

Procurement Policy Note – Policy on Standards and References.



Information Note 10/09 19 August 2009.

Issue

1. This note emphasises the recommendations of the Glover Review (“[Accelerating the SME economic engine: through transparent, simple and strategic procurement](#)”) in terms of;
 - a. The requirement in public procurement to accept equivalent standards and evidence from organisations bidding for contract opportunities; and
 - b. The requirement to accept from bidding organisations both private and public sector-based references and evidence of capability.

Dissemination

2. Please circulate this Procurement Policy Note (PPN) within your organisation, agencies, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), and any other bodies for which you are responsible for, drawing particular attention to those with a purchasing role.

Contact

3. Enquiries about this paper should be addressed to the OGC Service Desk 0845 000 4999 servicedesk@ogc.gsi.gov.uk.

Background

4. The Glover Review contained recommendations relating to how procurers should assess or evaluate pre-qualification questionnaires (or their equivalent) as part of the tendering process. These recommendations are now being taken forward by the [Access for All programme](#).
 - a. Recommendation 7 states;

“Procurers should ensure that, where they rely on a particular accreditation scheme or standard as part of the process of prequalification or contract award, that they take a flexible approach. Businesses should be given the opportunity to provide evidence that they can meet the contract requirements by reference to other similar equivalent accreditations or standards they may already hold – especially where these have been recognised or required by other public sector procurers”.
5. This re-emphasises the policy laid out in OGC’s guidance note, “[Non-discrimination in technical specifications](#)”.
6. The key principle in this guidance is that “contracting authorities must consider offers

which claim to satisfy the requirements in an equivalent manner even though they do not conform to the standard in question". So where a particular standard (e.g. ISO 9000, or a Health and Safety standard such as CHAS or Safe Contractor) might define a capability for a contract, the authority should give bidding organisations the opportunity to provide other proof the technical specification is met.

b. Recommendation 6 of the Glover Review states;

"Procurers should give businesses the opportunity to provide details of all previous relevant experience when bidding for contracts, not just public sector experience. This should be taken into account when selecting successful tenderers".

7. When asking for references or evidence of capability as part of the supplier selection process, contracting authorities should not discriminate between public and private sector experience. It is reasonable to give more credence to references that demonstrate capability closely related to that required by the contract in question; but those references or assessment of capability should not be evaluated as more favourable purely because they come from a previous public sector contract.

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