Guidance

Digital Outcomes and Specialists suppliers' guide

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Contents

1. Digital Marketplace and Digital Outcomes and Specialists

Public sector organisations and arm's length bodies can use the Digital Marketplace to buy Digital Outcomes and Specialists services, including:

- a digital outcome, eg a discovery phase or an online billing application
- digital specialists, eg a product manager or developers
- user research studios
- user research participants

If you want to sell these services on the Digital Marketplace, you need to submit your service details to the Digital Outcomes and Specialists framework.

You can apply to submit your services to the Digital Outcomes and Specialists framework when an Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) is open. On average, an OJEU will be open for 6 weeks, every 6 to 9 months.

If your application is successful, buyers will be able to find your service(s) live on the Digital Marketplace.

2. Services you can sell

2.1 Digital outcomes

Digital outcomes suppliers provide teams to work on a digital service

The buyers will define the brief.

As a digital outcomes supplier, you must:

- comply with the [technology code of practice](#)
- work according to the government [service design manual](#)
- understand what it means to work on a [discovery](#), [alpha](#), [beta](#), [live](#) or [retirement](#) phase

You must provide services within at least one of the following capabilities:

- design
- performance analysis and data
- security
- service delivery
- software development
- support and operations
- testing and auditing
- user research

2.2 Digital specialists

Digital specialists suppliers provide government departments and teams with individual specialists for work on a service, programme or project. The scope and deliverables will be defined by the buyer.

As a digital specialists supplier, you must:

- only provide specialists from your existing team
- offer evidence of competence in each role if requested by the buyer
- ensure all roles support the government service design manual's description of what you need to build a successful service

You must provide at least one of the following roles:

- agile coach
- business analyst
- content designer or copywriter
- cyber security specialist
- delivery manager or project manager
- designer
- developer
- communications specialist
- performance analyst
- portfolio manager
- product manager

- programme delivery manager
- service manager
- technical architect
- user researcher
- visual designer
- web operations engineer

2.3 User research studios

User research informs the development of all government digital services.

User research studios suppliers must provide:

- user research studio hire in the right location on specific dates
- a comfortable, private and safe environment for participants, researchers and observers to work in
- space to conduct interviews, usability tests or focus groups
- facilities where it's possible to watch and record people as they engage with designs, prototypes and live public sector services

2.4 User research participants

All government digital services need to:

- use research to develop a deep knowledge of who the service users are and what that means for the design of the service
- have a plan for ongoing user research and usability testing to continuously seek feedback from users to improve the service

As a user research participants supplier, you must:

- be able to recruit participants with a range of experience, eg you should consider diversity, people who are digitally excluded, as well as those who have low literacy or digital skills, and those who need assisted digital support
- be able to recruit user research participants who best reflect the users of a service, eg a specific target user group such as people who have recently had a specific experience eg victims, witnesses or jurors

3. How to apply

You must:

- [create, or log into, a supplier account on the Digital Marketplace](#)
- [register your interest in becoming a Digital Outcomes and Specialists supplier](#)
- [make the supplier declaration on the Digital Marketplace](#)
- [submit service information on the Digital Marketplace](#)
- [wait for compliance checks to be made on your information](#)

- [sign and return your framework agreement on the Digital Marketplace](#)

Each step in this process is mandatory.

Asking questions during the application process

You can ask clarification questions during the application process. All questions about this procurement must be submitted through the Digital Marketplace on the Digital Outcomes and Specialists updates page.

All clarification questions and answers will be posted regularly on the Digital Outcomes and Specialists updates page. Anyone who has registered interest will be notified when new clarification questions and answers are available.

All communication between suppliers and the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) must take place through the Digital Marketplace. CCS will not respond to questions individually.

3.1 Create, or log into, a supplier account on the Digital Marketplace

You need to [create an account](#) or [log into your existing account](#) before you can start your application. Once you have an account, you'll receive an email when Digital Outcomes and Specialists opens.

You'll need a [Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS number)](#) to create an account.

3.2 Register your interest in becoming a Digital Outcomes and Specialists supplier

When Digital Outcomes and Specialists is open for applications, log into the Digital Marketplace and click on 'Start application' to register your interest in becoming a supplier. This starts the application process and signs you up to receive Digital Outcomes and Specialists updates.

You'll only be able to register your interest when Digital Outcomes and Specialists is open for applications.

3.3 Make the supplier declaration on the Digital Marketplace

Next, you must make the supplier declaration to be eligible to provide services to the public sector. You have to:

- agree to the framework terms
- answer questions to establish grounds for mandatory exclusion
- answer questions to establish grounds for discretionary exclusion
- confirm how you will work with government
- confirm how you will work with digital
- provide basic supplier information

3.4 Submit service information on the Digital Marketplace

Next, you need to submit your service details on the Digital Marketplace.

You'll be asked to include information like where you can provide services and pricing details.

Each service you want to include needs to fit into one of 4 categories, or 'lots':

- digital outcomes
- digital specialists
- user research studios
- user research participants

You can invite extra contributors to help you add services more quickly.

Each service you add must be marked as 'complete' on the Digital Marketplace.

If you've also made your supplier declaration, your application will be automatically submitted for Digital Outcomes and Specialists on the deadline day.

3.5 Compliance checks will be made on your information

After you submit your application, the information you've provided will be evaluated by CCS against the criteria published in the supplier guidance on the Digital Marketplace.

You'll then be informed whether your application to Digital Outcomes and Specialists has been successful. You can access your result letter through your Digital Marketplace account.

3.6 Sign and return your framework agreement

You need to sign and return your framework agreement on the Digital Marketplace.

CCS would prefer you to use a digital signature to sign your framework agreement. If you can't digitally sign your framework agreement, you can print, sign and return a scanned copy of the signature page on the Digital Marketplace. Signed paper copies will not be accepted.

3.7 Your services will go live on the Digital Marketplace

Your services will be made available on the Digital Marketplace as soon as the framework goes live.

Buyers who want to buy your services must enter into a call-off contract with you. The maximum length of a call-off contract is 24 months.

4. When to apply

A new version of the Digital Outcomes and Specialists framework will be released about every 6 months to 9 months.

4.1 New suppliers

The Digital Outcomes and Specialists framework is a catalogue of services where the basic terms of use have already been agreed between the government and suppliers. This means buyers can buy services without running a full tender process.

You can bid to supply services when a new version is published on the [Official Journal of the European Union](#) (OJEU). You don't need to be based in the UK to apply to the framework, but you need to agree to the terms of the framework agreement and call-off contract, which are governed by English law.

Follow the steps in '[How to apply](#)' to submit a new application.

4.2 Adding new services

You can apply to sell new services whenever a new version of the Digital Outcomes and Specialists framework is released. You'll get a 'contract notice' (formal notification telling all potential suppliers about a public sector contract opportunity) from the OJEU ahead of each new release of the framework.

You'll need to reapply before your framework agreement expires so you can continue to offer services.

5. Editing existing services

You can update your supplier and service details over the course of the framework. You can't add services to lots in which you don't already have services. Buyers can request evidence of any changes you make.

6. How services are bought

6.1 Buying digital outcome services

If buyers want to buy a digital outcome, they will:

1. Write a brief detailing their requirements and the outcome they want to achieve.

2. Indicate their evaluation method and criteria for assessing suppliers against the brief, together with a timetable for the evaluation process.

The timetable will consider the complexity of both the brief and the evaluation method being used and will allow enough time for suppliers to respond. It will include:

- the bid submission due date
- the date range for any subsequent evaluation stages

3. Publish the brief and the evaluation method.

4. Produce a list of all capable suppliers that meet their requirements. This may be generated using information provided by suppliers in their applications.

5. Provide the brief and evaluation process to the list of capable suppliers.

6. Request a response from interested suppliers which must include answers to a number of yes/no questions defined by the buyer. The buyer will indicate against each question whether a positive response is essential or desired. A supplier must answer 'yes' to all essential questions (at least) to proceed to the next stage.

7. Review the list of interested suppliers who submitted a response and meet all essential criteria.

8. (Optional) Create a shortlist by asking all suppliers who meet the essential criteria further yes/no questions. This step can be repeated if necessary.

9. (Optional) Create a shortlist by asking all suppliers who meet the essential criteria any qualitative questions relating to the brief.

10. Invite shortlisted suppliers to further evaluation. This can include any of the evaluation methods indicated when the brief is issued. Evaluation methods may include:

- providing a written proposal
- providing a case study or evidence of previous work
- a presentation
- a pitch
- an interview
- providing a reference

11. Evaluate suppliers using the evaluation criteria indicated when issuing the brief.

12. Award a call-off contract to the successful supplier(s).

13. Notify unsuccessful suppliers and provide the shortlisted suppliers with feedback.

The buyer will evaluate suppliers' responses against the following criteria:

Criteria	Weighting range (%)	
Technical merit and functional fit	10 - 60	-
Cultural fit	5 - 20	-
Price	20 - 85	-
	Total	**100%**

Weightings for technical merit and functional fit, cultural fit and price will be set by the buyer within the ranges indicated in the table above. Weightings must add up to 100%.

If 2 or more suppliers have the same score, the buyer will use the criteria with the highest weighting to choose the successful supplier.

6.2 Buying digital specialist services

If buyers want to buy a digital specialist service, they will:

1. Write a brief detailing their requirements and the deliverables they need.

2. Indicate their evaluation method and criteria for assessing suppliers against the brief together with a timetable for the evaluation process. The timetable will take into account factors like the complexity of the

subject matter of the proposed call-off contract and the time needed to submit tenders. It will include:

- the bid submission due date
- the date range for any subsequent evaluation stages

3. Produce a list of capable suppliers that meet their requirements. This may be generated using information provided by suppliers in their applications.

4. Send the brief and evaluation process to the list of capable suppliers.

5. Request a response from interested suppliers which must include answers to a number of yes/no questions defined by the buyer. The buyer will indicate against each question whether a positive response is essential or desired. A supplier must answer 'yes' to all essential questions (at least) to proceed to the next stage.

6. Review the list of interested suppliers who submitted a response and meet all essential criteria.

7. (Optional) Create a shortlist of all suppliers who meet essential criteria by asking further yes/no questions. This step can be repeated if necessary.

8. (Optional) If sufficient information is available to evaluate, or the number of responses is manageable, go straight to step 10.

9. Invite shortlisted suppliers to further evaluation to assess whether their proposed specialist can meet their requirements. This can include any or all of the evaluation methods indicated when the brief was issued. Evaluation methods may include:

- providing a profile
- providing a written proposal which may require the supplier to respond to specific questions defined by the buyer
- providing a case study or evidence of previous work
- a presentation
- an interview
- a test
- providing a reference

10. Evaluate suppliers using the evaluation criteria indicated when issuing the brief.

11. Award a call-off contract to the successful supplier(s).

12. Notify unsuccessful suppliers and provide the shortlisted suppliers with feedback.

The buyer may use some but not all of the evaluation methods they included in their brief.

The buyer will evaluate suppliers' responses against the following criteria:

Criteria	Weighting range (%)	
Technical merit and functional fit	10 - 60	-
Cultural fit	5 - 20	-
Price	20 - 85	-
	TOTAL	100%

Weightings for technical merit and functional fit, cultural fit and price will be set by the buyer within the above ranges. Weightings must add up to 100%.

If 2 or more suppliers have the same score, the buyer will use the criteria with the highest weighting to choose the successful supplier.

6.3 Buying user research studio services

If buyers want to buy a user research studio service, they will:

1. Write a brief detailing their requirements, eg facilities needed, studio location and availability.

2. Indicate their evaluation method and criteria for assessing suppliers against the brief.

3. Produce a list of capable suppliers based on their requirements. This may be generated using information provided by suppliers in their applications.

4. Contact the list of capable suppliers to find out whether they are able to meet the requirements.

5. Evaluate suppliers using the evaluation criteria indicated when issuing the brief.

6. Award a call-off contract to the successful supplier(s).

7. Notify unsuccessful suppliers and provide the shortlisted suppliers with feedback.

The buyer will evaluate suppliers' responses against the following criteria:

Criteria	Weighting range (%)	
Technical merit and functional fit	10 - 60	-

Price	20 - 85	-
	Total	100%

The buyer may inspect the studios before contract award or before they are used.

If 2 or more suppliers have the same score, the buyer will use the criteria with the highest weighting to choose the successful supplier.

6.4 Buying user research participant services

If buyers want to buy a user research participant service, they will:

1. Write a brief detailing their requirements, eg facilities needed, studio location and availability.

2. Indicate their evaluation method and criteria for assessing suppliers against the brief together with a timetable for the evaluation process. The timetable will consider the complexity of both the brief and the evaluation method being used and will allow enough time for suppliers to respond. It will include:

- the bid submission due date
- the date range for any subsequent evaluation stages

3. Produce a list of capable suppliers that meet their requirements. This may be generated using information provided by suppliers in their applications.

4. Send the brief and evaluation process to the list of capable suppliers.

5. Request a response from interested suppliers which must include answers to a number of yes/no questions defined by the buyer. The buyer will indicate against each question whether a 'yes' response is essential or desired. A supplier must answer 'yes' to all essential questions (at least) to proceed to the next stage.

6. Review the list of interested suppliers who submitted a response and meet all essential criteria.

7. (Optional) Create a shortlist of all suppliers who meet essential criteria by asking further yes/no questions. This step can be repeated if necessary.

8. (Optional) If sufficient information is available to evaluate or the number of responses is manageable, go straight to step 10.

9. Invite shortlisted suppliers to a further evaluation stage. Only evaluation methods indicated when issuing the brief can be used. These methods may include:

- providing a written proposal which may require the supplier to respond to qualitative questions defined by the buyer
- providing a case study or evidence of previous work
- providing a reference
- an interview

10. Evaluate suppliers using the evaluation criteria indicated when issuing the brief.

11. Award a call-off contract to the successful supplier(s).

12. Notify unsuccessful suppliers and provide shortlisted suppliers with feedback.

The buyer reserves to right to use some but not all of the evaluation methods indicated when issuing the brief.

The buyer will evaluate suppliers' responses against the following criteria:

Criteria	Weighting range (%)	
Technical merit and functional fit	10 - 80	-

Availability	10 - 80	-
Price	20 - 80	-
	Total	100%

Weightings for technical merit and functional fit, availability and price must make 100% when added together.

If 2 or more suppliers have the same score, the buyer will use the criteria with the highest weighting to choose the successful supplier.

7. How services are provided

7.1 Methodologies

You should plan on using an agile process, starting with user needs. The methodology that should be used on each project will be outlined in the Statement of Work (SOW).

You should only use waterfall methodology in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be shown to better meet user needs.

Projects may need the best of both waterfall and agile methods.

You can read guidance on using agile in the the [service design manual](#) and the [technology code of practice](#).

7.2 Standards

You must support buyers:

- through successful [Service Standard assessments](#)
- to develop services based on [open standards](#) and accessible data protocols
- to comply with any [standards that are compulsory in government](#)

7.3 Security

You must ensure staff have the Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS), where this minimum level of security clearance is necessary. Additional levels of security clearance may be required by the buyer at the call-off contract stage and may include:

- Security Check (SC)
- Developed Vetting (DV)
- Counter-Terrorist Check (CTC)
- the [supplier assurance framework](#) for contracts at the 'Official' information security level
- any relevant [security guidance](#)
- the Cyber Essentials scheme
- [the Government Security Classifications](#)

7.4 Code of conduct

You should also comply with the [Civil Service conduct and guidance](#).