

This is a published notice on the Find a Tender service: <https://www.find-tender.service.gov.uk/Notice/084702-2025>

Planning

Bus Scheduling and Depot Allocation System

Translink

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

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-084702

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocids-h6vhtk-05f9e1

Published 19 December 2025, 9:28am

Scope

Reference

P-3361

Description

Translink are looking to engage with suppliers capable of providing a scheduling and depot allocation system to support bus operations on Ulsterbus and Metro Fleet. The system would be expected to allow Translink operations to efficiently create route diagrams, timetables and duty allocation for the full network in Northern Ireland, and some cross-border services.

Translink require the system to interface with wider bus systems, including the control room interface, therefore, a cloud-based, open data architecture is necessary, to ensure that the bus systems can integrate with other client systems, enhancing data flow and ensuring regular operations continue without interruption. The supplier will be required to maintain and support upgrades to the system to ensure Translink are able to take advantage of market developments.

Before embarking on a tender process, Translink wishes to engage with the marketplace to gather information which will be used to inform the sourcing strategy for this contract and thus, the procurement process. We are therefore looking to engage with providers that are experienced in scheduling and depot allocation systems, which believe they are capable of fulfilling all requirements below.

It is anticipated that this contract will commence in Q1 2027.

Our requirements include, but are not limited to the following:

- Facilitate bus route development.
- Facilitate Timetable and staff rota development.
- Provide reporting on bus mileage to allow Translink to reconcile fleet mileage.
- Provide a method of storing and managing fleet details.
- Support integration with a wide variety of third-party bus systems that are already in place.
- Facilitate a bus stop asset database which contains information including, the NaPTAN location code, stop name, locality, and facilities (shelter/pole).
- Allow for daily variation outside of the regular timetables and schedules during peak periods.
- Flag errors or notifications between the scheduling system and wider bus systems.
- Allow for the fleets (Ulsterbus and Metro) to be managed independently of each other, to facilitate their specific requirements.
- Support data exports and imports in recognised formats such as TransXChange and CIF files.
- Verify that all rotas are compliant with EU regulations relating to driver rest and compensation during allocated duties.
- Verify that all duties are accounted for in the driver rotas.
- Allow for operational changes, such as driver pay allocations to be manually updated by schedulers.
- Include a dedicated analytics package that supports manual and automated

performance and management reporting.

- Support integration with current, and future bus systems.

To advance to the next stage, suppliers must also be able to demonstrate that they have supplied a similar solution to customers with a similar fleet size (c. 1400 vehicles) within the last 3 years.

Total value (estimated)

- £1,000,000 excluding VAT
- £1,200,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 1 April 2028 to 1 April 2033
- Possible extension to 1 April 2036
- 8 years, 1 day

Main procurement category

Goods

CPV classifications

- 34121000 - Buses and coaches
- 48100000 - Industry specific software package

Contract locations

- UKN - Northern Ireland
-

Engagement

Engagement deadline

1 March 2026

Engagement process description

It is the intention of Translink to invite suitably interested Economic Operators to present during February 2026 (days, dates and times to be confirmed).

Suppliers registering their interest in participating in this exercise should note that:

1. This Notice is to initiate a market engagement and information gathering exercise and does not indicate the start of a procurement exercise. It is instead intended to act as an informal market research document providing a brief synopsis of Translink's future requirements. This document is not intended to provide a definitive list of requirements
2. We intend to invite interested suppliers to present to a range of Translink personnel and discuss the scheduling solutions each can offer.
3. This document is not a tender specification nor request for quotation. Translink is merely investigating market opportunities at this stage without entering into any contractual or financial commitments.
4. Please note, progress in the project will be subject to the availability and timing of funding. If this requirement is given financial approval, it will be tendered under the Procurement Act 2023. Any documents, discussions, presentations, demonstrations, or clarifications submitted for this Market Research will not be considered as any part of the tender exercise. If Translink does decide to proceed with a competitive tender process, a separate detailed tender specification document will be produced as part of that process.
5. Nothing in this advertisement or any other documents or information provided by

Translink or any of its advisers or agents is to be construed as implying a commitment by Translink to place any Contract, now or in the future with any participating supplier in respect of the requirement under consideration.

6. Translink takes no responsibility for any actions or decisions taken, costs incurred, or commitments made by interested parties in responding to this notice or by being involved in any subsequent discussions in this market engagement and information gathering exercise.

7. At this stage it is not possible to give an accurate timeframe for this requirement.

Participation

Particular suitability

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)

Submission

Publication date of tender notice (estimated)

1 October 2027

Procedure

Special regime

Utilities

Contracting authority

Translink

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PTMT-7134-NRMV

22 Great Victoria Street

Belfast

BT2 7LX

United Kingdom

Contact name: Tori Croft

Email: tori.croft@translink.co.uk

Region: UKN06 - Belfast

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

Devolved regulations that apply: Northern Ireland