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Tender

Delivery of the Nuclear Skills Plan - PSQ

Ministry of Defence

UK4: Tender notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

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Scope

Description

Purpose and Context

The Ministry of Defence's (MOD) Defence Nuclear Organisation (DNO), referred to as "the Authority," is seeking delivery partner(s) to support the Nuclear Sector Skills Team (NSST) in delivering specific projects that form part of the overarching Nuclear Skills Plan (NSP). These projects are critical to addressing the skills challenge across the UK's civil and defence nuclear sectors and ensuring the workforce is equipped to meet current and future demands.

Background to the Requirement

In August 2023, the Nuclear Sector Skills Team (NSST), formerly the Nuclear Skills Taskforce, was established to accelerate progress on nuclear workforce development. It brought together government, academia, and employers from across the civil and defence sectors to build on existing initiatives and drive a coordinated, multi-level action plan. Following extensive engagement with over 90 key stakeholders and a diagnostic exercise spanning more than 20 workstreams, the NSST produced two key outputs:

- The Nuclear Skills Charter, signed by CEOs (or equivalents) of all Nuclear Skills Executive Committee (NSEC) member organisations, securing cross-sector commitment to the NSP's actions and deliverables.
- The Nuclear Skills Plan (NSP), a ten-year, costed programme detailing the activities, governance structures, and collaborative behaviours required to generate the skills needed to meet the sector's growing demand. Further information on the NSP and its strategic context can be found at: <http://nuclearskillsplan.com>.

Launched on 15 May 2024, the NSP builds on the Defence Nuclear Command Plan and aligns with the Government's July 2024 policy intent to secure skills, jobs, growth, and social value across the UK. It supports both public and private investment in the nuclear workforce and underpins the ambition to create up to 40,000 new jobs by 2030.

Delivery and Governance

Delivery of the NSP began in May 2024, initiating an enabling phase through to March 2025. During this period, a suite of strategic requirements was developed to support sector-specific national priorities.

The NSST—a hybrid team comprising representatives from MOD, the Department for Energy and Net Zero (DESNZ), and Nuclear Skills Executive Council (NSEC) organisations—is responsible for mobilising the required contracts. As NSST is not a recognised contracting authority, the MOD acts in that capacity for this competitive tender via the DNO.

Scope of Tender

This document outlines the requirements for prospective delivery partners to support the NSST in executing defined work packages under the NSP. These 9 packages are designed to deliver tangible outcomes aligned with the NSP's strategic objectives, including workforce development, skills pipeline enhancement, and cross-sector collaboration. The Authority is seeking tender responses to the requirements in two stages:

Stage one: The NSST is seeking expressions of interest, via the completion of the Procurement Specific Questionnaire (PSQ), from Potential Providers to deliver the Nuclear Skills Plan detailed in this tender notice.

Stage two: Following evaluation of PSQ responses, up to four Potential Providers shall be invited to the full Invitation to Tender (ITT) stage for each Lot. Further details are provided below.

Further information regarding the scope of each work package can be found in the

Statement of Requirements (SORs).

Please note that any incumbent Potential Provider that has been shortlisted to participate in the ITT will be required sign the Ethical Walls Agreement. Failure to do so may result in the Potential Provider being excluded from further participation in the procurement process.

The documents made available to Potential Providers via the Defence Sourcing Portal are;

20251020_715655461_PSQ Guidance-O

20251020_715655461_Appendix 1_PSQ Guidance-O

20251020_715655461_Appendix 2_PSQ Technical Questions-O

20251020_715655461_PSQ_Certificate of Performance-O

20251020_715655461_PSQ Information Firewall Statement-O

20251020_715655461_PSQ_Conflict of Interest Declaration Form-O

20251020_715655461_PSQ_Similar Contracts Previous 3 Years-O

20251020_715655461_PSQ Explainer for Potential Providers-O

20251020_715655461_PSQ Technical Response Template -O

20251020_715655461_Lot 1_SOR_Destination Nuclear Marketing Campaign and Website-O

20251020_715655461_Lot 2_SOR_Bursaries-O

20251020_715655461_Lot 3_SOR_Nuclear Sponsorship Scheme-O

20251020_715655461_Lot 4_SOR_Sector Experts into Training-O

20251020_715655461_Lot 5_SOR_Career Switchers-O

20251020_715655461_Lot 6_SOR_Skills Supply Demand Model-O

20251020_715655461_Lot 7_SOR_Roles Pathways and Curriculum-O

20251020_715655461_Lot 8_SOR_Training Provider Network-O

20251020_715655461_Lot 9_SOR_Teacher Training Bursary-O

In order to access these documents Potential Providers will need to register for Find a Tender, the Central Digital Platform (CDP). To submit a PSQ submission Potential Providers will need to do this via the Defence Sourcing Portal (DSP). Both are linked below.

<https://contracts.mod.uk/>

<https://www.find-tender.service.gov.uk/>

Total value (estimated)

- £54,916,664 excluding VAT
- £65,900,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 31 March 2026 to 31 March 2031
- 5 years, 1 day

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 72415000 - World wide web (www) site operation host services
- 79341400 - Advertising campaign services

- 79342100 - Direct marketing services
- 80430000 - Adult-education services at university level

Contract locations

- UK - United Kingdom
-

Lot 1. Destination Nuclear

Description

Destination Nuclear is a pioneering, sector-funded campaign and website promoting careers in the UK nuclear industry. It aims to recruit 40,000 people by 2030, addressing skills shortages, reshaping perceptions, and supporting clean energy and defence.

Lot value (estimated)

- £5,916,666 excluding VAT
- £7,100,000 including VAT

Same for all lots

CPV classifications, contract locations and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Lot 2. Bursaries

Description

The Nuclear Bursary Scheme is a core element of the Nuclear Skills Plan (NSP). Its purpose is to provide support to talented individuals, particularly from lower socio-economic backgrounds, enabling them to access funding for education and/or wider professional development, with the aim of securing roles in the UK nuclear sector. A bursary of up to £5K per year can be granted for up to 20 bursaries.

Lot value (estimated)

- £8,250,000 excluding VAT
- £9,900,000 including VAT

Same for all lots

CPV classifications, contract locations and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Lot 3. Sponsorship Scheme

Description

The Sponsorship Scheme is designed to address the pressing need for skilled professionals within the nuclear sector, encompassing both civil and defence applications. Recognising the significant demand for degree-educated individuals in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) disciplines, and the current under-representation among those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, this initiative aims to foster social mobility while fulfilling critical workforce requirements. This is through offering comprehensive support, including full funding for tuition fees, summer placements, additional bursaries, and guaranteed job placement upon degree completion.

Lot value (estimated)

- £17,083,333 excluding VAT
- £20,500,000 including VAT

Same for all lots

CPV classifications, contract locations and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Lot 4. Sector Experts into Training**Description**

This project creates a national framework to integrate nuclear sector experts into training programmes, enhancing relevance and quality. It supports expert engagement without leaving operational roles, fostering industry-aligned skills development and incentivising workforce retention across the sector.

Lot value (estimated)

- £1,833,333 excluding VAT
- £2,200,000 including VAT

Same for all lots

CPV classifications, contract locations and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Lot 5. Career Switchers

Description

The Career Switchers Programme is a key initiative within the Nuclear Skills Plan (NSP), designed to attract, prepare, and accelerate mid-career professionals into critical nuclear sector roles. The programme targets occupations experiencing skills shortages across both civil and defence nuclear domains. By offering structured pathways, accelerator courses, and support mechanisms, it seeks to build a flexible, capable, and sustainable workforce.

Lot value (estimated)

- £6,833,333 excluding VAT
- £8,200,000 including VAT

Same for all lots

CPV classifications, contract locations and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Lot 6. Skills Supply Demand Model

Description

This project delivers a dynamic model to forecast nuclear sector skills needs, integrating workforce demand with training supply. It enables strategic planning, real-time gap analysis, and data-driven decisions through periodic reports and a live analytical tool.

Lot value (estimated)

- £3,000,000 excluding VAT
- £3,600,000 including VAT

Same for all lots

CPV classifications, contract locations and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Lot 7. Roles, Pathways and Curriculum

Description

The project supports the Nuclear Skills Plan by analysing and refining role profiles, career pathways, and curricula. It involves stakeholder engagement, data capture, and strategic planning to address critical skills gaps and aligns workforce development with industry needs.

Lot value (estimated)

- £3,083,333 excluding VAT
- £3,700,000 including VAT

Same for all lots

CPV classifications, contract locations and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Lot 8. Training Provider Network

Description

A coordinated, scalable training provider network in support of the Nuclear Skills Plan, bridging sector skills gaps by aligning industry investment to provider needs, and fostering partnerships to ensure sustainable workforce development across the nuclear sector.

Lot value (estimated)

- £2,166,666 excluding VAT
- £2,600,000 including VAT

Same for all lots

CPV classifications, contract locations and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Lot 9. Teacher Training Bursary

Description

This project establishes a teacher training and bursary programme to build a qualified nuclear education workforce, standardise training quality, foster industry partnerships, and ensure long-term sector sustainability through professional development, addressing critical skills shortages and supporting strategic workforce planning.

Lot value (estimated)

- £6,750,000 excluding VAT
- £8,100,000 including VAT

Same for all lots

CPV classifications, contract locations and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Submission

Enquiry deadline

11 November 2025, 12:00pm

Submission type

Requests to participate

Deadline for requests to participate

21 November 2025, 12:00pm

Submission address and any special instructions

<https://contracts.mod.uk/go/55405059019A2645B034>

Tenders may be submitted electronically

Yes

Languages that may be used for submission

English

Suppliers to be invited to tender

Lot 1. Destination Nuclear

Lot 2. Bursaries

Lot 3. Sponsorship Scheme

Lot 4. Sector Experts into Training

Lot 5. Career Switchers

Lot 6. Skills Supply Demand Model

Lot 7. Roles, Pathways and Curriculum

Lot 8. Training Provider Network

Lot 9. Teacher Training Bursary

Maximum 4 suppliers per lot

Selection criteria:

Please see PSQ Guidance document attached to the DSP listing.

per lot

Award decision date (estimated)

12 March 2026

Award criteria

Name	Description	Type	Weighting
Quality	The Authority intends to use a number of scored weighted quality questions. The headings of the scored weighted quality questions may be as follows; Commercial Compliance, Social Value and Technical Questions. Further information will be provided as part of ITT Documentation.	Quality	70%
Cost	The Authority intend to use Value for Money Index. This approach divides the total score of the non-cost (quality) criteria by the tender cost. It ranks tenders on the quality (represented by the non-cost score) for each £ (or £k or £m) of cost. A full and final ITT pack will be published post PSQ stage of the competition to down-selected Potential Providers.	Cost	30%

Other information

Payment terms

All payments will be made through the Authority's Contracting, Purchasing & Finance (CP&F) system (Exostar) and will be in accordance with future contractual arrangements.

This tender notice is for the award of a public contract through a competitive flexible procedure in accordance with section 20(1) and (2)(b) of the Procurement Act 2023.

The Procurement Specific Questionnaire (PSQ) (including Conditions of Participation) is available within DSP and will be used to down-select so that no more than 4 Potential Providers per Lot will be invited to Tender. This will also include the assessment of whether a Potential Provider, its connected persons, associated persons or any intended subcontractors are excluded or excludable persons and whether the Potential Providers are UK Potential Providers under the Procurement Act. A clarification process will be used during the PSQ period to allow Potential Providers to seek clarification from the Authority.

Within the PSQ there are a mix of questions: Pass/Fail, where a Fail in any question will result in exclusion from further participation in the tendering process; and scored Questions.

For those Potential Providers who Pass all of the Pass/Fail questions, their overall technical score will determine their ranking. Those Potential Providers ranking in the top 4 will be invited to Tender.

Where there is a tie at Positions 4 and 5 (or more), the decision on which Potential Provider will be Invited to Tender will be based initially on the highest score on question 1 of the Technical Questions. Where this still results in a tie, the decision will be based on the highest score for question 2. This will continue sequentially down the list of Technical Questions until a Potential Provider is selected for 4th place. If this sequential process does not result in a clear 4th place then the Authority reserves the right to proceed to tender with additional Potential Providers who share equal 4th position.

An Invitation to Tender (ITT) will be issued to those successful at PSQ. A clarification process will be used during the tendering period to allow Potential Providers to seek clarification from the Authority. A summary of the award criteria is in this notice and will be explained in the Tender Evaluation Strategy, which will be published in DSP, with the ITT.

The Authority reserves the right to refine the award criteria before and during the Tender period in accordance with section 24 of the Procurement Act 2023. This may include revision to the scored quality questions including potential revision to the weightings.

The following supplementary processes may be used, with further details set out in the additional tender documents at ITT Stage;

- Clarifications - during the tender evaluation period
- Dialogue
- Potential Provider presentations

- Best and Final Offer
- Preferred Potential Provider Stage - an opportunity to review and apply any economies of scale to pricing where a Potential Provider is awarded multiple lots; and/or to confirm solutions; and/or to finalise the draft contract(s). A review of pricing at this stage does not form part of the tender evaluation process.

The Authority reserves the right to amend the procurement, where such amendment would not be substantial, as follows, including and not limited to;

- amendments to the tender documents which may provide clarification
- refining the specification as the competitive flexible procedure progresses
- reducing timescales.

If any amendments are made, the Authority will consider whether any applicable tender deadlines should be revised, and whether any tender documents or notices need to be re-issued.

Under Section 43 of the Procurement Act 2023, the Authority reserves the right to Direct Award should no suitable tenders or requests to participate be received.

Description of risks to contract performance

Changes in standards and policies, outside of Authority control, may necessitate changes to the contract. This may incur delays and or increases to cost.

Conflicts assessment prepared/revised

Yes

Procedure

Procedure type

Competitive flexible procedure

Competitive flexible procedure description

This procedure provides contracting authorities with the opportunity and flexibility to design and undertake a bespoke multi-stage procurement process. The Authority is undertaking a two-stage procurement, stage 1 is seeking expressions of interest, via the completion of a Procurement Specific Questionnaire (PSQ) from Potential Providers. Following the evaluation of PSQ responses up to four Potential Providers shall be invited to Stage 2, the full Invitation to Tender (ITT) for each lot.

Justification for not publishing a preliminary market engagement notice

Publishing a PMEN was not deemed necessary as the Authority's requirement is suitably well defined and the competitive flexible procedure is being conducted over two stages, where interested parties will have the opportunity to register their interest and submit a PSQ response.

Contracting authority

Ministry of Defence

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PHVX-4316-ZVGZ

Ministry of Defence

Bristol

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United Kingdom

Email: daisy.white182@mod.gov.uk

Region: UKK12 - Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire

Organisation type: Public authority - central government