



EDUCATION PROCUREMENT
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LA2332F User Guide

**Multi Supplier Framework Agreement for the
Supply of Laboratory & Medical Gases and
Accessories**

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| What is a Framework Agreement? | 3 |
| Why Use This framework? | 3 |
| How Were the Suppliers Evaluated?..... | 4 |
| What is the Duration of the Framework?..... | 5 |
| Who Can Use the Framework? | 5 |
| What Products and Services are Covered by this Framework? | 6 |
| Who Can Provide Products and Services Under this Framework? | 6 |
| How to Purchase? | 7 |
| How do I drawdown from this Framework? | 8 |
| How does the Pricing Work?..... | 9 |
| How do I Use an RFQ? | 10 |
| How do I Use Self-Serve for Mini-Competitions? | 10 |
| When To Use Self-Serve & How to Initiate the Process..... | 11 |
| Completing your Tender Documents | 12 |
| Running a Self-Serve Competition | 13 |
| Supplier Contact Details..... | 14 |
| Contact Us..... | 15 |

What is a Framework Agreement?

Multi-Supplier Framework Agreement for the Supply of Laboratory & Medical Gases and Accessories.
 This framework is divided into Seven (7) lots.

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 and 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 access suitable products quickly and easily.

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?

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

Easy access to pre-selected, suppliers: The framework provides an easy access route to pre-selected suppliers & prices that are best placed to deliver Gases & Accessories to Public Sector customers.

Best Pricing: Because the public sector is speaking as one voice by going to market collectively, it enables Framework Clients to aggregate Gasses & Accessories requirements over a given period, thereby ensuring best pricing from suppliers for a range of core & non-core Gasses & Accessories products.

Easy drawdown mechanism: Public sector bodies can easily call off the products they require under €50k or run their own Self-Serve Mini Competition over €50k customers.

How Were the Suppliers Evaluated?

The EPS carried out in-depth research into Public Sector Body requirements for Laboratory and Medical Gases and Accessories. Following a significant market soundings/business intelligence exercise, the EPS received invaluable information from both users and suppliers. The EPS consultation period involved the publication of a Pre Market Consultation (PMC) to the supply base, consultations with both buyers and suppliers to the marketplace, as well as the distribution of customised buyer questionnaire.

Account Management

Appointment of Dedicated Account Management Team

Key Account Management Deliverables

E-Commerce

Price Stability

Delivery & Supply Requirements

Delivery Requirements & Guaranteed Response Time

New Business Account / Change of Gas Infrastructure Proposal

Service & Stock Requirements

Stockholding & Distribution Hub Locations

Cylinder/Container Rental & Management process

Health & Safety Standards

CLP, REACH & Other Standards

Certs of Analysis/Certs of Conformity & MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheets)

Training, Manual Handling/Onsite Transportation Requirements

Environmental Sustainability & CSR

Environmental & Sustainability Policy

Corporate Social Responsibility

Ultimate Cost

Tenderers were evaluated on Ultimate Cost based on their Core List Product Pricing and also based on the flat discount provided off the list price for the Non-Core Product per Lot and included standard Delivery Charges to selected zones.

What is the Duration of the Framework?

The Framework commenced on 05th April 2023 and will run for one (1) year with an option for three (3) twelve (12) month extensions.

- Valid From: 05th April 2023
- Expiry Date: 05th April 2027 (should all extensions be activated)

Who Can Use the Framework?

The Multi-Supplier Framework for the Supply of Laboratory & Medical Gases and Accessories can be availed of by the following Public Sector Bodies, and associated departments:

| Government | Health | Education | Defence |
|---|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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, including all local authorities in Ireland (themselves including regional assemblies, local enterprise boards). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entities in the Irish health sector including but not limited to the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), provided that such entities are contracting authorities within the meaning of Regulation 2 of the European Union (Award of Public Authority Contracts) Regulations 2016 (Statutory Instrument 284 of 2016). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contracting authorities which are Third Level Educational Institutions (including Universities, Technological Universities, Institutes of Technology and members of the Education Procurement Service). Contracting authorities which are Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and ETB schools, primary, post-primary, special and secondary schools as well as ETBs acting on behalf of schools . | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Garda Síochána (Police) The Irish Prison Service The Defence Forces |

What Products and Services are Covered by this Framework?

The Multi-Supplier Laboratory & Medical Gases and Accessories Framework covers a total of 7 Lots.

| Lot | Lot Description |
|-------|-----------------------------------|
| Lot 1 | Standard Gases |
| Lot 2 | Medical Gases |
| Lot 3 | Research & Special Gases |
| Lot 4 | Bulk Gases |
| Lot 5 | Environmental Monitoring Gases |
| Lot 6 | Dry Ice & Storage containers |
| Lot 7 | Ancillary Equipment & Accessories |

Who Can Provide Products and Services Under this Framework?

There are 5 suppliers admitted as members to this Framework.

To be appointed to the Framework, suppliers have demonstrated that they have the right expertise, capacity and product range to provide the goods identified in the associated lots.

The tables below outline the suppliers appointed to each Lot and their ranking within each Lot.

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

To promote value for money the Suppliers were ranked on the basis of the total score of their Tender submitted. The tables below outline the suppliers appointed to each Lot and their ranking within each Lot.

| Lot 1 Standard Gases | Lot 2 Medical Gases | Lot 3 Research & Special Gases |
|--|---|--|
| 1. Irish Oxygen Company Ltd 2. Air Products Ireland Ltd 3. BOC Gases | 1. BOC Gases 2. Irish Oxygen Company Ltd | 1. Air Products Ireland Ltd 2. BOC Gases 3. Irish Oxygen Company Ltd |

| Lot 4 Bulk Gases | Lot 5 Environmental Monitoring Gases | Lot 6 Dry Ice & Storage Containers |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Air Products Ireland Ltd 2. BOC Gases 3. Pipeline Solutions NI Ltd | 1. BOC Gases 2. Air Products Ireland Ltd 3. Irish Oxygen Company Ltd | 1. Polar Ice Ltd |

| Lot 7 Ancillary Equipment & Accessories |
|--|
| 1. Irish Oxygen Company Ltd |

How do I Access the Roll Out Pack?

Framework Client Activation 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.

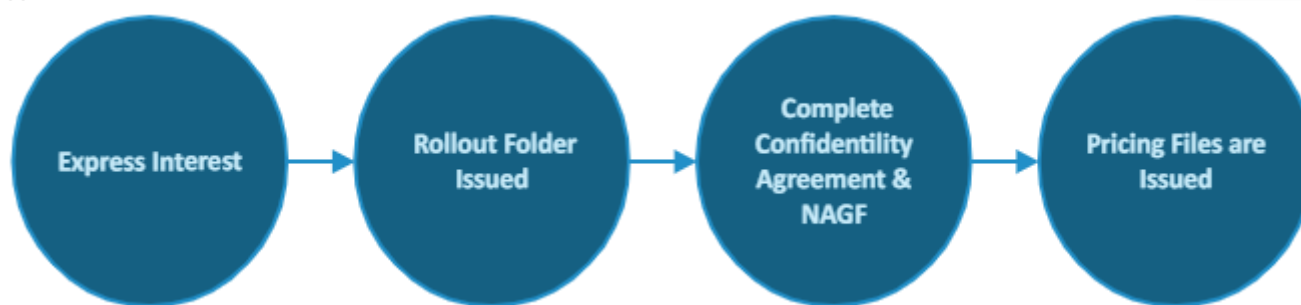
Step 1. Contact EPS to express interest in using the Framework on info@educationprocurementservice.ie.

Step 2. EPS issues rollout folder.

Step 3. Complete Confidentiality Agreement and NAGF form for the Supplier with which you require pricing.

Step 4. EPS provides the Pricing Documentation in consultation with Procurement & Contracts Offices.

Please note that BOC have included their terms and conditions in the BOC NAGF document.



How do I Drawdown from this Framework?

Once you have examined the pricing and identified the lot which hosts the goods required, you can proceed to drawdown from the Framework. There are two drawdown mechanisms available to you for lots 1-6 and three drawdown methods available for lot 7.

Cascade Method (Lots 1-6)

The Cascade Method applies to lots 1-6.

When the Cascade method is used to procure services, the highest-ranked Supplier on the lot will be contacted first to deliver the required goods. If the first-ranked supplier is unable to fulfil the request, due to unavailability, inability to meet the required timelines, or underperformance, the request will automatically be passed to the next ranked supplier in descending order. When the Goods Contract/Purchase Order is completed between the Framework Client and the Supplier, the contract is formed.

Mini Competition/ Self-Serve (All Lots)

The Mini Competition method applies to all lots and can be achieved by using the Self-Serve platform on eTenders. Mini Competitions are an effective way of putting a contract in place which requires extra technical detail or long term recurring requirements. In the first instance raise a PSR for your requirement EPS will then provide the required competition templates within the roll out pack, which you will then complete according to your requirements.

When the Mini Competition method is used to call off the service, each Supplier appointed to that Lot will be invited to an open competition on the Self-Serve eTenders platform. They will then be able to access your Supplementary Request for Tender (SRFT) documentation and submit a response. Framework clients will then proceed to evaluate the response and award the competition. When the Goods Contract is completed between the Framework Client and the Supplier, the contract is formed. Further [instructions](#) on running a mini can be seen below.

Request for Quotation Method/RFQ (Lot 7 ONLY)

The Request for Quotation Method applies to lot 7 ONLY and allows framework clients to generate quick price comparisons on the goods required. This method gives clients opportunity to achieve further discount on the original ceiling prices offered. EPS will provide a template for creating an RFQ within your roll out pack.

When the Request for Quotation method is used to procure services, all Suppliers appointed to the relevant Lot will receive a Request for Request for Quotation (RFQ) via email, the preferred method of communication. Suppliers must submit their RFQ responses by the specified deadline date and time. Framework clients can then evaluate the responses and progress with the most suitable Request for Quotation. Once the evaluation is complete, all tenderers who submitted a response will be notified of the outcome via email. When the Goods Contract/Purchase Order is completed between the Framework Client and the Supplier, the contract is formed. Further instructions on completing an RFQ are included [below](#).

Direct Drawdown (Lot 7 ONLY)

For lot 7, in the interest of Continuity, Framework Clients can avail of Direct Drawdown.

Direct drawdown method can be used when purchasing ancillary products such as tubing and connectors, these ancillary products may be purchased directly from the provider. Where the same product is available from multiple suppliers within a Lot the Contracting Authority must drawdown the lowest cost proposal available.. When the Goods Contract/Purchase Order is completed between the Framework Client and the Suppliers, the contract is formed.

How does the Pricing Work?

Pricing for this Framework is open for review Annually.

Onboarded Suppliers are free to submit updated product and price reviews on a bi-annual basis. Should you sign up to this framework agreement, any changes in relation to this will be communicated by EPS by the end of April and October annually. Prices issued by EPS are ceiling prices and should not be exceeded by Suppliers.

If during the price review process Suppliers exceed the percentage by which the relevant Price Index has increased, the EPS reserve the right to query these increases and remove the Supplier from the Framework should it be deemed necessary.

How do I Use an RFQ?

If you are looking for an efficient method to easily benchmark one Supplier to another for a particular requirement, then an RFQ may be the best approach to take.

An RFQ is generated using the Request for Quotation drawdown method available on all lots. Should you wish to complete an RFQ, you will find the relevant templates in your roll out pack, which are provided by EPS following [client activation](#). Once this is complete, you will proceed to email your RFQ to ALL suppliers appointed to the relevant lot. EPS will provide the contact information. Suppliers must provide a response within your requested timelines. Once your responses have been submitted, you are then free to evaluate and proceed to award to the most economically advantageous tender.



How do I Use Self-Serve for Mini-Competitions?

The self-serve procurement process for frameworks in the Irish public sector is a significant development aimed at enhancing efficiency, transparency, and cost-effectiveness.

The self-serve model empowers framework clients to have a more active role in shaping their procurement process, aligning it with their unique requirements.

This approach streamlines the acquisition of goods and services, ensuring that government agencies and contracting authorities can access the necessary resources quickly while adhering to regulations and best practices.

Contracting Authorities can initiate the procurement process independently, through the original framework on the eTenders platform, reducing the need for extensive administrative support from the EPS. They will be provided with associated framework documentation templates once they sign the necessary confidentiality agreements, and will be able to define their requirements, set evaluation criteria, and manage the procurement timeline and process.

When To Use Self-Serve & How to Initiate the Process

Mini competitions, run through the Self-Serve platform on eTenders, are open competitions advertised to all awarded Suppliers on a particular lot. Mini Competitions are an effective way of putting a contract in place which requires extra technical detail or long term recurring requirements.

Once you have established Mini Competition as the required drawdown method you initiate the Self-Serve process simply by following the steps outlined below:

Step 1. Consult with your local procurement to confirm Mini Competition as the ideal drawdown for your requirement.

Step 2. Your procurement representative will then complete a PSR (Procurement Support Request) with you, referencing the relevant framework.

Step 3. The completed PSR is issued to the OGP (Office of Government Procurement) for review.

Step 4. This will then be forwarded to EPS who will accept the request and assign a project lead.

Step 5. Your project lead will guide you through the tender process and provide tender templates.

Step 6. Your project lead will provide access to the relevant framework on eTenders so that your tender can be uploaded and published.



Completing your Tender Documents

Should you wish to run a Self-Serve Competition, you will find Supplementary Request for Tender (SRFT) templates to guide you in your Stage 2 Folder of the Roll out pack. This will be issued by EPS once you have completed [client activation](#).

These Documents include:

| Self-Serve Guidance | SRFT Template | Appendix 1 | Appendix 2 | Appendix 6 |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| This template will guide you through accessing self-serve on eTenders and creating a competition. | This template contains all required instructions to tenderers and conditions of the tender. | This template will assist in putting your award criteria and specification together. It will also include supplier guidance and scoring methodology. | This template will guide you on putting together an appropriate pricing schedule for your requirement. | This template contains the contract which will be completed between you and the winning tenderer following award. |

An SRFT will be issued to all Framework Members in a Lot and this will set out:

- the scope and term of the contract to be awarded,
- the deadline (date and time) for the receipt of the response to the SRFT (“Response”) taking into account the complexity of the contract and the time needed to prepare an appropriate submission. Responses received after the deadline will not be considered,
- the pricing requirements of the contract,
- the special conditions (if any) that apply to the Contract in addition to those published with the RFT.
- how the criteria will be weighted, Framework Clients can decide their weightings based on the ranges below. The total award criteria should equal 1000 marks (i.e. 100%).
- The award criteria table included in the SRFT will also ask Contracting Authorities to state a 60% minimum score for each weighting, i.e. suppliers will need to achieve a minimum of 60% for each criterion.

| Award Criteria | Weighting (range) |
|--|-------------------|
| Account Management Requirements | 0%-80% |
| Delivery & Supply Requirements | 0%-80% |
| Service & Stock Requirements | 0%-80% |
| Health & Safety Requirements | 0%-80% |
| Environmental, Sustainability & CSR Requirements | 5%-80% |
| Ultimate Cost | 10%-80% |

Please refer to the award criteria above for Mini Competitions. Note that only Environmental Sustainability & CSR along with Ultimate Cost are mandatory requirements; the other criteria listed can be used if desired. All other areas of these templates and can be adjusted to your needs or special conditions.

Running a Self-Serve Competition

The Framework Client and the Contracting Authority shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by the Supplier in the preparation of a Response to an SRFT

Once your tender documents are complete, please refer to the “Self-Serve Guidance” file within your templates, to guide you on accessing the self-serve platform and publishing your competition.

The steps below outline the tendering process to follow for a Self-Serve Mini Competition.

Step 1: Issue invitation to Tender

The tenderer must issue an SRFT on the appropriate lot. All Suppliers onboarded to this lot will then receive an automatic invite to tender. The SRFT must clearly outline how and when Suppliers must respond to the SRFT.

Step 2: Evaluate Responses

Following your submission deadline, you can go ahead and download your submissions and proceed to evaluation. This evaluation must be completed according to the published award criteria and scoring methodology within your SRFT. The evaluation report must include specific, impartial and objective comments to justify the scores given. These comments should be used to provide feedback to unsuccessful suppliers and a record kept for audit purposes.

Step 3: Award Tender

To award a contract you will need to draft letters to the successful and unsuccessful tenderers. The successful tenderer must receive their scoring breakdown along with any further information required as to the next steps. The unsuccessful tenderer must receive a scoring breakdown in relation to the scores of the winning tenderer. They must also receive clear comparative information on all areas in which they were scored below the winning tenderer.

Step 4: Complete Goods Contract

Once the submitted tenderers have been notified, the Framework Client may then proceed to complete the published Appendix 6 Goods Contract with the winning tenderer. When this is in place Framework Clients must ensure that the competition on the Self-Serve platform has been progressed and correctly awarded.

Step 5: Complete Audit File

It is essential that all information relating to the process contains the original framework reference number and name. Ensure your full audit trail is compiled and stored correctly and must include a tender summary/cover report.



Supplier Contact Details

Please refer to the Supplier contact details excel document outlining supplier contact details and any online purchasing facility.

For further information about LA2332F Multi Supplier Framework for the Laboratory & Medical Gases and Accessories and to request the framework roll-out pack, please contact:

+353 (0)61 233715

Unit 10, IBC - Block 2,

University of Limerick,

Castletroy,

Limerick