalities Legislation outlined above, including all amendments and relevant regulations, in relation to provision of goods and delivering of services.	Yes / No
6	In the last three years has any finding of unlawful discrimination been made against your organisation by any court or industrial or employment tribunal?	Yes / No
7	In the last three years has your organisation been the subject of a formal investigation by the former Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), the former Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), or the former Disability Right Commission (DRC) (now merged as the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR)) on grounds of alleged unlawful discrimination?	Yes / No
8	If the answer to question 6 and / or 7 is “ Yes ”, what steps did your organisation take as a result of that finding or investigation?	

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9	Is your policy on equality and diversity in employment and service delivery set out:	
9.1	In instructions to those employees concerned with recruitment, training, promotion and remuneration ?	Yes / No
9.2	In documents available to employees, recognised trade unions or other representative groups of employees?	Yes / No
9.3	In recruitment advertisements or other literature?	Yes / No
9.4	If we asked, could you provide relevant examples of the instructions, documents, recruitment advertisements or other literature?	Yes / No
10	Do you follow as far as possible the Equality Commissions Codes of Practice for Employment and Promotion of Equal Opportunities which gives practical guidance to employers and others on the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment, service delivery and procurement including the steps that can be taken to encourage ethnic minorities, women and disabled people to apply for jobs or take up training opportunities?	Yes / No