

Supplier Responses

Ref.	Question	Theme	Answer
01	Does the definition of 'public sector' include Network Rail, HS2, TFL, Highways England?	Sector strategy	Yes the aforementioned organisations sit within the Public Sector banner
02	How will you facilitate and actively create opportunities for SMEs - otherwise the larger consultants will continue to dominate and the status quo will prevail?	SMEs	We are maintaining engagement with the whole of the industry so all suppliers are welcome to engage and help shape the strategy. Our existing agreements have high percentages of SMEs currently awarded (CWAS3 approx 60% and CCS approx 40% and will try to remove restrictions where we can to support SME inclusion further. Our regional strategy around Lot structure is aimed to support local SMEs participating and we previously utilised an award restriction across Lot awards to avoid Lot dominance of suppliers, which again will be considered. Our aim is to support SMEs and all suppliers as part of this strategy
03	Will there be guaranteed minimum levels of business?	Pipeline	Through a framework there is no guarantee of business spend, but we will envisage being able to share regular pipelines to provide visibility of opportunities to bid against
04	If appointed to the framework will there be direct 'single' source awards or will suppliers have to compete for each call-off?	Call off options	We envisage both options will be available through the framework, as they are via our current frameworks. We will confirm further details on how this will work as we progress through the project
05	How will you encourage international suppliers who are new to the UK market but have delivered major global projects and may be put off by the cumbersome SO and ITT processes including topics such as Net Zero which is not usually followed in other jurisdictions?	International	Our scope to include international suppliers under the new Procurement Act is being explored. This extends to how we align local and international standards in order to consistently deliver Government policy commitments which include Net Zero. For further guidance on international suppliers accessing CCS agreements please see the Treaty States Suppliers guide following Procurement Act 23 LINK
06	What steps are you undertaking to ensure that the incumbent suppliers do not have an advantage for this procurement particularly as some suppliers provide 'professional' services support to some of the clients, such as NHSE, MoJ, etc. and have more 'insight' than other bidders?	Framework criteria	Over the coming months we will continue to engage with suppliers in order to develop our tender requirements and criteria. Alongside this, CCS will provide transparent guidelines on the assessment of bids to suppliers along with feedback and visibility of scoring outcomes. The requirements for tender evaluators include extensive evaluator training and a team comprised of varied organisations and disciplines to ensure outcomes are evidence based and transparent.
07	Did Airports sit in Civil Engineering?	Sector strategy	This will generally be dictated by the client according to the nature of the works being delivered. It's anticipated that civil engineering will include aviation, however if the works were deemed general in nature then it would be for the client to determine the most appropriate route to market.
08	In becoming the framework of choice, what level of engagement is taking place with local authorities?	Sector strategy	Our engagement approach has been designed to suit a broad range of customers which include local authorities, a number of whom we've reached out to directly alongside inviting them to join our webinars. As we dive further into shaping future customer requirements, we'll continue this engagement to ensure our framework recognises the many different ways our customers procure and deliver public works and services.
09	Should a Tier 1 contractor who currently isn't active in the UK defence sector wish to enter this market via CCS, will they need to provide UK references from the Defence market to prequalify, which would obviously be a barrier for new entrants. Or would overseas references be adequate?	International	CCS is committed to providing fair and even opportunity across suppliers and in compliance with the new Procurement Act. As part of our continued engagement with the market we will look to shape and define our tender and framework criteria in a way that ensures suppliers are not unfairly advantaged. The ongoing engagement with the market and other areas for discussion will remain key.
10	In your discussions with clients, have they indicated whether they will use CCS as opposed to setting up their own Construction Frameworks eg. MOJ Constructor Services?	Sector strategy	In furthering our discussions with strategic customers across central government and the wider public sector, a key element of this is understanding and mapping future requirements. This includes discussions around existing and planned frameworks and where CWAS3 can provide solutions to customers over the longer term. The CWAS3 framework will be designed specifically on the basis of these discussions with key strategic clients.
11	By splitting lots in terms of contractor size, will this not unfairly exclude Large Contractors who only have a Minor Works capability because construction is not their core service offering?	Lot structure	Over the coming months we will continue to engage with suppliers in order to develop our tender requirements and criteria. Alongside this, CCS will provide guidance to bidding suppliers with feedback and visibility of their assessments. A key requirement for all CCS and public procurements includes intense evaluator training and a team of evaluators from a range of different organisations and disciplines to ensure outcomes are evidence based and transparent.
12	If an Early Integrator approach is taken, will this not give the contractor an unfair advantage for bidding for the subsequent works? Would you consider implementing a process that prevents the 'designer' from bidding for the actual works else this could prevent an unfair playing field?	MMC	This is a good question and we'll be further testing the principles and mechanisms of what could be achieved as we move further into our engagement and shaping of framework specification and Lot criteria. We have an aspiration to drive MMC and increase the collaboration between parties as part of Early Contractor Involvement. Currently we envisage this as supportive at early RIBA stages, however we also recognise the need to ensure the way in which this is facilitated maintains any competitive requirements through the tendering of contractor design and build services or offsite solutions.
13	If you limit the numbers of suppliers per lot, will you also operate a reserve list if a supplier becomes non compliant/repeatedly underperforms?	Framework criteria	This is something we'll look to further explore and define as part of the next round of our engagement. The operating of a reserve list will require measured thought around the contractual mechanisms and governing processes. Alongside this, we'll consider KPIs and the wider performance obligations so we are proactively managing and safeguarding performance
14	Will this be a closed framework, or where you looking to do an open framework?	Framework criteria	In developing our early strategy, both options were explored. Currently we envisage that the framework will be closed and we are keen to ensure the framework provides opportunities to build long term relationships between clients and suppliers
15	Could you confirm whether you will be using CAS at PQQ stage?	Framework criteria	In seeking to support the new Procurement Act it is likely that common assessment standards will be incorporated in order to streamline and simplify our qualification processes.
16	Will consideration be given to a separate, high value MMC focused lot for the critical infrastructure mega projects that NISTA will be pushing forward?	MMC	This is something we'll be continuing to explore with our clients across the infrastructure sector as we work together to shape and inform the potential Lot structures. Over the coming months we'll be reaching out to suppliers to further inform our findings, modelling a range of scenarios to support customers in delivering new and emerging pipelines.
17	If reserving spaces on lots for SMEs, will you be splitting this down to specific appointment spaces saved for micro companies, then small business and then medium companies, etc	SMEs	The strategy that will determine the framework Lot structure is in development and very much reliant on past and forthcoming engagement with suppliers. We remain committed to providing opportunities for micro and small to medium enterprises and our ability to map the market, which all suppliers will be invited to support in shaping, will help us in determining a fair and proportionate approach
18	Are there any early thoughts on proposed indexation to be used for the new Framework? CPI has not kept-up with construction price specific inflation leading to a shortfall in recovery during CWAS2/P23.	Terms & conditions	This will be a key area for development as we move further into discussion with suppliers and customers. We intend to build on lessons learned through our existing frameworks and from the survey and data insights we've already received through early engagement. CCS remains committed to ensuring the mechanisms to incorporate market pressures are reflective of the industry and proactive in their implementation
19	How broken down will the Civils/Buildings (construction) be broken down in the Lot structure in terms of the new buildings act coming in, where it doesn't cross over into the Civils as a rule.	Lot structure	Please could the person who raised this question contact cwas3@crownccommercial.gov.uk ? We will need some further context in order to help clarify. Thank you.
20	Overseas - will it cover Europe and then others?	International	Building on the response to Q.07, we are exploring options to incorporate overseas requirements. The exact nature and definition of how we do this will be further explored in partnership with our wider supplier and customer engagement
21	With the key milestones and deliverables, when will we be expecting the ITT packs and how long will the programme be for submissions	Programme	We anticipate an ITT release during early 2026. The timescales for tender submissions will be reflective of the resources needed for suppliers to reasonably respond to and evidence the tender quality and cost criteria. As we shape and define that criteria in partnership with clients and suppliers, we will ensure that we are building in appropriate timescales with forward visibility so that suppliers can prepare and plan resources accordingly.
22	Will you be awarding as Principle suppliers with contingency suppliers?	Framework criteria	Please see response to Q.15
23	By simplifying it - you will exclude SMEs	Lot structure	It's not our intention to over-simplify the framework structure, much of the approach under CWAS1 and 2 will remain with specific lots, value bandings etc. We are keen to simplify the journey for customer and suppliers so much of this will be about the guidance and tools to make our framework easily accessible
24	But stretching the values you will omit SMEs, with the inclusion of the Procurement Act where this is to assist and be of benefit to SMEs, surely this doesn't benefit - and how would you distinguish between the lots who get to bid?	Lot structure	This option to provide marginal flex in Lot value banding is at an early ideas stage and will rely heavily on the views and contributions from the market and from customers in terms of how and when this might provide an advantage. For example, if applied to lower bands there could be the potential for an SME to stretch up into a higher Lot where their capacity exceeds the Lot maximum. The feedback we've received to date indicates a wide range of maximum order values across SMEs which brings further complexity in identifying optimum thresholds. We're committed to working proactively with suppliers so we can better understand market positioning and preferences which will be key to our strategy
25	For the early integrator - would this be developing a hybrid solution for traditional construction and 3D/2D OR considering alternative proposals to support the options / preferred in the business case process?	MMC	Building on our response to Q.14, the potential and scope for this option has yet to be fully understood so we'll be exploring the detail of this and what it could mean with suppliers, industry bodies and customers. Early thinking is that it could potentially deliver both but the driver may depend on the maturity of client requirements. We've seen some excellent collaboration between clients and suppliers in exploring standardised design and components under a 'platform' type approach when options have yet to be fully developed. Our intention here would be to continue harnessing that dialogue - as opposed to simply swapping one solution for another.
26	For the ITT timeline, are you intending to issue an SO prior to January 2026?	Programme	Please refer to the response to Q.24.
27	If you move into a more granular regional approach, will you restrict how many lots you can be awarded?	Lot structure	At this stage is difficult to explicitly state the methodology that will be used. Our starting point has been to understand the shape and complexity of the market, where suppliers have coverage across regions and their strategic focus. Through understanding this we can continue to shape and define the Lot structures before modelling a range of scenarios to ensure that the methodology we apply will encourage and not limit competition.
28	How can we continue to support the engagement over the coming weeks?	Programme	We've been blown away by the support to date from that market and the willingness to provide knowledge and insights that have been pivotal to us delivering our outline where we've provided a solid baseline for further design. In April 2025 we commence a series of internal governance gateways and then from May 2025 onwards we'll be diving further into the detail. We'll do this in partnership with suppliers and customers and anticipate running multiple sessions across different themes and elements of the framework scope and criteria. Please continue to look out for emails from our CWAS3 mailbox and check our CWAS3 web page for ongoing updates and invitations.
29	What are you doing to make a direct award allocation process more straightforward	Call off options	We're assessing a range of scenarios in relation to direct awards. This is a complex area as it carries heightened compliance risk that's shared by both Contracting Authorities and framework providers. We'll be carefully exploring this with senior stakeholders and internal legal and governance advisors. Under previous iterations, our frameworks for construction and offsite works and services have been underpinned by maximum rates across each Lot for each supplier. The maximum rates typically comprise on and off site staff across a range of disciplines, site set up and a percentage for overheads and profit. Suppliers can vary these rates and percentages in accordance to the Lot value, region or specialism they are tendering for at the point of bidding for the framework. These rates and percentages provide a maximum threshold within which clients and suppliers can negotiate based upon the specific project requirements. As the awarding authority at call off stage customers retain the ability to negotiate with suppliers and can exceed the thresholds if there is an agreed reasonable justification which might include risk and complexity. Equality they may seek to incentivise suppliers through their own project level KPIs.
30	On alternative Frameworks, procuring Clients are able to incentivise Contractors to enhance their Fee by meeting KPIs which relate to Client priorities. Under CWAS3 will Clients be permitted to increments fees at their own discretion, to compensate for complexity, or for KPIs linked to project objectives?	Terms & conditions	Under previous iterations, our frameworks for construction and offsite works and services have been underpinned by maximum rates across each Lot for each supplier. The maximum rates typically comprise on and off site staff across a range of disciplines, site set up and a percentage for overheads and profit. Suppliers can vary these rates and percentages in accordance to the Lot value, region or specialism they are tendering for at the point of bidding for the framework. These rates and percentages provide a maximum threshold within which clients and suppliers can negotiate based upon the specific project requirements. As the awarding authority at call off stage customers retain the ability to negotiate with suppliers and can exceed the thresholds if there is an agreed reasonable justification which might include risk and complexity. Equality they may seek to incentivise suppliers through their own project level KPIs.
31	Just a thought - is there opportunity to create an overlap between the higher lots bands to reflect varying capability at tier 1 and Tier 2 level? Might also prevent some suppliers going for multiple lots "just to get a place" and then being inactive on lots.	Lot structure	Similar to our response to Q.27, the option to allow flex between Lot value bandings is an early idea and something we're considering but it will be subject to further testing. As part of the next wave of engagement we will be exploring the feasibility of an option like this and ensuring that any proposals provide a measured assessment of the opportunities and risks. Designing a framework that provides ample opportunity across all suppliers and capacities remains key.
32	Initial thoughts on the MMC early engagement. I think there is a definitive need for this, we would be interested in understanding if this is just to provide early advice and ideation or whether an appointment under this lot could lead to a full delivery contract. We would also be interested in how ideas and IP would be protected too under this arrangement.	MMC	Please see responses to Q.14 and Q.29
33	3D and 2D providers may have different commercial models / overheads - would need to look at whole life benefit and careful use of MAT criteria in assessment.	MMC	We recognise a range of market and operating models exist under the proposed range of works and services that would comprise CWAS3. We also recognise that in order for it to be successful the framework will require the means to assess proposals fairly. This ability to assess like for like will require careful planning of the tender criteria at both framework and call-off level. We plan to further inform this through forthcoming workshops with clients and suppliers where we can understand more fully the journey of client requirements and scope availability in balance with the commercial models the framework will provide
34	Is there a plan for a supply only product manufacturer lot or annex?	Lot structure	Our lot considerations at this stage don't extend to the supply only of manufacturer building materials.
35	Good to see emerging refinements to the totting structure, how / when will you review the commercial aspects, in particular reflecting the recent change from MEAT to MAT and ensuring sustainable fee levels and risk allocation - is that May onwards?	Terms & conditions	Yes - from May 2025 we will start to dig deeper into the totting strategy and the terms and conditions that will underpin and govern these. Our continued engagement will the market and our customers will be a crucial element in us ensuring that the framework is sustainable and future proofed. We anticipate holding a number of workshops over the coming months with focus on key themes such as this to support and shape our framework tender strategy
36	Good also to hear recognition of the value of early engagement, how will the new framework discourage the level of single stage bids we have seen to date?	Call off options	As a construction category team we always seek to engage early with clients and their bid teams to champion the principles of The Construction Playbook which includes early contractor involvement and dialogue to identify the best possible route to market. Through our current frameworks we operate a number of collaborative initiatives and forums across client and industry groups to help champion best practice. We will continue this collaboration under CWAS3 and in providing collective insights to help guide and inform clients
37	Is Education Sector covered under separate frameworks?	Sector strategy	The Department for Education's (DfE) are currently procuring the next iteration of their construction framework that will focus specifically on their schools building design and pipeline. It's sometimes the case that government departments will procure their own bespoke framework when there is a significant programme of works and bespoke requirements across a finite programme. However, CCS continues to work closely with the DfE as a strategic customer ensuring that its frameworks provide routes to market and also retains strong relationships with education sector clients across the UK including schools, trusts, universities, colleges, further education institutes and local authorities. Education clients who may have a requirement outside of the DfE's scope are obviously able to access alternative routes to market for their requirements including for example the CCS framework
38	Is there any merit to put a transport Lot within the framework to cover the Network rail / TFL / HS2 works for specialist rail contractors ?	Lot structure	At the webinar we shared some early thinking around this and how we might incorporate a wider civil engineering and infrastructure option. We continue to engage our customers, including those mentioned, and will shortly proceed with the next phase of our engagement to identify the most robust and practical option. We recognise the need to explore the many specialisms that make up this sector.
39	Is it the intention of the Integrator Lot to lead to a second procurement process for project development and delivery through RIBA 3 onward, or will it be possible to carry on as a provider with the preferred solution?	MMC	Please see responses to Q.14 and Q.29
40	Would the integrator Lot be fee-based - i.e. to develop design alternatives	MMC	Please see responses to Q.14 and Q.29
41	I note the from the early engagement that customers struggle to engage with SMEs and you're early insight shows you are not getting much involvement from SMEs in this process. How are you planning on engaging with SMEs who are generally put off by the perception and reality of onerous pre-qualification requirements ?	SMEs	To date we have gained some excellent feedback from existing and new SMEs with SMEs making up around a third of the organisations that have engaged with us to date. Overcoming barriers to SMEs in competing at both framework and project call off stage remains a key priority for CCS and the wider public sector. As we transition to the new Procurement Act we will explore how we can use the new regulations and proposed digital tools to help simplify the process and in overcoming perceived blockers. The next wave of engagement will be extensive and will include support and guidance for all suppliers to assist them in preparing for the framework ITT release during early 2026.
42	Are there any plans to ensure that local SMEs do local work, rather than contractors from other areas to take the work. EG Cambridge work being taken by London contractors?	SMEs	This is something that will require careful consideration as we continue to work with suppliers and develop our framework tendering and award criteria. Any mechanisms that preclude or restrict suppliers from tendering must be tested alongside a rigorous assessment of risks and benefits so this is certainly something we will explore in partnership with you over the coming months
43	Note: the smaller value band for SMEs is huge, as a smaller contractor, the difference between and £1m job and £5m job for turnover/resources/cash flow etc is HUGE, most SME contractors who could manage a £1m or £2m job, would not be able to manage a single £5m job, so inevitably with a band this wide at this sector of the market it will attract large companies not SMEs.	SMEs	Building on the response to Q.19, we aim to ensure that our Lot options are thoroughly explored and developed in partnership with suppliers. This will include a deeper analysis of the market and how we map supplier capacity to ensure that the resulting structure is evidence based while also delivering on the government commitments to developing and supporting SMEs
44	Does the aviation lot under civils refer to all works including terminals, mscp, runways / taxiways ie a mix of building and CD disciplines	Lot structure	Building on the response to Q.09, the Lot structure considerations will be further tested and informed by suppliers and customers as part of our ongoing engagement. It's important we consider not just the works and services being delivered but also the way the framework and our customers define their requirements in order to utilise the most appropriate Lots under the new CWAS3 framework

45	We have grown into areas with security requirements, procured via the General Contracting Lots but if a Specialist category we would not have met the additional requirements at bid level. would this approach limit new entrants	Lot structure	We are committed to ensuring maximum competition which includes not limiting the opportunities for new entrants. As we move into more focused engagement from May 2025 and begin shaping our tender methodology and criteria there'll be opportunities to engage and inform this.
46	Would you consider a higher value lot ie over £250m?	Lot structure	This is currently something we are considering based on existing framework feedback from clients and suppliers and also through our CWAS3 early engagement to date. Our ability to define a suitable threshold for major projects will be informed through ongoing client engagement to identify future pipelines alongside working with the market to identify capacity and points of difference. This will be a key feature in forthcoming workshops to which all suppliers will be invited to participate and provide insights.
47	Could you please clarify the significance of the % shown on CWAS1 structure. usage or headroom?	General	The percentages that were included within the webinar slide depicting RM6088 CWAS 1 show the utilisation to date of each of the framework Lots. To date, Lots 3, 4 and 5 have seen the strongest activity and number of awards.
48	Will groups made up of several separate legal entities be allowed to bid across the Lot landscape?	Framework criteria	This is not yet fully defined but previous iterations of the framework have allowed for joint ventures and consortiums to be created by suppliers. We continue to work closely with public sector clients in order to assess the scope of potential Lots that would lend themselves to joint enterprises and will further develop a suitable approach with suppliers as we continue to engage and develop the framework structure
49	How would a programme of works be allocated ie 200m could be 5 40 or 1 200 which would be a different contractor group?	Lot structure	The total value of the contract to be awarded will determine the Lot utilised by the awarding authority. It will be up to those authorities to ensure that they are approaching the appropriate Lot based on their assessment of supplier capability and capacity
50	Are you looking at this being an open framework (PA 2023 vocabulary)?	Framework criteria	Please refer to the response to Q.16
51	Are you also involved in PFI schemes?	Scope	The CWAS3 framework will provide a route to market for construction works and off-site manufacturing. We don't envisage that it will extend to requirements in respect of future/new PFIs however this will be thoroughly investigated and considered in line within the permissible governance
52	It wasn't clear from Thursday's session whether there are plans to split the framework lots between new build and fit-out contractors, or if you intend to continue only including contractors who can deliver both.		At present our strategy does consider both requirements in scope of the agreement but we are yet to determine how this will be structured to deliver the optimal solution for our clients. This will be reviewed further and determined through our future market engagement