

NICE Electronic and Print Content Framework - FAQ

Question: How long can I put a contract in under the framework?

Answer: Any Order placed under the Framework must not exceed four (04) years from first commencement date. No Order can be placed on or after the expiry date of the Framework.

Extensions or renewals of any Order are valid after expiry of the Framework.

Question: Is there a maximum / minimum I can buy?

Answer: There is no minimum or maximum volume of cost threshold to purchase made under the Framework.

Question: The Provider uses numbers of FTEs to price a quotation for my organisation. Where can I find up to date numbers to provide in my Invitation to Quote (ITQ)?

Answer: Providers' pricing models can be based on the number of FTEs / beds / Athens users – this should be demonstrated in the quote received. Up to date numbers can be found at the following sources:

- FTEs, headcount and role count totals are provided in the [Monthly NHS Hospital and Community Health Service \(HCHS\) Workforce Statistics in England](http://www.hscic.gov.uk/home) website. (Source: Health & Social Care Information Centre at: <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/home>).
- Total national Open Athens Org IDs - a full list is available at: http://auth.athensams.net/list_orgs.php?id=1407223
- Bed count - the latest figures are available from the KH03 Bed Availability and Occupancy Data Source: <http://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/bed-availability-and-occupancy/bed-data-overnight/>

Question: I've been told that I can't use the framework but need to carry out a full tender.

Answer: The Framework was procured through a fully compliant EU tender. Purchases under the framework are governed by the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (section 33). The point of this is to save money so individual organisations don't have to go through a full OJEU every time. Instead the regulations have a framework elements to save time, money and resources on purchasing.

Question: We want to call-off a contract under the framework by holding a mini-competition. Do we have to use exactly the same award criteria at this stage as used when we awarded the framework agreement itself?

Answer: The legislation states that, following a mini-competition, the call-off contract must be awarded to the supplier that submits the best tender on the basis of the award criteria specified in the contract documents based on the framework agreement. It is possible to vary the relative priorities of the call-off award criteria from those used at framework award. The proposed call-off criteria and the relevant weightings must be clearly stated in documents sent to suppliers in relation to the mini-competition.

The award criteria used for this framework was:

- Service Usage
- Service Availability
- Service Access
- Technical
- Service Support
- Service Performance
- Pricing Structures & Cost Efficiencies

Question: Beyond the Regulations, is there any guidance on how to use frameworks?

Answer: The Cabinet Office/OGC guidance on frameworks can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/transposing-eu-procurement-directives>.

Additionally, you may want to review the current [procurement regulations](#) which govern public sector procurement; the government recommended process for operating, managing and delivering procurement projects from the start to finish: [the Lean Sourcing Process](#)

Question: I need to order a range of print books and have no additional requirements apart from the book title. Do I have to follow the buying process for more than open capable Provider? Can't I just award to the supplier we used last time?

Answer: You must not base your purchasing requirement on a particular Provider unless they are the only supplier capable of providing the Content Resource you require.

Question: What if the incumbent supplier we use is not listed on the framework agreement, will they be able to take part in a mini-competition?

Answer: No only suppliers already awarded to the framework agreement will be invited to submit a tender.