

## COMMERCIAL POLICY

### Code of Good Practice

It is the policy of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (the UK Commission) to follow a totally ethical approach to the procurement of all goods and services. We will strive to ensure that the highest standards of **fairness, honesty, efficiency and professionalism** are maintained in all our dealings with suppliers.

As with other government departments, the UK Commission complies with the best practice processes defined by the Office of Government Commerce (OGC). The OGC has published a Procurement Code of Good Practice for use by all Government purchasing organisations as well as all suppliers dealing with those organisations.

This guidance code will assist you in understanding how we work and how you can successfully work with us.

On the OGC website you can access their document "The Government Procurement Code of Good Practice – for customers & suppliers".

Any enquiries regarding this section can be sent by email to [tenders@ukces.org.uk](mailto:tenders@ukces.org.uk).

### Transparency

In line with the recently introduced Government Transparency Agenda, all live contracts will be published on the 'Contracts Finder' website. All opportunities being offered to the Open Market (for supply over £10k in value) will also be published there and will be open to all suppliers to submit proposals.

### Environmental Procurement Policy

In pursuit of the organisation's objectives relating to sustainability, we recognise the critical need to act as a role model by carrying out procurement activities in an environmentally responsible manner. We will therefore:

- Comply with all relevant environmental legislation
- Encourage and persuade suppliers where applicable to investigate and introduce environmentally friendly processes and products
- Ensure that where appropriate, suppliers' environmental credentials are considered in the supplier appraisal process
- Ensure that where appropriate, environmental criteria are used in the award of contracts

- Specify, wherever possible and reasonably practical, the use of environmentally friendly materials and products
- Ensure that consideration is given to inclusion within specifications, of a facility for potential suppliers to submit prices for environmentally friendly alternatives
- Ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the costs and benefits of environmentally friendly alternatives.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

### **General Policy Statement**

The UK Commission is committed to the maintenance and improvement of health, safety and welfare standards. All necessary measures will be taken, in line with the statutory duties set in legislation, to secure the health, safety and welfare of the UK Commission's employees in their place of work and to protect persons other than employees, against risks to their normal health and safety which may arise from work activities at the UK Commission's premises and clients' sites as well as home working. The UK Commission will use sound policies and practices in all its activities, in accordance with its code of conduct and accountability. In particular the UK Commission will:

- Provide, document, implement and maintain, safe and healthy working conditions, taking into account any legal and semi-legal requirements
- Ensure that all employees are made aware of their individual health and safety obligations
- Provide information, instruction, training and supervision to enable employees to perform their work safely and efficiently
- Make available all necessary safety devices and protective equipment and supervise their use
- Maintain a constant and continuing interest in health, safety and welfare matters applicable to the UK Commission's activities in particular by clear leadership, example and by consulting and involving employees
- Periodically review and develop the policy to ensure its ongoing relevance to the UK Commission
- Ensure that all suppliers and contractors who work on any of the UK Commission's premises are aware of the Health and Safety policy
- Prior to the awarding of contracts, where applicable, ensure that potential suppliers and contractors are conducting their business in compliance with Health and Safety legislation.

It is the duty of all employees to exercise personal responsibility for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their work activities. The support of all employees is required to ensure the success of the UK Commission's Health and Safety policy.

### **Respecting People**

- All commercial relationships will be founded on mutually agreed ethics and best practice
- We will adhere to the Government Procurement Code of Good Practice for Customers and Suppliers and be fair, honest, open and even-handed

- We will embrace public procurement policy, including ethical and open government principles
- We will ensure that all commercial relationships meet Race Relations and Equality obligations.

## **Advertising**

Contracts in all relevant categories over the threshold set every two years by the European Union will be advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). For contracts which have been identified that will be advertised in the forthcoming financial year, we will issue Prior Information Notices (PINs) which will also be published in the OJEU.

In addition all other contracts below the EU threshold will be advertised on our website [www.ukces.org.uk](http://www.ukces.org.uk) as well as Contracts Finder, where all other government funded opportunities can be found.

Details of all contract awards are displayed on the website for 1year from the date of award.

## **Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs)**

The important role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) has been recognised by the government in delivering UK economic growth and prosperity. It therefore actively encourages the public sector to consider small firms when awarding contracts.

In compliance with this policy the UKCES seeks to award all contracts following a public competitive process. The Office of Government Commerce (OGC) provides general advice and guidance for SMEs about dealing with the public sector. The OGC actively promote initiatives to reduce bureaucracy involved in bidding for Government business and to make government contracts more attractive and accessible for smaller organisations.

## **The UK Commission definition of an SME**

- **A small company** is one that has a turnover of not more than £5.6 million and not more than 50 employees; and
- **A medium-sized company** has a turnover of not more than £22.8 million and 51 to 250 employees.

## **Innovation**

It is the policy of the UK Commission to stimulate innovation as part of its strategy to deliver better value for money. To encourage innovation it will therefore:

- Identify key suppliers and understand the market place
- Encourage dialogue with potential suppliers on their product/service developments and plans
- Encourage suppliers freedom to submit innovative bids

- Be willing to take and manage risk
- Use outcome specifications to avoid constraining the solution by detailed specifications.

## **Sponsorship**

### **Giving**

Where the UK Commission wishes to sponsor an event or service, a formal Business Case detailing the benefits to the UK Commission of sponsoring this activity, must be prepared and approved. When entering into such an arrangement the basic conventions covering acceptance of gifts and hospitality apply as it is inappropriate for any employee to receive a personal benefit from a sponsorship arrangement.

It is also inappropriate for any employee who has a conflict of interest to enter into or take part in discussions relating to sponsorship arrangements.

The sponsorship arrangement must be completed as a formal contract document and signed by both parties.

### **Receiving**

Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor an activity of the UK Commission– the basic conventions concerning acceptance of gifts and hospitality apply. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors where sponsorship activity may lead to a perceived lack of transparent or fair procurement exercises in other areas.

It is inappropriate for any employee to receive a personal benefit from a sponsorship and wherever a conflict of interest occurs it must be declared and the employee removed from the process.

All sponsorship arrangements must be completed as a formal contract document and signed by both parties.