

NFCC Procurement Hub National Framework Agreement for the Supply and Delivery of Emergency Response Equipment (ERE) and Associated Services C002687

Following on from the Article in the April edition of EST which detailed the procurement exercise for the new ERE Framework, the lead Authority West Midlands Fire Service, are pleased to confirm that the Framework went live on the 1st August 2021.

The multi supplier Framework consists of five Lots which are: Lot 1 Rescue Equipment, Lot 2 Fluid Transfer and Compressed Air Foam equipment, Lot 3 Ultra High-Pressure Lances & Misting Systems, Lot 4 Positive Pressure Ventilation Fans & Smoke Curtains and Lot 5 Thermal Imaging Cameras.

The 23 suppliers included on the Framework are: Angloco Ltd, Angus Fire Limited, Clan Tools & Plant Ltd, Cold Cut Systems, CMT Flexibles Ltd, Delta Fire Systems Ltd, Draeger Safety UK Ltd, Excelerate Technology Limited, Fire Hosetech Ltd, Fire Ladders & Equipment, Godiva Limited, Holmatro UK Limited, High Precision Motor Products Ltd, Max Fire Limited, MSA (Britain) Ltd, Premier Hose Technologies Ltd, Rosenbauer UK Ltd, Scott Health & Safety Ltd, Terberg DTS (UK) Ltd, Venari Group, Vimpex Ltd and Weber Rescue UK.

Through the establishment of this Framework UK Fire and Rescue Services now have a compliant route to market to procure a range of Emergency Response Equipment. The Framework can also be accessed by Police Forces, Ambulance Trusts NHS, and Government Departmental Agencies. To date 22 FRS's have signed an access agreement to utilise the Framework and some further competitions are already being undertaken with more expected to follow.

The Framework is managed by West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) who conduct strategic supplier relationship management on behalf of all customers and suppliers and can be contacted for advice and guidance as necessary. In time WMFS plan to populate a procurement pipeline based on the information supplied via the customer access agreements to see where there is an alignment of procurements across services and partner agencies and any potential collaboration opportunities. Collaboration could be in the form of information sharing or a joint procurement exercise including the functional trials/assessments of equipment.

Suppliers are expected to submit quarterly management information to WMFS which will detail the spend through the Framework and identify what equipment is being purchased by which customers. Customers are also expected to complete a feedback form to WMFS when call off contracts are established so that lessons can be learned in respect of any future frameworks.

There are two ways to access the Framework which are via direct award or through the reopening of competition using a further competition exercise. There are specific rules for forming a call off contract under the Framework using a direct award which are as follows:-

“A direct award option is available to Participating Services, Customers, or their Agent for quantities (within any Lot) of up to **20%** of their operational fleet per annum and may be considered for, by way of example only; provision of maintenance services; provision of parts, spares, and consumables; replacement of a small quantity of items of equipment due to loss, damage or beyond economic repair.”

The equipment that is available to purchase via the Framework is fit for purpose, meets operational needs, is compatible with existing protective equipment and meets or

exceeds the appropriate published BS/EN standards for quality and performance. This was achieved through extensive pre-market engagement with the market and the Sector and a robust procurement exercise.

The Framework Agreement provides the following benefits:

- A reduction in the duplication of cost and effort associated with conducting multiple procurement exercises
- No management or access fee to utilise the Framework
- Contractors are not required to pay the lead Authority a rebate which is hoped will result in more competitive pricing
- The option to place a direct award contract for up to 20% of operational fleet per annum (per lot)
- A comprehensive suite of goods and associated services available from one place
- Contractors can add new (in scope) products to the Framework throughout the four years of the agreement via a robust technical refresh process
- All Contractors are pre-vetted and qualified to provide the required goods and services and will continue to be monitored by the Framework owner for the duration of the Framework
- All products (where applicable) are certified to the required standards, with the provision to ensure that certifications remain up to date throughout the term of the Framework Agreement and Call-Off Agreement(s)
- Robust Terms and Conditions of Contract
- A suite of KPIs to ensure optimal contract performance.
- Strategic Supplier relationship management by the Framework owner (WMFS) on behalf of all customers and suppliers
- Standardised Specifications
- Clear ordering procedure
- Access to advice and guidance.

For further information on the Framework Agreement please contact Liz Davies, Contracts Manager at: liz.davies@wmfs.net