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Tender

Closed Framework for Research and Evaluation Services

ARMED FORCES COVENANT FUND TRUSTEE LIMITED

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

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Scope

Description

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust ("the Trust") is running a procurement process to establish a closed Framework of suitably qualified Suppliers for the provision of research and evaluation services to support the Trust's research, evidence, policy, and decision-making needs. The Framework is intended to appoint up to five (5) organisations capable of delivering high-quality research, evaluation and related services. Call-Off Contracts will then be awarded under the Framework for specific projects. Bidders must demonstrate their ability to deliver all core elements of the Service Specification (included in the ITT document) and to respond flexibly to a range of Call-Off requirements over the life of the Framework, which will be for a period of four (4) years.

Commercial tool

Establishes a framework

Total value (estimated)

- £400,000 excluding VAT
- £500,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 23 February 2026 to 22 February 2030
- 4 years

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 73210000 - Research consultancy services

Contract locations

- UK - United Kingdom

Framework

Maximum number of suppliers

Maximum percentage fee charged to suppliers

0%

Framework operation description

The Trust intends to appoint up to a maximum of five (5) Suppliers. However, where the submitted tenders demonstrate that full coverage of the requirements can be achieved with fewer Suppliers than the maximum number stated in this paragraph, the Trust reserves the right to appoint fewer than the stated maximum number of Suppliers. The Trust will make the decision factoring in issues such as coverage of requirements, the need for consistency in service delivery, supplier capacity risk and effective framework management. The Trust also reserves the right to appoint fewer than the maximum number of Suppliers if fewer than five (5) compliant Tender Responses are received.

The term of the framework is four (4) years.

Individual Call-Off contracts are estimated to range from £40,000 to £200,000 but the Trust reserves the right to award Call-Off contracts under the framework with a value outside of this range.

Call-Off Mechanism and Award Process

Call-Off contracts under the framework will be awarded, by default, by 'mini-competitions' based on the following criteria:

- The experience and expertise of the bidding organisation and the proposed team in relation to the Service requirements.
- The suitability, deliverability and robustness of the methodological framework proposed to undertake the research or evaluation, and the strength of the project management framework.
- Consideration of factors including risk management, adherence to relevant professional standards, research ethics principles, data protection legislation and safeguarding requirements.
- The proposed cost for carrying out the work in the Service Specification outlined in the Call-Off - the lowest bidder receives the highest score in the Commercial section

The process for mini-competitions will involve:

- Issuing a Call-Off request setting out the scope of services, deliverables, timescales and the precise research and evaluation criteria to be applied to award the Call-Off contract.
- Allowing framework Suppliers a reasonable period to respond, proportionate to the complexity of the requirement.
- Evaluating responses and awarding the Call-Off contract to the Supplier whose submission offers the most advantageous tender based on the published criteria.

The Trust reserves the right to award Call-Off contracts via direct award (i.e. without a mini-competition) by approaching a single framework Supplier for a proposal. The Trust may use the direct award option for any of the following reasons:

- for urgent requirements;
- where the Call-Off contract is low-value (typically below £50,000 including VAT); or
- where the Trust considers (in its absolute discretion) a direct award to a specific framework Supplier is necessary for the continuation of work for consistency or because the Supplier is the only one that has the experience or expertise required for the Call-Off contract.

The Trust reserves the right not to award a Call-Off contract after requesting proposal(s) at any time and for any reason including if no submission meets the Trust's requirements.

Award method when using the framework

Either with or without competition

Contracting authorities that may use the framework

Establishing party only

Participation

Particular suitability

- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)
- Voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSE)

Submission

Enquiry deadline

16 January 2026, 12:00pm

Tender submission deadline

23 January 2026, 12:00pm

Submission address and any special instructions

Tenders shall be submitted via tenders@covenantfund.org.uk by answering all of the required questions in the ITT document and attaching any necessary documents as instructed. More information on the required form and structure of Tenders is provided alongside the relevant questions in the ITT.

Tenders may be submitted electronically

No

Languages that may be used for submission

English

Award decision date (estimated)

9 February 2026

Award criteria

Name	Description	Type	Weighting
Relevant experience and capabilities	Please set out your organisation's experience of delivering services of the type and scale envisaged under this framework, as outlined in the Service Specification, over the last three years. Provide up to three examples of previous relevant projects.	Quality	30%

Name	Description	Type	Weighting
Team capacity and specialist expertise	<p>Please provide details of your organisational capacity and key personnel relevant to this framework and the Service Specification.</p> <p>Outline the typical size and composition of your research and evaluation team (roles, FTEs). Provide short profiles of the core team who would lead and deliver work under this framework, highlighting experience with research and evaluation in the armed forces community or similar contexts.</p> <p>Explain how you will ensure continuity of personnel and manage peaks in demand across multiple Call-Offs.</p>	Quality	30%

Name	Description	Type	Weighting
Methodological approach	Describe your organisation's standard approaches to designing impact and economic evaluations of grant-funded programmes, conducting evidence reviews and mapping the needs of specific communities, as outlined in the Service Specification. Explain how you select and justify methods (qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods), ensure data quality, and manage bias and limitations.	Quality	10%
Quality assurance	Provide an overview of your internal quality assurance processes for research and evaluation outputs (e.g. peer review, sign-off).		10%

Name	Description	Type	Weighting
Engagement, ethics and safeguarding	<p>Describe your approach to engaging with members of the armed forces community in research and evaluation activities, including veterans, serving personnel, families and other groups who may be vulnerable or have experienced trauma.</p> <p>Explain your arrangements for research ethics, informed consent, confidentiality, data protection, and safeguarding, including how you would manage distress or risk during fieldwork.</p> <p>Provide examples of how you have adapted methods to be inclusive and safe for participants.</p>	Quality	10%
Rate Card/Commercial	<p>The Rate Card (template) calculates the day rates for each member of the team across a total number of days working on a hypothetical project. As not all of these roles will be relevant for every bidder, the average cost across the team (total overall cost ÷ number of members in the team) will be used to score the commercial criteria.</p>	Price	10%

Other information

Conflicts assessment prepared/revised

Yes

Procedure

Procedure type

Open procedure

Documents

Associated tender documents

<https://covenantfund.org.uk/work-for-the-trust/>

Contracting authority

ARMED FORCES COVENANT FUND TRUSTEE LIMITED

- Companies House: 11185188

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PLHN-1877-WRDN

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Region: UKE42 - Leeds

Organisation type: Public authority - central government