



Circular number	03-2005	Date issued	1 February 2005
This circular is	Request for information	Respond by	25 February 2005
This circular is	Relevant to the National Framework		
Status	This circular informs FRAs of data collection work needed to progress the Integrated Clothing Project and requests an update on procurement project plans.		

Integrated Clothing Project and regional procurement plans

Issued by:

Phillip Smith
Head of Fire Service Effectiveness Issues Branch
Fire Service Effectiveness Division

Addressed to:

Chief Executives of County Councils
Clerks and Chairs of Fire and Rescue Authorities
The Commissioner of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
All Chief Fire Officers

Please forward to:

Directors of Finance
Treasurers
Procurement Managers

Summary

The Integrated Clothing Project will require robust data on current patterns of issue and usage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to develop the next tranche of documents for interested bidders. A data collection exercise is about to be launched. FRAs are also asked to provide updates on procurement plans to enable the FiReBuy project team to identify existing opportunities for collaboration in advance of the implementation of a National Procurement Strategy.

For further information, contact:

Phillip Smith
17/D Portland House
Stag Place
London
SW1E 5LP

Direct line **020 7944 0055**
E-mail fsed6@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

General helpline **020 7944 8194**

Website www.odpm.gov.uk

1.0 Integrated Clothing Project - data gathering

- 1.1 The Integrated Clothing Project (ICP) is a key part of the National Procurement Strategy, which aims at establishing "FiReBuy" as a procurement body owned by Fire and Rescue Authorities.
- The joint ICP team recently issued an Invitation to Negotiate (ITN1) to the 9 long-listed bidders, who now have until 5th April 2005 to make submissions. Along with sample garments these submissions will provide the basis for determining which of the bidders will be short-listed and progress to the ITN2 stage in July 2005. Bidders have been told to expect a data room (a library of documents and data, including some examples of garments) to be available to them from 4th July 2005 and to be ready to make their submissions in response to ITN2 by November 2005.
- 1.2 Robust data will be required by the project team to produce the ITN2 as it will be on these figures that short-listed bidders prepare their detailed proposals for costs and service levels. The project team will issue Chief Fire Officers with a questionnaire this week to gather the required data. The questionnaire will be sent by email and will be accompanied by full guidance notes on completion and return. **In order to enable the team to have precise data to work with it is imperative that the returns made are as accurate as possible.** Inaccurate returns will have an impact on the future costs to member FRAs of goods and services provided under the ICP contract.
- 1.3 CFOs and Treasurers or Directors of Finance should certify jointly that the returns are accurate and ensure that they are received by the project team no later than 1st April 2005.
- 1.4 Following receipt of returns, each Authority may receive a visit from a Business Change Manager or a member of the ICP project team. The visit will aim to validate the data submitted and to clarify any outstanding issues. We are hoping to complete visits by 31st May 2005 to allow compilation of validated returns in advance of the opening of the data room.
- 1.5 If during compilation of the return, the compiler realises that particular data items will prove difficult to quantify accurately, he or she should promptly contact the ICP project team to discuss options. This should be done at the earliest opportunity and not left until the date for return of submissions. To this end **CFOs are asked to confirm by 25th February** for an early indication of any areas that are expected to be difficult to quantify.
- 1.6 The ICP project team is very grateful for your co-operation on this exercise. Enquiries about the data collection exercise should be directed to the ICP project team on 020 7587 6258 or e-mail: cpt@london-fire.gov.uk.

2.0 Consultation on the draft National Procurement Strategy

2.1 The consultation, which closed on 3rd December 2004, attracted a response by the vast majority of FRAs. We have completed collation of the comments received and are drafting responses for consideration by Ministers during February 2005. We aim to publish the Government's response to the consultation in early March 2005.

2.2 Although there are some areas in which work, associated principally with the funding of FiReBuy from 2006/07, will need to be taken forward over the summer we are continuing on the assumption that FiReBuy will be established in the spring and funded by the Secretary of State for 2005/06. This is in addition to the generous funding made available to the Integrated Clothing Project for next year.

2.3 We expect to circulate drafts of:

- the Business Case
- the Memorandum and Articles of Association
- the Members Agreement and
- options for voting allocations

soon after the response to consultation is published. We are working on the assumption that Authorities and Regional Management Boards (RMBs) will require time to form a view on how to distribute voting rights, whether to take membership of the company and whom they would wish to appoint as Director. We think it reasonable to ask Authorities and RMBs to make their decisions on these matters by the end of August 2005.

3.0 Procurement Plans

3.1 As part of the draft NPS Regional Management Boards were asked to compile a Regional Procurement Plan and submit it to ODPM by December 2004. Only one has been received. The information that is most urgently needed relates to indications of contracts that may require renewal during the next financial year. Our aim is to identify any possibilities for early collaboration.

We would be grateful therefore if responses for each Region could be sent to us by 25th February 2005.

Returns should be sent by e-mail to: FSED6@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

Phillip W Smith

Head of Fire Service Effectiveness Issues