

User Guide

LEE002F - Multi-Supplier Framework for the Supply & Associated Service of Laboratory/Medical Gases & Accessories



USER GUIDE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section	Page No.
Overview	1
What is a Framework Agreement?	3
Why use this Framework?	4
How were the suppliers chosen?	7
Who can use the Framework?	8
What products and services are covered by this framework?	9
Who can provide services under this framework?	10
How do I purchase goods?	11
Contact us	14



LEE002F - Multi-Supplier Framework for the Supply and Associated Service of Laboratory/Medical Gases and Accessories

What is a Framework Agreement?

Framework Agreements are a procurement tool for facilitating the purchasing of defined goods and services and from which considerable potential time and cost savings can be made. Framework Agreements are widely used across the Public Sector.

A framework is an agreement put in place with a supplier, or range of suppliers, that enables buyers to place orders with service providers, without running a full tender exercise.

Frameworks are based on large volume purchasing. Aggregating different buyer's needs means individual buyers can buy goods and services at prices below those normally charged, or with special added benefits and/or more advantageous conditions.

Public Bodies have requirements to purchase numerous Laboratory/Medical Gases and Accessories.



either regularly or as one-off purchases. This means that costly and time-consuming procurement exercises are regularly undertaken across some organisations, while others struggle to quickly and easily access suitable products.

This Multi-Supplier Framework reduces the time and cost associated with procurement by offering an agreement that has already been competitively tendered for.

Why use this Framework?

Framework Benefits

- *Easy access to preselected suppliers*
- *Best pricing*
- *Easy drawdown options*
- *Flexibility*
- *Best practice procurement*
- *Agreed terms and conditions*
- *Efficiency*
- *Value for money*
- *Quality of products and services*
- *Value added services*

The Procurement and Associated Service of Laboratory/Medical Gases and Accessories can take significant time and money, both for the awarding authority and service provider.

The Multi Supplier Framework for the Supply and Associated Service of Laboratory/Medical Gases and Accessories is fully compliant with procurement regulations. It reduces the time and cost associated with the procurement process by offering a facility that has already been competitively tendered for.

It aims to deliver easy access for Public Sector Bodies to Laboratory/Medical Gases and Accessories at the best possible price.

The main benefits include:

Easy access to pre-selected, suppliers

The framework provides an easy access route to pre-selected suppliers & prices that are best placed to deliver Laboratory/Medical Gases and Accessories to Public Sector customers.

Best Pricing

Because the public sector is speaking as one voice by going to market collectively for this requirement, it enables Framework Clients to aggregate Laboratory/Medical Gases and Accessories requirements over a given time period, thereby ensuring best pricing from suppliers for a range of core & non-core Laboratory/Medical Gases and Accessories.

Easy drawdown mechanism

Public sector bodies can easily call off the products they require without running a formal tender process. The framework provides a quick and compliant process to allow purchasing of a large range of Laboratory/Medical Gases and Accessories by either using the Cascade or by Mini-Competition methods.

Flexibility

This Framework reduces the time and cost associated with a full procurement exercise, which in turn allows you to be more flexible with the planning and running of any

tender process via Cascade or Mini- Competition.

Best practice procurement

Each of the suppliers on the framework has been subject to a rigorous qualification and compliance process and subsequent evaluation, ensuring they offer the scope and quality of goods and services you require.

Agreed Terms and Conditions

Terms and conditions are already established and agreed for both public sector bodies (Framework Clients) and the suppliers (Framework Members). This removes the need to re-draft terms for each procurement procedure you undertake. You have the right to refine, but not fundamentally alter, the terms and conditions to take into account any special conditions.

Efficiency

The Framework removes the need for you to conduct full tender exercises or lengthy service provider evaluations, saving the time and costs associated with procurement exercises.

Value-for-money

This framework has been delivered in order to harness the opportunity to aggregate spend across the public sector. Ceiling prices have been submitted by successful tenderers for cascade or mini competition methods of drawdown. Framework Clients can run a mini competition to fulfil their Gas requirement, thereby ensuring further opportunities to secure Value-for-Money is consistently achieved.

Please contact the EPS for all information regarding:

- Framework agreement client activation templates.
- Cascade templates & Mini-Competition templates.



Quality of products and services

The experience, expertise and commitment to quality of products and associated services submitted by all tenderers are evaluated at the time of the initial Framework Agreement tender evaluation.

Framework client satisfaction with the supplier performance will be monitored on an ongoing basis.

Value Added Services

All suppliers on the framework offer an extensive selection of core and non-core products and have committed to ongoing promotions throughout the lifetime of the framework. Details of this promotional activity will be available to Framework Clients via the EPS.



How were the suppliers chosen?

As part of the tender process, successful framework members demonstrated proof of the following:

Account Management Requirements

Suppliers account management abilities were assessed through various factors such as account management team, supply of data/Market Intelligence reports and periodic business reviews, Future engagement and support, Promotion and Discount strategy and price stability during the lifetime of the framework.

Delivery Requirements

Tenderers were evaluated on their ability to deliver any volume of gases in a fast, safe and efficient manner. Delivery requirements highlighted by the users of the framework were also evaluated. These include standard Delivery charges , multi-location charges, National coverage including remote locations , Response times (weekdays & weekends) & Escalation Chart.

Stock Requirements

Stock Requirements were assessed using the following sub-criteria: stockholding & location of Distribution hubs, stock management, call-off methods proposed and returns policy.

Ecommerce Requirements

Framework users' needs for ecommerce requirements were also assessed including: assessing supplier's ability to provide a purchase-to-pay system/interfaces with financial systems, web-based stock-listings/catalogue portal, as well as a separate framework Login for the Framework Clients.

Health & Safety Standards

Health & Safety Standards were assessed using the following sub-criteria: CL, REACH & Other Standards, Certs of Conformity & Manual Handling Requirements.

Waste, Environmental & Sustainability

In feedback from client questionnaires, waste management & the environment was highlighted as being very important to EPS clients and framework users. Tenderers were asked to provide details of Packaging and Waste Removal Policy, By-product/expired product removal, environmental & sustainability policy and corporate social responsibility.

Pricing

Tenderers have been evaluated according to ceiling pricing

they have submitted on core products across seventeen lots. Framework Clients who sign up have access to comparative pricing for core lists and will be able to drawdown either directly, or by mini-competition.

In order to harness the opportunity to aggregate spend across the public sector, for larger ongoing and/or aggregated requirements, Framework Clients can also avail of Mini-Competitions to secure better pricing across Core and Non-core ranges across the six lots.

Flexible Call-off Methods

Supplementary Request-for-Tender (Mini-Competition) or Cascade options are available to Framework Clients regardless of the range and quantities of products required.

Who can use the Framework?

- **Central Government**
- **Local Government Sector**
- **Health Sector**
- **Education Sector**
- **Department of Justice & related public sector bodies (An Garda Síochána, Forensic Science Ireland, the Irish Prison Service & the Defence Forces)**
- **Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine & related Public sector bodies (Teagasc, the State Laboratory, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Marine Institute)**
- **All other public sector bodies**

The Multi-Supplier Framework for the Supply of and Associated Service of Laboratory/Medical Gases and Accessories can be availed of by the following Public Sector Bodies, employees staff & associated departments;

- Ministers of the Government of Ireland, Central Government Departments, Offices and non-commercial Agencies and Organisations which have a formal reporting and legal relationship to Central Government Departments
- All local government authorities in Ireland (themselves including Town Councils, regional assemblies, county enterprise boards and library bodies).
- Contracting authorities in the Irish health sector including the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA)
- Contracting authorities which are Third Level Education Institutions (including all Universities and Institutes of Technology), Education and Training Boards (ETBI's), Vocational Education Committees (VECs) and VEC schools and primary, post-primary, special and secondary schools as well as VEC's acting on behalf of school, groups and clusters of schools in centres.
- Department of Justice and An Garda Síochána (Police), Forensic Science Ireland, The Irish Prison Service & the Defence Forces.
- Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine, Teagasc, the State Laboratory, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Marine Institute.
- All other public sector bodies deemed suitable, who purchase the goods specified the RFT and where value of purchases is not greater than 2% of the overall value of the FWA.

What products and services are covered by this framework?

- Lot 1: Standard Gases
- Lot 2: Medical Gases
- Lot 3: Research & Special Gases
- Lot 4: Dry Ice & Storage Containers
- Lot 5: Bulk Gases
- Lot 6: Ancillary Equipment & Accessories

The Multi-Supplier and Associated Service of Laboratory/Medical Gases and Accessories Framework has 6 Lots covering a range of gas products as outlined below

BACKGROUND

The EPS carried out in-depth research into Public Sector Body requirements for Laboratory/Medical Gases and Accessories over the past eighteen months. Following a significant market soundings/business intelligence exercise, the EPS received invaluable information from both user/researchers and suppliers. The EPS consultation period involved a Meet-the-Supplier event, one-to-one interviews with both buyers and suppliers to the marketplace, as well as the distribution of several hundred customised supplier/buyer questionnaires via e-mail.

From the research conducted, it became apparent that several lots were required to cover the full range of Laboratory/Medical Gases and Accessories required by the marketplace. The feedback received recommended that the EPS break the market into six (6) lots, details of which are contained in the adjacent tables.

CATEGORIES

The EPS sought to identify the core-range of competitive products in each lot for evaluation. This was devised in consultation with the user/researcher (customer) side of the market.

CORE & NON-CORE PRODUCT

Most lots have a core range of products for which multiple tenderers have submitted competitive pricing. This comparative pricing is available to all Framework Clients to procure by either running a Mini Competition or the cascade method.

Given the breadth of this framework, several suppliers provide unique gases products across all lots for which there is only single-source supply. This type of product has been covered in the Non-Core range in each Lot. Please refer to the EPS with any specific questions regarding product covered under this Framework Agreement.

Who can provide services under this Framework?

There are 3 suppliers admitted as members to this Framework.

In order to be appointed to the Framework, suppliers have demonstrated they have the right expertise and capacity to provide these goods and related services.

Full contact details for each Framework member are available upon Framework Client activation via the EPS.

The EPS also includes below a summary table with details of successful tenderers to the framework. The EPS has included details of each initial lot that the successful tenders have been admitted to.

Full pricing and product details by suppliers and by lot are available to framework clients upon framework activation at public sector body level.

	Lot 1	Lot 2	Lot 3	Lot 4	Lot 5	Lot 6
Air Products	2	N/A	2	N/A	2	2
BOC	1	2	1	1	1	N/A
Irish Oxygen	3	1	3	N/A	N/A	1

How do I Purchase goods?

Framework Client Activation Process

1. Contact OGP/EPS to express interest in using Framework.
2. Sign up to Client/User Confidentiality Agreement.
3. Outline requirements using PSR/NAGF/ Quotation documents.
4. Access Pricing Documentation.
5. Decide on drawdown Method.
6. Run competitive process and evaluate submissions.
7. Finalise procurement & document the process.

Purchasing goods in an easy, flexible and simple manner is a core element of the Framework. The nature of the requirement will determine the most appropriate route to adopt.

Client Activation Process

In order to be able to purchase goods from the Associated Service of Laboratory/Medical Gases and Accessories Framework on an ongoing basis, Framework Clients (Public Sector Bodies) will need to follow the step-by-step process below in order to ensure compliant activation:

1. Framework clients should contact the EPS to express interest in using this Framework Agreement as their basis for procuring Laboratory/Medical Gases and Accessories (EPS contact details are provided at the end of this document).
2. Framework Clients should sign up to the Framework Agreement by completing and signing the User Confidentiality Agreement. The EPS will co-ordinate the distribution of pricing and promotion information in consultation with Procurement & Contracts Offices (PCO's) in Public Sector Body.
3. Framework clients should then outline their immediate Associated Service of Laboratory/Medical Gases and Accessories requirements by completing a Procurement Support Request Form (PSR) for the Contracting Authority, a Notification-to-Activate-Goods form (**NAGF – required once only for each supplier**) for Framework Members/Suppliers, and populate accompanying quotation document, if multiple Laboratory/Medical Gases and Accessories requirements are needed.
4. The EPS will co-ordinate the distribution of Framework Agreement pricing and promotion files with PCO offices and nominated personnel at Framework Client/Customer level. Buyers at public sector body level will then be able to research product and pricing information

submitted by tenderer by lot and make informed decisions about how best to drawdown from the Framework Agreement.

5. Once buyers have studied product and pricing files, they can then decide how best to proceed with their drawdown method. They will then be able to either co-ordinate a mini-competition to tender out the product(s) that they wish to purchase to secure more competitive pricing, or, if circumstances dictate, use the cascade method to drawdown directly.
6. For immediate low-value requirements, the Framework Agreement has been established so that Framework Clients can effectively drawdown directly using the Cascade method. However, it is recommended that public sector body buyers use their own recommended quotation process, together with the framework information to purchase goods off the framework. The mini-competition is the competitive process that Framework Clients will use to secure better pricing for above threshold, long-term contract requirements.
7. Successful tenderers/Framework Members have already been evaluated on Pass/Fail/Eligibility and Quality/Non-cost Criteria so, unless there is a particular non-cost element that requires evaluation, i.e. specific Delivery or Service T&C's, the mini-competition will be evaluated solely on price. As always, the EPS recommends that the Framework Client documents all elements of the procurement process, regardless of requirement size or value.

Mini-Competition

Purchasing from the Framework can be conducted through "Supplementary Request for Tender" (SRFT) based Mini-Competitions. Framework users can run a mini-competition in order to get more competitive pricing than the initial ceiling prices provided by suppliers. Mini-Competitions have the potential to encourage competition, in particular where there are limited numbers of suppliers, with resulting cost benefit and improved service to users. It is Public Procurement Policy and best practice to aggregate requirements and use Mini-Competitions that provide the Framework Users with the potential to achieve further additional savings.

During a mini-competition, customers shall indicate how they wish to drawdown supply in one of two ways:

- (i) A set amount of products – i.e. 10 x 50L(70Kg) cylinders of AP-Nitrogen to be delivered at a particular time to a particular site(s).
- (ii) Customers may seek to establish an agreement for the supply of gas products for a particular period of time with fixed cost for the duration of the drawdown, i.e. an estimated quantity of 300 x 50L cylinders of Carbon Dioxide – Industrial grade to cover a 24-month period.

Mini-competition templates for Associated Service of

Laboratory/Medical Gases and Accessories Framework are available to all Framework Clients once client activation is complete.

Sector Specific Mini- Competitions

During the term of the framework, where required, the EPS may conduct sector specific mini-competitions to enable aggregation of requirements and increase value for money across public sector bodies.

Such competitions, once concluded, will allow for customers to drawdown product without the requirement for SRFTs or mini-competitions.

Once scheduled, these mini – competitions will be identified and communicated via the EPS communications format. (Procurment.ie, Twitter, Email, Category Council, E-Newsletter)

The EPS Laboratory sourcing team will engage with the Laboratory Category Council and relevant stakeholders in each sector to establish aggregated/sector requirements and timelines.

Cascade

Framework Clients can also simply use the cascade method to drawdown from this framework by searching for their required product(s) using the pricing schedule documents provided by EPS, each lots suppliers are ranked from 1 to 3. The EPS has organised all tenderer pricing submissions in the following manner:

- By Category
- By Lot
- By Supplier ranking
- By Core/Non-Core Product Ranges.

Filters have also been created in the Pricing Schedules to help Framework Clients quickly find specific products and pricing that they wish to order.

By activating a user account with the EPS (executing a Notification-to-Activate-Goods-Form), Buyers in Contracting Authorities will have access to individual line item pricing by lot for each Framework Member.

When opting to use the Cascade call-off method once they have found the required product and supplier, users can contact the supplier and order products using whatever agreed communication method that the successful tenderer has committed to (email, telephone, website ordering, framework login, E-Catalogue etc.) per the Terms & Conditions of the Framework.

Where the Cascade method of call off is used the contract is always offered first to the first ranked tenderer on the Framework. Should the first ranked supplier not be in a position to fulfil the requirements then the second ranked tenderer may be used.


Alternatively the award of contracts may rotate between framework members in a pre-determined order. Care needs to be taken to ensure that whatever method is used that it is transparent and objective

Contact Us

If you have any questions about the supply and Associated Service of Laboratory/Medical Gases and Accessories or would like to know more, please contact us at the following:

 eps.mail@ul.ie

 **+353 (0)61 233715**

 Education Procurement Service
Unit 10, IBC - Block 2,
University of Limerick,
Castletroy,
Limerick