

## **Commentary for the Sector Manual online tutorial**

### **Sector Manual home, benefits and Working Group pages...**

“The introduction section on the web page explains the core functions and areas covered by the Sector Procurement Manual, the Document and Guidance Suite and some of the key benefits of using the Manual that have been identified by Working Group members.”

### **Decision Tree...**

“The decision tree is essentially a ‘how to use’ introduction which aims to guide the procurement officer through the procurement process, in a systematic and sustainable fashion. Key documents are highlighted together with areas containing guidance, and these are particularly likely to be of assistance to individuals that are unfamiliar with the procurement process, but can also serve as a reminder to experienced procurers.

The tree starts with a series of questions, to determine whether the requirement can be fulfilled from a variety of existing sources, rather than obtaining a quote or issuing a tender for a new requirement. This could be by calling from existing contracts or framework agreements, for example, Category A, Category B or from CUPID or by combing requirements with other institutions to form a Category C1 procurement. The need to secure budgetary authority, and purchasing authority, prior to commencing with a procurement is also addressed, which is an important governance and accountability issue together with whether the procurement is aligned with your institutions’ own strategy and policy, for example, regarding corporate and social responsibility. Key words are highlighted, for example, separation of duties and a definition appears explaining what the text actually means.

The tree then moves on to showing the EU procurement regulations, the EC Treaty Principles and other core documents such as the Suppliers’ Charter that govern public sector procurement. These have been applied to both the Sector Procurement Manual and the Documentation and Guidance Suite. Further considerations on key areas such as corporate social responsibility are also covered, particularly at the commodity profile strategy stage, to ensure they are considered at the outset of procurement and then translated into the procurement process.

The tree now separates into two branches, one covering procurements that are subject to the EU procurement regulations and those that fall below the current published threshold. Additional guidance covering subject specific areas is also available.”

## **Restricted Procedure...**

“In this example, one of the most common procedures, the restricted procedure, is being followed. If you click on the bold text, a process flow chart appears. On the left hand side you will see a reminder of the mandatory EU timelines that are applicable to certain stages in the procurement process, including where these can be shortened. On the right hand side are recommended sign-off points in the procurement process by either the budget holder or the procurement officer, or as designated within your institution.

At the start of the process flowchart you will see the Scottish Procurement Policy Handbook and Procurement Manual. The Handbook sets the fundamental rules, behaviours and standards that are applicable to public procurement activity in Scotland, whereas the Procurement Manual details information about the procurement process and recommended procedural requirements that should be met. The process flowchart sits below this and consists of stages in the procurement process with each stage containing a header shaded in blue. The header is actually a link which takes you to guidance, normally from the Scottish Public Sector Toolkit about the subject matter of that stage. This stage can either be referenced or bypassed as necessary. Further guidance is also contained in some of the individual documents, for example, the contract notice.”

## **Restricted Procedure and Invitation to Tender...**

“The templates have been designed with optional text shown in italics which can be utilised if it is relevant to the procurement or deleted as necessary. Also on the front page of some of the templates, for example the commodity profile and strategy and the invitation to tender, further information is provided and shows how a document is constructed.”

## **Commodity Profile and Strategy...**

“One of the key documents in this process flow chart, is the commodity profile and strategy because it is used at the planning stage of any procurement activity to determine how the key issues will be addressed. For example, the tendering options, corporate social responsibility issues, the pricing strategy, the details of the outputs of the requirement and award criteria. These are then all translated into the procurement process and documentation such as the pre-qualification questionnaire if it is used, and the invitation to tender. In doing so this identifies and minimises risk, and also assists in ensuring, by a series of prompts, that key factors have been

taken into account, which should help to lead to delivery of requirements that are for fit-for-purpose and value for money.”

### **Restricted Procedure...**

“As you proceed through the process flowchart, you will come across a number of template documents which just require population. For example, the Invitation to Tender has optional text for insertion into the statement of requirements, considers eProcurement readiness, and contains standard terms and conditions. There is also a section at the end for lessons learned which will help contribute towards continuous improvement.”

### **What’s New and Archive...**

“The Sector Procurement Manual, document, and guidance suite will be updated centrally by APUC and any changes will be notified in the “What’s New” section on the webpage. Old versions of the documents will still be available and they will be located in the archive section should they ever need to be referenced.”

### **Contact...**

“We welcome feedback and any comments that you wish to make on the Sector Procurement Manual, document and guidance suite. Details of how to do this are contained in the contacts section on the web page.”

### **Closing Screen...**

“APUC, on behalf of the Working Group hope that you find the Sector Procurement Manual, the document and guidance suite of value within your institution.”