



DWP Social and Economic Research Framework

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1988-2000

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2000-2007

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Classic Model in Research Procurement

- 3-5 tenders
- No discussion with tenderers
- No info on budget
- Can innovate but not exactly encouraged
- No feedback to unsuccessful tenderers



DWP Social and Economic Research Framework Contract

The Framework enables the Department to;

- Engage more effectively with supplier base,
- Focus on building more open and collaborative relationships with our suppliers **and**
- Can be accessed by anyone within DWP who wishes to commission analytical research.



DWP Social and Economic Research Framework Contract

There are currently 62 Contractors on the DWP Framework.

Pre Framework most of our contracts were let to around 25 Contractors, therefore we have considerably expanded our Contractor base giving increased choice for our Researchers



DWP Social and Economic Research Framework Contract

Advantages

- Closer working on research specifications – collaboration rather than competition
- Coherent practices across the Department
- Centre of Expertise in Research Procurement
- Better liaison at a business level with research units



Changes for Researchers

Increased trust when working with Contractors, including the recommended option of sharing indicative budget information with the Contractor when designing the specification

The Research Managers need the skills & competencies to effectively assess Contractor proposals for Value for Money (without the benefit of competitive tenders)



Contract Extension 2007

- The Framework contract was let for 3 years originally
- Following consultation with users has been extended for 2 further years for all existing Contractors
- Will be totally re-let Summer 2009



Contract Extension 2007

- During consultation it became apparent we needed new skills on the Framework to support the work of Office for Disability Issues
- An external competition was held to introduce new skills
- 22 new organisations have applied to join and the tender evaluation ongoing.....



DWP Framework Management

Managed by a Procurement Specialist

Held initial workshops with Contractors
to check understanding of processes

Ongoing meetings to review Contractor
performance and to address issues

Central point for Analysts to refer
contractual issues, which enables us
to get a true picture of performance



DWP Framework Management

After initial reservations the process is proving popular with both Analytical community and Contractors

Able to offer professional advice and guidance

Can act as mediator in any disputes and help negotiate mutually beneficial solutions



Advantages

- Social Researchers can stop being contract bureaucrats!
- Basis for SR commissioning is much more robust
- Speeds up commissioning
- Can strengthen working relationships through commitment to ongoing relationships
- Provides more impetus to utilisation of less well known contractors



Issues

Need to have interest and support from procurement professionals- who need to understand the nature of social research

At the same time SR's should not be too precious about established traditions:

- Wanting to use favourite contractors vs having lots of choice (that is not used much in practice)



Issues

Scale of Government purchasing of research – over £100M pa

- Rigid procedures ensure fairness vs using market power to facilitate development of industry