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Planning

Preliminary Market Engagement ICT Direct A Whole ICT Services Framework for the UK Public Sector

Efficiency East Midlands

UK2: Preliminary market engagement notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-055370

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-059780

Published 10 September 2025, 12:41pm

Scope

Reference

EEM0080

Description

Whole ICT Services Framework for the UK Public Sector. This single-supplier framework will adopt a neutral vendor delivery model, enabling public bodies to access the full range of ICT goods, services, and solutions from end user devices and licensing, to networks, consultancy, and cloud infrastructure via a compliant and simplified route.

Commercial tool

Establishes a framework

Total value (estimated)

- £500,000,000 excluding VAT
- £600,000,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 2 February 2026 to 1 February 2030
- 4 years

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 72000000 - IT services: consulting, software development, Internet and support

Contract locations

- UK - United Kingdom

Engagement

Engagement deadline

10 October 2025

Engagement process description

Preliminary Market Engagement (PME)

ICT Direct: A Whole ICT Services Framework for the UK Public Sector

EEM 0080

1. PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

1.1 EFFICIENCY EAST MIDLANDS LTD

Efficiency East Midlands (EEM) is a not-for-profit procurement consortium set up to drive cost and efficiency savings in the public sector. Since 2010, EEM and its members have worked together to deliver comprehensive yet simplified procurement solutions, which offer a wide range of compliant, competitive and high-quality products and services.

EEM's vision is to develop a collaborative working approach, which delivers the fullest possible range of organisational, financial and social benefits.

EEM is working with its partner and Representative, Meta Procurement Ltd, to create a whole ICT Services Framework that provides best possible value and service to our members and the wider public sector.

We are pleased to invite interest in the idea of establishing a national framework agreement titled ICT Direct Whole ICT Services Framework for the UK Public Sector. This single-supplier framework will adopt a neutral vendor delivery model, enabling public bodies to access the full range of ICT goods, services, and solutions from end-user devices and licensing, to networks, consultancy, and cloud infrastructure via a compliant and simplified route.

The framework will be designed to support transparency of ICT spend across all categories, particularly in areas where pricing is often unclear or complex, such as Microsoft licensing, Azure, DevOps, and cloud consumption models. It will provide public sector organisations with greater clarity and control over their ICT investments while streamlining procurement activity and promoting value for money.

This PME exercise is issued in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 and is not part of a formal procurement process. No organisation will be prejudiced by its response or non-response, and this engagement does not guarantee inclusion in any future procurement activity. However, supplier feedback will play an important role in shaping our requirements and procurement approach.

2. Background

This Preliminary Market Engagement (PME) seeks views from the ICT supply chain ahead of a proposed procurement for a single-supplier neutral vendor framework. The framework will be made available to all UK public sector bodies, including, local authorities, government departments, housing associations, arms-length bodies, educational institutions, and emergency services.

A core objective of the proposed framework is to increase transparency of ICT procurement, particularly in complex areas such as:

- Microsoft licensing (e.g. M365, Enterprise Agreements)
- Azure consumption and DevOps tooling
- Subscription-based cloud and SaaS pricing
- Third-party service margins and bundling

Public bodies often face challenges in validating these costs, comparing options, and understanding value for money. The neutral vendor model is intended to address these issues through a single, accountable supplier who provides clear, auditable pricing structures, supports fair market access, and delivers expert procurement guidance.

This engagement does not form part of a formal procurement process and does not commit the authority to any course of action. The views of suppliers and stakeholders will be used to inform the design of the opportunity and test assumptions prior to publication of the contract notice.

3. Market Engagement Purpose

UK public bodies are responsible for procuring a wide range of ICT goods and services to support their operational, digital, and transformation objectives. These include cloud platforms, productivity tools, end-user devices, cyber security, and infrastructure. These are often sourced via a complex web of routes with inconsistent pricing transparency or procurement overhead.

There is increasing interest in more strategic and joined-up procurement models, which can offer:

- Better commercial visibility and control
- Access to a dynamic supply chain (including SMEs and specialists)

- Efficient call-off and sourcing methods
- Assurance over compliance, risk, and sustainability
- Benchmarking and aggregation of spend insights

This neutral vendor model is proposed as a mechanism to achieve these benefits through a single accountable partner acting as a sourcing agent and supplier ecosystem manager.

4. Proposed Framework Summary

The neutral vendor will act as a managed service provider (MSP) or aggregator for public bodies, responsible for the delivery and procurement of:

- ICT hardware (e.g. laptops, mobile devices, peripherals, servers)
- Software and licensing (e.g. Microsoft, Adobe, antivirus, sector-specific platforms)
- Cloud services (e.g. IaaS, PaaS, SaaS including Azure, AWS, M365, DevOps tooling)
- Cybersecurity tools and frameworks
- Technical consultancy and professional services
- Implementation and rollout services
- Managed services and support
- Innovation and emerging technologies (e.g. automation, AI, IoT)

The neutral vendor must provide a high-performing digital platform or equivalent service for requisitions, reporting, and audit, ensuring full transparency of supplier selection, cost build-up, and contract status.

5. Draft Specification

ICT Goods

- End-user devices: desktops, laptops, tablets, smartphones, peripherals.
- Infrastructure: servers, storage, networking equipment.
- Accessories and components: monitors, docking stations, cabling, spare parts.

- Specialist equipment: mobile clinical devices, ruggedised hardware, audio-visual kit.

Software & Licensing

- Microsoft (inc. Enterprise, CSP, Azure) and other volume licensing programmes.
- Operating systems, security software, productivity suites, line-of-business applications.
- SaaS, PaaS, IaaS offerings.
- Licence optimisation and usage reporting services.

ICT Services

- Technical consultancy and solution design.
- Deployment and implementation services.
- ICT support and managed services (e.g. helpdesk, remote monitoring).
- Asset tagging, imaging, configuration, staging, disposal, and secure recycling.
- Data migration, backup, and disaster recovery services.

Cloud, DevOps & Infrastructure

- Cloud hosting, storage, and compute capacity (public, private, hybrid).
- DevOps consultancy and tools provisioning.
- Network design, delivery, and optimisation.
- Security solutions and compliance support (inc. Cyber Essentials, ISO standards).

Strategic Services

- Strategic ICT reviews and transformation consultancy.
- Budget planning and cost transparency reporting.
- Aggregation of demand across organisations.
- SME enablement and supply chain management.

6. Supplier Input Requested

We are inviting potential suppliers to respond to the following:

- Transparency and Value for Money
 - How can a neutral vendor help public bodies understand and benchmark costs in areas where pricing is typically opaque (e.g. Azure consumption, M365, SaaS bundles)?
 - What models ensure cost clarity and reduce hidden margin or duplication?
- Commercial Model
 - What is the most appropriate pricing structure for the neutral vendor (e.g. fixed fee, % margin, hybrid)?
 - How can the model be designed to balance sustainability for the vendor with cost transparency for buyers?
- Supplier Ecosystem & Inclusion
 - How can a neutral vendor fairly onboard and manage a diverse, quality-assured supplier network (including SMEs)?
 - What controls and reporting should be in place to avoid bias or vendor lock-in?
- Buyer Experience & Simplicity
 - What mechanisms support easy, compliant call-offs for non-technical or low-capacity public sector teams?
 - What should be included in a service catalogue to make it user-friendly?
- Technology, Reporting & Assurance
 - What digital tools/platforms are in use for order capture, supplier interaction, invoicing, and performance tracking?
 - How can this framework provide insight across the public sector to inform strategic procurement decisions?

7. How to Respond

Please respond to the questions in section 6 above and return via email to

mark@metaprocurement.org no later than 10th October 2025.

We may also invite a selection of respondents to participate in follow-up in one-to-one conversations to explore feedback further.

Please note this is not a call for competition or a procurement exercise. Responding to this notice does not guarantee future involvement.

8. Next Steps and Timeline

Issue PME - 8th September 2025

Deadline for Responses 10th October 2025

Follow-up Supplier Sessions 13th to 17th October

Anticipated Tender Publication November 2025

Anticipated Contract Start February 2026

9. Contact Details

For any queries relating to this PME, please contact:

Mark Stephens

Meta Procurement Ltd on behalf of EEM

Email: mark@metaprocurement.org

Submission

Publication date of tender notice (estimated)

3 November 2025

Contracting authority

Efficiency East Midlands

- Companies House: 07762614

Unit 3 Maisies Way

Alfreton

DE55 2DS

United Kingdom

Contact name: Mark Stephens

Email: mark@metaprocurement.org

Website: <https://metaprocurement.org/>

Region: UKF12 - East Derbyshire

Organisation type: Public undertaking (commercial organisation subject to public authority oversight)

Other organisation

These organisations are carrying out the procurement, or part of it, on behalf of the contracting authorities.

Meta Procurement Ltd

Summary of their role in this procurement: Framework Management

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PHTC-9381-MRCG

Rock Cottage

Nottingham

NG7 1DE

United Kingdom

Contact name: Mark Stephens

Email: mark@metaprocurement.org

Website: <http://WWW.METAPROCUREMENT.ORG>

Region: UKF14 - Nottingham

Contact organisation

Contact Efficiency East Midlands for any enquiries.