

Procurement is the purchase of works, assets, goods and services for the British Society of Soil Science (BSSS) according to a process that is open and transparent. The aim of this policy is to ensure orders are handled by individuals having skills in evaluating the purchases required, to ensure purchases made do not exceed the budget, to ensure purchased goods and services conform with the quantity and price specified and that all suppliers are able to adhere to our Environmental, Ethics and Diversity and Inclusion policies.

This policy covers:

- Appointment of non-staff personnel such as contractors and consultants
- Purchase of all services, goods and equipment.

The policy's purpose is to:

- maintain the highest ethical standards in procurement matters
- ensure the correct quality, goods or services are purchased, in specification, limiting their impact on the environment and to achieve best value for money
- act fairly towards suppliers
- promote diversity and inclusion, ethics and sustainability throughout the procurement process.

BSSS commit to:

- A zero-tolerance approach to bribery: we value our reputation for ethical behaviour and for financial probity and reliability. Our Ethics policy provides further detail on our anti-bribery position and the ethical responsibilities our staff and volunteers hold
- Being clear with suppliers from the outset on what 'quality' would look like, and what our expectations for the procurement process would be
- **Quality, value for money and environmental and ethical standards**, rather than price alone, being the key factors in our procurement selection process. Our [Environmental policy](#) provide further information on our environmental position and should be agreed to by any supplier providing services on our behalf
- Providing all suppliers with fair and equal access to contracts we advertise. Where possible, we will provide a fair and open approach to tendering and:
 - Ensure that our tenders are supported by a sound business case and provide robust information which will allow suppliers to decide whether to bid for the tender, or decline to bid
 - Keep the costs associated with tendering to a minimum: although we will expect a response to the tender, we will not expect the supplier to present, design or create any new products or services before a decision has been made on awarding the contract
 - Offer meaningful feedback to suppliers on the evaluation of their proposal at the end of the tendering process.
- Paying suppliers for goods or services within 30 days of receiving an invoice. To achieve this aim we ask suppliers to process related paperwork promptly.

Scope

For all purchase transactions, the following thresholds are applicable. When calculating the contract value, for a one-off purchase, the total cost of the good(s) or service(s) will provide the contract value. If the purchase is a recurring spend, we will calculate the value over one year to establish the total contract value. The values quoted here exclude VAT.

For contracts and purchases estimated to cost less than £3,000

A supplier may be selected directly, without the requirement to prepare a shortlist, and a contract negotiated with a member of staff.

For contracts and purchases estimated to cost between £3,001 and £10,000

Selection may be made on the basis of an evaluation of shortlisted, qualified candidates/ suppliers and the rationale for the choice should be recorded.

The shortlist should usually consist of a minimum of three candidates/suppliers.

Where a tender is issued and fewer than three responses are received, the member of staff should review the shortlist and make the decision based on the responses received.

For contracts and purchases estimated to cost in excess of £10,001

A competitive process must be followed and proposals invited from a shortlist of qualified organisations. The selection process for identifying the shortlist will usually be based on:

- Defining the scope, objectives, estimated budget, timescales and any follow-on services required
- Determining the brief and selection process to be followed. This should include a commitment from the suppliers chosen to comply with other relevant BSSS policies
- Identifying suppliers that are qualified to deliver the required services and preparing a shortlist of qualified organisations/ people
- Evaluating and comparing capabilities and proposals and selecting the preferred supplier
- Negotiating a contract with the selected supplier
- Managing the procurement process from end-to-end.

Where proposals are requested from a short-list of suppliers, the tender must clearly state the criteria for evaluating them. This may include ability to meet the requirements set out, previous experience, personnel qualifications and suitability of the workplan to meet the brief.

In some circumstances it may be necessary or advantageous to engage or continue with a specific consultant where:

- The consultant has unique experience or expertise
- The consultant has been involved in the early phases of the project such as feasibility or design, where continuity is necessary and no advantage would be gained by not following competitive procedures
- Additional services not included in the original contract have, through unforeseen circumstances, become necessary for the performance of the contracted services, on condition that those additional services cannot be technically or economically separated from the original contract without major inconvenience to the contracting authorities or when such services, although separate from the performance of the original contract, are strictly necessary for its completion.

Governance, Organisational Capacity and Audit

We are responsible for establishing arrangements for ensuring the proper conduct of our affairs, including conformance to standards of good governance and accountability with regard to procurement.

In the planning and development of major projects it may be necessary to review our capacity and skills in procurement. We will assess the strengths and weaknesses of our Trustee Board, our staff and volunteers. In

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some instances, it may be necessary to co-opt Council members or establish a dedicated procurement group which would have collective responsibility for overseeing a particular procurement project.

As a Charity registered with the Charities Commission, we recognise the need to demonstrate a robust selection, monitoring and audit process which is central to this policy.

The procurement policy is fully supported by BSSS Trustees and Council.

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