



OLLSCOIL NA
GAILLIMH
UNIVERSITY
OF GALWAY

**QUALIFICATION BRIEFING DOCUMENT (QBD)
SINGLE-PARTY FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT**

**PLEASE NOTE AN ASSOCIATED QUALIFICATION QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE DOCUMENT IS
PROVIDED SEPARATELY.**

Title:	Provision of a Single Party Framework for the ongoing support, maintenance, and development of YourSpace Portals, associated websites, associated systems and associated services.
Procedure	Competitive Procedure with Negotiation
University Ref:	GALW/CON1549/2026
eTenders CFT Ref:	8829345
Issue Date:	12 th August 2026
Closing Date for Queries:	12noon (Local Time), 27 th August 2026
Closing Date for Tender Submission:	12noon (Local Time), 14 th September 2026
Submissions and Queries via:	eTenders only
NOTE:	– In responding to this Qualification Stage, please complete Appendix 1 (Qualification Questionnaire Response Document (QQRD)) which is available on eTenders. – Please upload your response as a ZIP FILE to protect the integrity of the file names. – Where there is a discrepancy between the QBD and the QQRD please contact the Contracting Authority as soon as possible. In normal circumstances the wording in the QBD will take precedence over the QQRD.

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1. The Contracting Authority

University of Galway (herein after referred to as the “Contracting Authority” or University) has been inspiring minds since 1845 as a research-led university. University of Galway is one of the oldest and largest universities in Ireland. We are at the heart of a distinct and vibrant region, renowned for its unique culture, creative industries, medical technologies, marine ecology and economy, and our innovation.

University of Galway is a global perspective, and our university contributes greatly to the diversity and dynamism of Galway, the most international city in Ireland. Through our teaching and research, we attract and develop talent from around the world to address global challenges.

With over 19,000 students, University of Galway has a long-established reputation of teaching and research excellence in the Colleges of Arts, Social Sciences, and Celtic Studies; Business, Public Policy and Law; Engineering and Science, and Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences. With a complement of over 2,700 (full-time equivalent) staff, University of Galway (Contracting Authority) is one of the largest employers in Galway and makes a significant contribution to the economic, social, and cultural fabric of the city.

University of Galway’s vision is to be a driver of transformational change for our people, our region and our world. We will think globally by inspiring, celebrating and advancing the critical role that our University has in delivering sustainable development. We act locally by empowering our people, investing in our purpose and engaging with the distinctive needs of our region.

We create a distinctively values-based culture, which has excellence, ambition and the wellbeing of our communities at its core. Our vision will be guided by our university values of respect in our actions, excellence in our work, openness in our outlook and sustainability in our approach. Distinguished by kindness and a commitment to equality, this culture will empower our people to thrive. We will harness our distinctive strengths and creative energy to deliver significant and sustainable societal impact.

Our university is at the heart of a distinctive city and region, renowned for its culture, creativity, technology and innovation. Drawing on these distinctive strengths will set us apart internationally. We aim to stimulate creative potential of our students, staff, alumni and wider community to advance our teaching, research, innovation and engagement in and for the world.

Learn more at www.universityofgalway.ie

1.1 The University’s Supplier Charter

We value the relationships we have with our suppliers, and our Supplier Charter sets out how we require those relationships to be based on our Values of Openness, Respect, Excellence and Sustainability.

All University suppliers and/or service providers shall adhere to the Supplier Charter, available to view and download [here](#).

1.2 Disclaimer

This document issued herewith (“the Document”) is for information only and does not constitute, and shall not be interpreted as, an offer for sale, prospectus, or the basis of a contract. All information contained in this Qualification Questionnaire is provided for the purpose of facilitating the production and submission of an Application.

Candidates are recommended to read the documents thoroughly. While all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that the information set out in the Document is accurate and up to date, no representation or warranty, express or implied, is or will be made or given in relation to the accuracy or the completeness of any information contained in the Document or otherwise provided by or on behalf of University of Galway (in writing or otherwise) to any interested party or its advisers. No responsibility or liability for any loss or damage arising as a result of reliance on these documents, or for the information contained in these documents or for any omission is or will be accepted by the Contracting Authority or by any of its officers, employees, agents or professional advisers. No officer, employee, agent, or professional adviser of the company has any authority to give or make any representation or warranty, express or implied, in relation to such information. The Contracting Authority’s officers, employees, agents, and professional advisers

expressly disclaim any and all liability arising out of such documentation or information and any errors or omissions in or from the documents and information.

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to discontinue the procurement process at any time and not make an award decision.

1.3 Use of eTenders

Please note that information relating to this Qualification Briefing Document, including clarifications and changes, will be published on the Irish Government Procurement Opportunities Portal www.etenders.gov.ie. Registration is free of charge and there is no charge for documents. Please note that the Contracting Authority accepts no responsibility for information relayed (or not relayed) via third parties.

In order to submit a response, it is mandatory to have **ASSOCIATED** your company with the competition using the eTenders log in.

For all up to date information on using eTenders, please refer to the Guidance Material on eTenders: <https://www.etenders.gov.ie/epps/home.do>

eTenders system usage queries are managed by eTenders Technical Support: <https://www.etenders.gov.ie/epps/PrepareContactUsAction.do>

1.4 Use of a Qualification Questionnaire Response Document (QQRD)

The Contracting Authority have provided a Qualification Questionnaire Response Document (QQRD) as a separate document for Candidates to use in preparing their response to this tender. This document and format must be used. Candidates should note that personalisation of the QQRD is not allowed, and they must not add their branding/colours to the QQRD.

Please note that in addition to this Qualification Briefing Document and the QQRD, any Clarification documents issued by the Contracting Authority during the qualification submission period forms part of the Procurement Documentation. Candidates must ensure they regularly monitor eTenders and review any Clarification documents published.

The Contracting Authority will not click on any web links in QQRD responses, so Candidates cannot assume that any material contained in web links will be viewed. Where Candidates submit additional material such as brochures or appendices, they must specifically highlight the information they consider is relevant to their Application and clearly explain which criterion it relates to. The Contracting Authority is under no obligation to parse through such material seeking information relevant to the response.

It is recommended to upload your response as a Zip file in order to protect the integrity of file names and ensure your company name/subset of your name (to identify the response) is included in the title of all files submitted.

2. Scope of Requirements

The Contracting Authority is seeking to establish a Single Party Framework for the ongoing support, maintenance, and any further development of their YourSpace Portals, associated websites, associated systems and associated services.

2.1 Background

The YourSpace Portal, associated websites and associated systems support the central publication and administration services in the co-curricular / extra-curricular space within the Contracting Authority. These portals, websites and systems were developed in consultation with the Contracting Authority's Information Solution Services Unit over the last 18 years, with seed funding from the Student Project Fund. This funding is used to develop online capabilities to manage staff & student extra-curricular activities including YourSpace.

Initially the systems were developed primarily for Contracting Authority clubs and societies. However, as new staff & student extra-curricular programmes were developed, they required online system support and this resulted in additional functionality being regularly added to the original portal, websites and systems:

Name	Description	Link
YourSpace	Extracurricular Student Portal	yourspace.universityofgalway.ie
Clubs Portal	A portal for clubs to manage club activities	https://sport.universityofgalway.ie/
Sport Scholarships	A portal for application for Sports Scholarship	University Of Galway - Elite Sport
Societies Portal	A portal for Societies and other University services to manage their activities	University of Galway - Societies - University of Galway Societies: Home
Student Web-store	A website for online shopping	University of Galway - Societies - Products
Online Room Booking System	Booking system for student spaces within the Contracting Authority campuses e.g. sports facilities; performance areas; rooms	Societies Room Booking System
Staff Calendar	Calendar portal to allow staff members publish staff related events. This is integrated with Clubs Society portal calendars to produce a variety of bespoke calendars.	https://dialann.universityofgalway.ie/

2.2 Current status

The Contracting Authority currently has a service provider for the services in scope of this tender. Should the contract be awarded to a new service provider, transition / migration will be required to ensure continuity of service.

2.3 Functional overview

Specifically YourSpace supports the central administration of:

- Calendars/ aggregator calendars
- Personal and personalised student calendar
- Event registration tool and history of events attended
- Event location management
- Notifications
- Student extracurricular e-learning
- Societies portal
- Clubs' portal

Ancillary student and staff services including but not limited to:

- Alive Award for volunteering and Certificate download
- Employability Award and Certificate download
- CEIM - peer learning
- Student event management and attendance
- Student lockers
- Training Delivery and compliance management and e-learning completion tracking
- Constitution builder
- Room booking system for Aras na Mac Leinn and other student spaces
- Societies and clubs' compliance documentation
- The mathematics support centre SUMS
- Web Store
- Club membership payments
- Club coach register
- Grinds
- Student Union and Class Rep elections
- Clubs and Societies Membership management and communication
- Entity profiles and Social Media
- Clubs and Societies Constitution builder
- Planned Absence Letters
- Newsletter generator
- Reporting
- Statistic generation
- Society Leadership Programme
- 2LIFT
- Student Ambassadors
- Sports Scholarship administration
- Civic Engagement Scholarship management
- Loyalty Cards
- Cell Explorers
- Staff Choir
- Student Engagement Award
- Digi Champs
- Orientation Ambassadors
- Just 3 - Global Galway civic engagement programme
- Export of data in format compatible with other National Platforms including Board of Irish Colleges Societies and Student Volunteer Ireland platforms.
- Ensure all sites are GDPR compliant

2.4 Technical overview

All services are available 24 / 7 with peaks and troughs in usage during the academic year. All scheduled downtime is agreed with stakeholders, managed through the societies officer and planned for off-peak periods.

All services in scope are hosted by the Contracting Authority and all software / hardware licences associated with the services in scope are managed by the Contracting Authority. However, advice from the service provider will be sought in relation to hosting and licencing the services in scope.

The web technology in use is Apache, PHP, with MySQL as the database technology.

Content Management, reporting, user access control and website admin are controlled via bespoke menus / functionality within the YourSpace environment.

User logon to any sensitive content / pages is authenticated via Contracting Authority Single Sign On (SSO) solution. Nightly metadata downloads from Edugate/HEAnet. Nightly processing of student and staff data from the contracting authority Information Solution Services to ensure seamless student and staff access to the systems.

There are a number of integrations:

- Contracting Authority Payment Solution (Realex / Elavon)
- Contracting Authority Transactional Email solution (Mailgun)
- Contracting Authority SMS solution (Clickatell)
- Stripe

A number of data extracts from the services in scope are produced for National bodies on an ongoing basis using an API (with a backup of CSV file downloads using common file types e.g.).

2.5 Functional requirements

The successful Tenderer will be responsible for the ongoing support, maintenance, and development of the YourSpace Portal, associated websites and associated systems as outlined above.

This will include:

- Making changes to existing and creating new content and imagery as required, via the bespoke content management menu.

Note: The Contracting Authority creates and manages the majority of content / imagery, via the bespoke content management menu. More complex content / imagery is managed by the successful Tenderer.

Additional requirements include:

- Troubleshooting and resolving incidents, issues and queries, including customisations
- Providing functional advice and support to end users where required, including configuration enhancements and training events
- Ensuring the functional user guide accessible through the system is kept up to date by carrying out a full review of the guide on an annual basis, as well as making any necessary updates required, as a result of any development work
- Generate download of all data in excel format as required
- Liaising with stakeholders, where appropriate, in relation to incident and query management

2.6 Technical requirements

- While the YourSpace Portal, associated websites and associated systems are available 24 / 7, the support requirements are **09:00 to 17:00 (Irish Standard Time), Monday to Friday (Irish business days)** – based on ISO / ITIL / Other frameworks.
- Ensure the underlying architecture must be supported, maintained and managed
- Ensuring portals, websites and systems are accessible and WCAG-AA compliant.
- Providing advice on backup and recovery of all layers in the solution architecture, proactively monitoring backups and proactively testing
- Providing advice on licencing
- Providing advice and notification of essential system updates and / or maintenance

2.7 Quality Assurance requirements

- Throughout the Contract, regular and ad hoc meetings between the Service Partner and the Contracting Authority will be arranged in order to analyse the quality of the services provided, discuss major problems, improve quality, and assess needs for changes.
- Continual improvements in service delivery are expected during the Contract.

3. Type of Arrangement

3.1 Single Party Framework Agreement

This competitive process relates to the establishment of a single-party Framework Agreement. A Framework Agreement constitutes a means of establishing overall terms and conditions in accordance with which, for a specified duration, individual contracts may or may not be awarded.

This competition relates to the establishment of a single-party framework with one (1) member, subject to the winning tenderer meeting the minimum criteria and rules following tender/negotiation stage(s) as applicable. Thereafter contracts will be awarded in accordance with the rules contained herein.

3.1.1 Duration of the Framework Agreement

The Framework Agreement will be for a maximum period of seven (7) years. However, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to collapse/terminate the framework should the circumstances arise by giving three months' notice.

The extended duration for the framework has been selected for a number of reasons including:

1. The embedded and strategic nature of the Contracting Authority Enterprise Infrastructure and associated services amounts to a core enterprise system and to replace and transition from such a system in a shorter period would cause significant disruption to the workings of the Contracting Authority and the delivery of services.
2. The financial cost for the Contracting Authority in procuring the services will amount to a significant investment and this investment could not be optimised and the necessary return achieved if the services were required for a shorter period and would ultimately not deliver value for money on behalf of the taxpayer.
3. For the avoidance of doubt, the Contracting Authority confirms that the period of any contracts awarded under the framework agreement may extend beyond the date of expiry of the agreement.

The framework agreement will be established on foot of a competition for an initial call-off contract for a three (3) year period, with any subsequent contracts ranging from between one (1) to two (2) years, subject to satisfactory annual review of performance.

The Contracting Authority confirms that the period of any contracts awarded under the Framework Agreement may extend beyond the date of expiry of the agreement.

3.1.2 Estimated Value for the Framework Agreement

It is envisaged that maximum spend under this Framework Agreement will not exceed €350,000 excluding VAT.

It is emphasised, however, that this figure is provided strictly for indicative purposes only as there is no guaranteed expenditure under the Framework Agreement.

Please note that the historical expenditure has been approximately €30,000 per annum. We estimate future spend to equate to €50,000 per annum.

3.1.3 Estimated Value of the Initial Call-Off Contract under the Framework Agreement

The initial contract for the project will be to support, maintain and develop the YourSpace website and related services for an initial 3 years. The budget for these initial services is estimated to be between €100,000 and €175,000.

3.1.4 Awarding Contracts under the Framework Agreement

Contracts may be awarded directly on foot of the original tenders or by consultation with the Framework Member and invitation to provide a Supplementary Request for Tender (SRFT) within the constraints laid down in this tender documentation and the Contracting Authority's Terms and Conditions.

3.1.5 Right to tender outside of the Framework Agreement

Admission to a framework does not guarantee the award of any contract to any Framework Member, nor does it give the member the right to be consulted in respect of any contract.

The Contracting Authority intends to use the framework for the procurement of requirements falling within its scope during the specified period; however, it reserves the right to go outside the framework for the procurement of any requirement without reference to the Framework Member, via either an individual tender process or use of another centrally establishment Framework Agreement.

3.2 Award to Runner Up

In circumstances, following the conclusion of the procurement process, where it is not possible to admit to the framework agreement one or more of the tenderers invited for whatever reason, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to re-examine the other tenders in order to identify a tenderer to be admitted to the framework, in accordance with the relevant criteria and applicable ranking within the applicable tender validity period.

Where required as part of provision of information obligations, new letters of notification will be issued. This shall be without prejudice to the right of the Contracting Authority to cancel this competitive process and/or initiate a new contract award procedure at its sole discretion.

In circumstances, subsequent to the conclusion of any contract awarded under the framework with the designated successful tenderer, where this contract is terminated for whatever reason, the Contracting Authority reserves the right, at its sole discretion to award the initial contract to the next highest scoring tenderer from the original procurement process for the contract willing to contract during the applicable tender validity period.

Subject to the above, any contract awarded will take account of work completed as relevant and any review mechanisms which may have applied within the period of time that has passed since the submission of tenders. In addition, and subject to the above, where the framework agreement is also terminated with an admitted framework member, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to re-examine the other valid and responsive tenders to identify a Tenderer to be admitted to the framework, from the original procurement process, in accordance with the relevant criteria and ranking within the applicable tender validity period.

With regard to the relevant circumstances, as set out above, the right to replace an initially successful contractor with a runner up from the original competition post award of a contract and within the

applicable tender validity period constitutes an unequivocal, clear and precise review clause for the purposes of Article 72(1)(d)(i) and 72(1)(a)^[1].

3.3 Compliance with the Terms and Conditions of the Contract

Award of the contract / admission to the Framework Agreement will be conditional upon acceptance of the Contracting Authority's Terms and Conditions which will be provided at tender stage.

^[1] DIRECTIVE 2014/24/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC Or the analogous application of this rule for below threshold contracts

4. Type of procedure

Competitive Procedure with Negotiation

The Contracting Authority is employing the Competitive Procedure with Negotiation for this procurement given the complexity and risk associated with the procurement in accordance with Art. 26 of Directive 2014/24/EU.

The procedure involves a number of stages:

– Qualification Phase (this Phase)

Interested parties are invited to complete the attached Qualification Questionnaire Response Document (Appendix 1) and to submit it before the specified deadline. **In order to be considered for participation in the competition, candidates must in the first instance meet the selection criteria and rules set out in the Qualification Questionnaire.** It is anticipated that three (3) firms will be invited to tender, subject to that number meeting the minimum criteria and rules. The Contracting Authority reserves the right to invite a larger number in situations where the next ranked firms are scoring closely or in the case of tied positions.

– Tender Stage

Those invited to tender, will be issued with a minimum based specification, award criteria and pricing documents and invited to submit tenders. The Contracting Authority will evaluate those tenders against the award criteria and reserves the right to:

1. Move straight to a contract award decision, without negotiation
2. To invite all firms to negotiation meetings.
3. To apply the successive reduction rule to reduce the number of firms invited to the negotiation phase. The selection of firms may be based on scenarios where firms have failed to qualify under one or more of the award criteria and/or situations where there is a clear score differential following evaluation of the initial tenders, which may on occasion mean only inviting one firm where they are a clear winner.

– The Negotiation Stage

Tenderers may be invited at the discretion of the Contracting Authority to attend a negotiation meeting at which all aspects of the tender submitted may be discussed, including costs. These Tenderers will be accorded an opportunity to submit a revised tender and again the Contracting Authority reserves the right to continue as set out in the 'Tender Stage' above.

The final tender on which basis the most economically advantageous tender is selected is not subject to any further negotiation but may be subject to clarifications on minor aspects.

It should be noted that the Contracting Authority reserves the right to award the framework/contract directly following receipt of tenders at any stage without recourse to negotiations with individual Tenderers.

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to employ a negotiation stage for the award of any additional contracts.

5. Instructions for Candidates

Every effort has been made to ensure that this Document contains all the necessary information for the completion of applications. The Contracting Authority does not warrant or represent that this Document, or any other information given to candidates, is accurate or complete. No liability is accepted for any error, misstatement, or omission (negligent or otherwise) in this Document, or in any other information given to candidates.

5.1 Closing Date for Application

The closing date for questionnaire responses submission is specified on the title page.

Candidates must ensure that they give themselves enough time to upload and submit all required documentation before the closing date/time. Candidates should consider the fact that upload speeds vary. For submissions, the Candidate can upload a total of 2.00 GB of files, with any individual file being up to 250MB. In order to submit a document to the electronic post-box, please note that you must click “Submit Response”. After submitting you can still modify and re-send your response up until response deadline. Candidates should be aware that the ‘Submit Response’ button will be disabled automatically upon the expiration of the response deadline.

It is the responsibility of the candidates to ensure that their application is complete and is uploaded by the designated deadline. Applications that are received late or via other means **will not be** considered in this public procurement competition.

It is important to note that only persons who have downloaded and accepted a document can upload a submission.

5.2 Submission of Applications

The Contracting Authority is using the postbox facility on eTenders, and questionnaire responses must be submitted electronically via the eTenders postbox facility on www.etenders.gov.ie only. Only questionnaire responses submitted to the electronic postbox will be accepted. Questionnaire responses submitted by any other means (including but not limited to by email, post or hand delivery) will **not** be accepted.

Candidates must ensure that they give themselves enough time to upload and submit all required documentation before the closing date/time noting the use of the new eTenders platform. Candidates should consider the fact that upload speeds vary. In order to submit a response to the electronic post-box, please note that you must ensure you have submitted the response completely. It is advisable to familiarise yourself with the new platform prior to the closing date.

Below we provide an overview of the key steps. Please note that the Contracting Authority take no responsibility for these steps being the totality of the steps required as different processes may require different actions.

If in doubt, please ensure you contact the eTenders helpdesk as follows:

Email: irish-eproc-helpdesk@eurodyn.com

Phone: +353-818001459

5.2.1 Accessing Documents

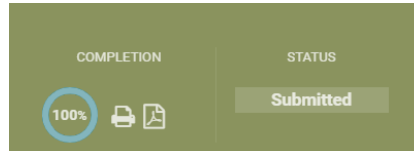
It is important to note that you must ensure you **ASSOCIATE** your company with this competition in the first instance. To do this you must do the following:

- (a) Log-in to the system
- (b) Locate the competition using the Advanced Search by Contracting Authority or Resource ID
- (c) Click on the hyperlink for the competition which will bring you to the CFT Workspace

- (d) In the Show CfT Menu for the competition click on the “Expression of Interest” in the drop-down menu
- (e) Complete the “Association with the CfT” tab.
- (f) This will then provide you with a link to “Tender” under the Show CfT Menu

5.2.2 Submitting your Response

In responding to a competition without an electronic ESPD, a number of steps are required. The final step involves clicking on a Submit button and receiving the following status:



If you do not receive a message similar to above and an email directly to the inbox of the person who submitted the response you have not complied with formal submission requirements and you have not submitted your response.

Please note that the screen may say **OFFLINE**, this is a technical feature of eTenders and does not mean you cannot submit. Also please note you may see the percentage field also saying 100% before you submit, this still requires you to go through the submit button.

Please upload your response as a **ZIP FILE** to protect the integrity of the file names.

It is the responsibility of the Candidate to ensure that their tender is complete and is uploaded in accordance with the instructions provided on eTenders prior to the deadline as per the front page.

5.3 Queries

The closing date for submitting queries is specified on the title page.

All queries regarding this tender should be through the messaging facility on www.etenders.gov.ie, including any omissions which would prevent Candidates from submitting a comprehensive tender. Please submit queries as soon as possible.

In circulating responses, queries will be edited to avoid disclosing the identity of the querist and will be circulated to all parties who have expressed an interest in the procurement on the eTenders website.

Please note that information relating to this Qualification Questionnaire, including clarifications and changes, will be published on the Irish Government Procurement Opportunities Portal www.etenders.gov.ie. Registration is free of charge and there is no charge for documents. Please note that the Contracting Authority accepts no responsibility for information relayed (or not relayed) via third parties.

5.4 Extension of the Deadline

The Contracting Authority reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to extend the closing date for receipt of applications by giving notice in writing (via eTenders) to all parties who have expressed an interest in the notice via eTenders no later than six days before the original closing date.

5.5 Completing the Qualification Questionnaire

When completing the Qualification Questionnaire contained in *Appendix 1* to this Document, Candidates should note the following conditions:

All questions must be completed in full using the format provided.

All questions should be answered with relevance to the subject matter of this competition. For the avoidance of doubt, it is emphasised that the information requested in the Qualification Questionnaire is aimed solely at determining the suitability and choice of candidates for entry to the competitive tendering

stage. Only at that subsequent tendering stage will the selected Tenderers be invited to tender in application to the specific requirements of the contract in the light of the published award criteria and the Request for Tender document.

Where a 'Rule' is associated with a particular question, candidates must satisfy the requirements of the rule in order to remain eligible for consideration in the competition.

Candidates are permitted to add lines to the pro-forma tables and boxes set out within the Qualification Questionnaire if required.

The Qualification Questionnaire must be completed in English.

All financial information should be denominated in euro (€), except where financial information is being provided in a certified or audited supporting document such as a set of financial statements in which case it is sufficient for the information to remain in its original currency.

Failure to provide a sufficient level of detail or to explain adequately any relevant matters may result in such data or information not being taken into account during the evaluation process.

The Contracting Authority is not responsible for and will not pay for any expense or cost incurred or loss suffered by an candidate in the preparation or submission of its application or otherwise. Further, the Contracting Authority is not responsible for any travel or accommodation costs incurred by the candidate unless previously agreed in writing by the Contracting Authority. Each candidate is fully responsible for the entirety of all expenses and/or costs it incurs in the presentation or submission of an application or in participating in this process and competition.

5.6 Applications from SMEs and Consortia

The Contracting Authority seeks to encourage participation on a fair and equal basis by Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) in this Competition. SMEs that believe the scope of this Competition is beyond their technical or business capacity are encouraged, subject to this paragraph, to explore the possibilities of forming relationships with other SMEs or with larger enterprises. Through such relationships they can participate and contribute to the successful implementation of any Services Contracts that may result from this Competition and therefore increase their social and economic benefits.

Larger enterprises are also encouraged, subject to this paragraph, to consider the practical ways that SMEs can be included in their proposals to maximise the social and economic benefits of any Services Contracts that may result from this Competition.

5.7 Relying on the Capacity of Other Entities

Where a grouping (of economic operators¹ comes together, (regardless of the legal relationship between the various entities of that grouping) to submit an application in response to this Qualification Phase, the Contracting Authority will deal with all matters relating to this Competition through the entity (the "Prime Entity" or "Lead Candidate") who will carry overall responsibility for the performance of the contract if successful, irrespective of whether or not tasks are to be performed by another entity within the grouping e.g., a subcontractor, etc. The Candidate must clearly set out the name, title, telephone number, postal address, and email address of nominated contact personnel of the Lead Candidate authorised to represent the Candidate and to whom all communications shall be directed and accepted until this Competition has been completed or terminated. Correspondence from any other person (including from any Subcontractors) **will not** be accepted or responded to.

Candidates are reminded that they may rely on the resources of other entities in order to establish the suitability requirements on condition that they can prove to the satisfaction of the Contracting Authority that they will have these resources at their disposal when necessary.

¹ 'Economic operator' means any natural or legal person or public entity or group of such persons and/or entities, including any temporary association of undertakings, which offers the execution of works and/or a work, the supply of products or the provision of services on the market; (Art 2(10) of Directive 2014/24/EU).

All Lead Candidates relying on the capacity of other entities must:

- Identify in Section A of the Questionnaire as the Lead Candidate for the grouping, with whom the Contracting Authority will communicate and with whom any subsequent contractual arrangements will be made, if successful.
- Identify in Section A of the Questionnaire, the relevant entities upon whose capacity the Lead Candidate is relying upon to meet criteria and/or deliver elements of the contract.
- Ensure Section A of the Questionnaire (including all subsections) are completed and submitted for all relevant entities upon whom the Lead Candidate is relying on to meet criteria and/or deliver elements of the contract, if awarded.
- In all applications, the Lead Candidate must nominate the reference contracts for inclusion in the assessment and selection process. The number of reference contracts for which details are to be provided will be nominated in the relevant section of the Questionnaire of the Lead Candidate. If more reference contracts are provided than required only the first listed reference contracts to the number specified by the contracting authority (e.g. 3 reference contracts) will be considered. Where relying on the experience of other entities, at least one of the references provided should include reference to the relevant experience.
- Where a third party will indirectly provide particular resources/capacity such as licencing, hosting, etc. in the fulfilment of any future contract arising from the procurement process and these resources/capacities are generally available to all candidates on more or less the same terms, a completed Section A of the Questionnaire will not be required.
- The Contracting Authority reserves the right to seek additional information to verify the capacity of any party involved in the execution of the contract or being relied upon.

Subject to the above:

- The Contracting Authority may request proof that a Candidate who is relying on the capacities of other entities will have at its disposal the resources of the other entity, when necessary, this could include for example, a request for a written commitment of those entities.
- Where the Candidate is subsequently successful at tender stage, the Contracting Authority may require the members of the Candidate grouping to enter a formal legal arrangement for the contract as a single entity having joint and several liability, and provide evidence of same.

5.8 Multiple Participation

All Candidates should note that if any individual member of a Candidate grouping is included in more than one application for this competition, each individual or lead in a group must provide a statement declaring that they are aware of this 'multiple participation' and this has been brought to the attention of all the groupings they belong to. Depending on the situation arising, the Contracting Authority may take all appropriate steps to limit attendance by such parties at competing dialogue rounds. The Contracting Authority will engage individually with relevant parties in order to ensure that any conflicts of interest, distortion of competition, and/or competitive advantage are appropriately managed to the satisfaction of the Contracting Authority.

5.9 European Single Procurement Document

In accordance with 2014 Directives, suppliers may have compiled a European Single Procurement Document (ESPD), either electronically via the eESPD on eTenders or as a separate uploaded attachment with their response, which will be accepted as evidence of compliance with *Section A* of the Questionnaire. However, the Contracting Authority requires evidence via completed submission of *Section B* relating to Technical Capacity. Mere confirmation **will not** be sufficient under these headings.

Progression to the next stage will be conditional upon identified candidates providing evidence of self-declared information to the Contracting Authority. Failure to provide appropriate evidence within the

required timeframe specified will result in the candidate being deemed inadmissible for the next stage of the competition.

5.10 Evaluation of Applications

An “Application” comprises a completed Qualification Questionnaire Response Document including the associated appendices.

Applications will be evaluated strictly on their merits in accordance with the published selection criteria, minimum rules and weightings specified in the Qualification Questionnaire Response Document.

5.11 Clarification of Applications

While not being obliged to seek clarifications from candidates, the Contracting Authority reserves the right, at its absolute discretion, to ask candidates for clarification or elaboration of their applications to assist in its evaluation of applications.

However, it is emphasised that the Contracting Authority will **not** be obliged to seek clarification where any of the essential pass requirements set out in the Qualification Questionnaire have not been met. Therefore, candidates should pay particular attention to ensure that their applications contain all the required information.

Candidates will be responsible for any costs incurred by them in preparing applications and/or in the event that they are required to attend clarification or other meetings or make a presentation of their proposals at subsequent stages.

5.12 Identification of Short List for Subsequent Stage of the Competition

All applications will be evaluated in line with the criteria and rules outlined in Appendix 1. Responses will be scored and the top scoring three (3) or at least three (3) qualifying candidates will be invited to the next stage, subject to that number meeting the minimum requirements.

5.13 Freedom of Information Act

All responses to this Qualification Questionnaire will be treated in confidence and no information contained therein will be communicated to any third party without the written permission of the candidate except insofar as is specifically required for the consideration and evaluation of the response or as may be required under law, including the Freedom of Information Act 2014, EU and Irish Government Procurement rules.

Candidates are requested to consider if any of the information supplied by them in response to this request for tenders should not be disclosed because of its sensitivity. If that is the case, candidates should specify the information that is sensitive and the reasons for its sensitivity. The Contracting Authority cannot guarantee that any information provided by candidates, either in response to this Qualification Questionnaire or in the course of any contract awarded as a result thereof, will not be released pursuant to the Contracting Authority’s obligations under law, including the Freedom of Information Act 2014, or to those under EU and Irish Government Procurement rules. The Contracting Authority accepts no liability whatsoever in respect of any disclosure of the relevant information which is subsequently released or in respect of any consequential damage suffered as a result of such disclosure.

5.14 Interference

Any effort by the candidate to unduly influence the Contracting Authority, relevant agency personnel or any other relevant persons or bodies in the process of examination, clarification, evaluation and comparison of applications and in decisions concerning the award of the contract shall have their application rejected.

In accordance with Section 38 of the Ethics in Public Office Act 1995 any money, gift or other consideration from a person holding or seeking to obtain a contract will be deemed to have been paid or given corruptly unless the contrary is proved.

5.15 Inducement to purchase

The Contracting Authority shall be entitled to disqualify an candidate in one of the following circumstances:

- (a) If the candidate has offered or given or agreed to give to any person any gift or consideration of any kind as an inducement or reward for doing or forbearing to do, or for having done or forborne to do, any action in relation to the obtaining or execution of this contract award procedure or showing or forbearing to show favour or disfavour to any person in relation to this contract award procedure or any other contract award procedure with the Contracting Authority, or
- (b) If like acts have been done by any other person employed by the candidate or acting on its behalf (whether with or without the knowledge of the candidate).

5.16 Irish Legislation and Law

Candidates should be aware that national legislation applies in other matters such as Employment, Working Hours, Official Secrets, Data Protection and Health and Safety. Also, it is a requirement of the Contracting authority that tenderers are compliant with the Official Languages Acts (2003 & 2021).

Candidates must have regard to statutory terms relating to minimum pay and to legally binding industrial or sectoral agreements in the Contracting Authority tenders and in delivering contracts awarded to them. The contract(s) awarded on foot of this tender process will be governed by Irish law.