



User Guide



www.gemframework.co.uk

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SECTION 1

Introduction

This User Guide supports educational organisations and the wider public sector in accessing and using the GEM (Good Estate Management) Framework, a compliant and efficient procurement solution for Capital Projects and Facilities Management (FM) services tailored to the education sector and suitable for use across all public sector organisations. It outlines the structure of the Framework, eligible services and routes to procurement.

The GEM Framework is designed primarily to assist schools, academies, multi-academy trusts, colleges, and universities in managing their estates through reliable, vetted suppliers offering high-quality FM solutions. The GEM Framework is also available for use by all Public Sector Bodies.

Our delivery partners have obtained a position on the Framework by evidencing outstanding working practices especially within school environment. Our delivery partners are typically Tier 2/3 contractors providing the customer with a more competitive and proportionate service.

The Framework will provide for the delivery of the scope of services for each Lot and region and will enable Customers to call-off through a further competition or direct award basis to deliver their requirements.

The approach to setting up and delivering this Framework is to ensure all aspects are compliant, fair and transparent. The principles of the Framework are:

- A. Driving best practice and legal compliance**
- B. Following fair, open and transparent business practices.**
- C. Delivering value for money for all Customers.**
- D. Being people-first in our approach.**
- E. Leading on technology and innovation.**

The overall aim of this Framework is to enable a compliant route to market, providing Customers with an efficient procurement process, accessing Suppliers that are suitable to deliver their requirements, whilst also delivering value for money.

SECTION 2

FRAMEWORK SCOPE AND STRUCTURE

Scope of the GEM Framework

The GEM Framework enables education and public sector bodies to procure construction and maintenance services across several disciplines.

Framework Structure

The full suite of Lots available on the GEM (Good Estate Management Framework) are:-



Lot 1: Total Facilities Management

Facilities management involves strategic estate management and maintenance of a buildings infrastructure (hard FM), such as heating, ventilation and air conditioning and electrical systems, as well as services that support the comfort and well-being of occupants (soft FM), like cleaning and security.

GEM (Good Estate Management) Framework can help to ensure that your estate remains safe, well maintained and compliant. If required, the GEM (Good Estate Management) Framework can provide you with ongoing support in the continued performance management of your estate.

Framework users are free to form and build their own bespoke FM model which suits their needs.



Lot 2: Capital Projects up to £250,000

Capital projects up to £250,000 involve improvements or upgrades to buildings, equipment, or infrastructure within that budget. The GEM (Good Estate Management) Framework will help to ensure that your projects are clearly defined, follow approved processes and use resources to the best effect.



Lot 3: Capital Projects ranging from £250,000 to £1 million

Capital projects ranging from £250,000 to £1 million involve larger-scale improvements or developments, such as major renovations or new construction within this budget range. The GEM (Good Estate Management) Framework help to ensure that your projects are clearly defined, follow approved processes and use resources to the best effect.



Lot 4: Capital Projects exceeding £1 million

Capital projects exceeding £1 million involve significant investments in large-scale developments, such as complex construction, major infrastructure upgrades, or extensive facility expansions. The GEM (Good Estate Management) Framework will or can help to ensure that your projects are clearly defined, follow approved processes and use resources to the best effect.



Lot 5: Renewable Energy Solutions

Renewable energy solutions involve using natural resources like sunlight, wind, and water to generate clean, sustainable power. Renewable energy solutions, like solar panels, provide clean, sustainable power by converting sunlight into electricity, helping reduce energy costs and environmental impact. The GEM (Good Estate Management) Framework will or can help to ensure that your projects are clearly defined, follow approved processes and use resources to the best effect

SECTION 3

WHO CAN USE THE FRAMEWORK

Whilst primarily focused upon educational settings, all public sector organisations may utilise this Framework subject to prior approval from the contracting authority. Eligible users include entities affiliated with or related to local government, police forces, fire and rescue services, the NHS and its trusts, housing associations, third sector and charitable bodies, educational institutions (including academies and free schools), publicly funded institutions, and publicly owned private enterprises.

These organisations must be operating within England and Wales. The Framework is also available for use by any other public sector bodies and local authorities.

SECTION 4

HOW TO USE THE FRAMEWORK

Accessing the Framework

Customers must complete the Access Agreement (see example Appendix A) before calling off services. The Access Agreement can be accessed via the website or upon request. Support is also available from the GEM Framework team.

Step by Step Guide to your Call-Off Exercise

- Step 1** Complete and return the access agreement outlining basic details of your project and your preferred procurement route (mini competition or direct award). The Access Agreement Form can be found on the website – www.gemframework.co.uk
- Step 2** Allow the Framework Manager to coordinate with our delivery partners to address your specific project needs including managing the call-off process.
- Step 3** Sign and return the Call-Off Contract Award Notification.

Tender/Pricing/Specification Documents to be used in conjunction with Call-Off exercises.

- Option 1** Customers may provide their own tender, pricing, or specification documents for inclusion within call-off documentation. They will also be required to complete the GEM (Good Estate Management) Framework document template, which will then be used to conduct a further competition based on the information supplied.
- Option 2** The GEM (Good Estate Management) Framework can help facilitate the provision of tender documents from third-party professional organisations. However, the cost of third-party services is not included under the terms and conditions of this Framework.
- Option 3** Tender/pricing/specification documents are not required.

Procurement Routes

Option 1: Direct Award:

'A simplified process for awarding contracts where a preferred supplier is known.'

A direct award may be made to any capable supplier appointed to the Framework without the need to re-open competition. The GEM (Good Estate Management) Framework allows Direct Awards to be made to the highest scoring supplier on the appropriate Lot. If the highest scoring supplier cannot meet the requirements, then a direct award is permissible to the second scoring supplier and so on.

In such circumstances, the customer is strongly advised to carry out their own due diligence before selecting whether they conduct a further competition or direct award with any of the awarded suppliers. The customer will determine the requirement, specification and award based on the Most Advantageous Tender (MAT). GEM (Good Estate Management) Framework takes no responsibility for the chosen contracting method of any individual customer.

Option 2: Further Competition:

'A mini-competition between suppliers on the relevant Lot'

A further competition may be conducted with all capable suppliers appointed to the Framework in order to identify the most suitable provider for a specific project or time-limited requirement. During this process, the customer has the discretion to apply, modify, or introduce alternative terms and conditions to those originally set out in the original Framework tender documentation. Any such modifications or alternatives must be clearly stated within the further competition documentation and/or in the resulting order and/or individual contract.

To comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, the following process should be followed when running a further competition under this Framework:

- All Framework suppliers capable of delivering the specified requirement must be invited to participate.
- The customer must develop and issue a comprehensive specification or project brief outlining the services or products required.
- This documentation should reference the relevant Framework number and be circulated to all eligible suppliers. A fair and proportionate deadline must be set for the submission of completed tenders.
- All tender responses must be securely stored and remain unopened until the stated submission deadline has passed. Late submissions should be excluded without being opened.
- Evaluation of bids must be based on the criteria outlined in the specification or brief. These headline criteria must align with those used in the original Framework, although the customer may revise weightings and introduce additional sub-criteria as appropriate.

- Tenderers must be notified in writing of the outcome, with a summary of scoring and feedback provided.
- While there is no legal requirement to apply a standstill period during a further competition under a Framework, it is recommended to do so. This precaution helps mitigate the risk of legal challenge, including potential court action leading to a declaration of ineffectiveness, contract termination, or financial penalties.
- At this stage, suppliers cannot be assessed based on general financial or technical standing, as these factors were considered during their initial selection for the Framework. However, additional financial due diligence (such as reviewing a credit report) may be carried out, provided it does not influence the selection process.

Governance and Compliance

Suppliers must comply with all legal and regulatory obligations including Health & Safety, GDPR, TUPE, and safeguarding.

Fees and Charges

Framework Levy

A framework levy is applied to all call-off contracts awarded through the GEM (Good Estate Management) Framework. This levy contributes to the ongoing management, governance, and development of the framework to ensure its compliance, quality, and long-term value for users.

The levy is included within the prices quoted by providers under the framework.

It is collected directly from the appointed provider upon award of a call-off contract.

The levy supports:

- Contract management and performance monitoring
- Framework promotion and user engagement
- Continuous improvement and reporting to stakeholders

The current levy rates and further details can be found on our website at www.gemframework.co.uk

The levy is designed to be transparent, proportionate, and aligned with public sector best practice, ensuring the framework remains a sustainable and high-quality procurement solution.

If you have any questions regarding the calculation of the levy or how it should be applied, please contact GEM Framework

Contact and Support


GEM Framework Team • Email: enquiries@gemframework.co.uk
t: 01782 697224 • t: 0333 038 7579 • www.gemframework.co.uk

SECTION 5


OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

The Framework Manager is committed to delivering an efficient, transparent and value-driven procurement solution for all participating customers. Ensuring best value is central to the management of the GEM (Good Estate Management) Framework and a strong emphasis is placed on continuous improvement, supplier performance and customer satisfaction.


Key responsibilities and commitments include:




Ensuring Best Value: The Framework Manager will monitor pricing structures, market competitiveness and supplier performance to ensure that all customers receive high-quality services at fair and sustainable rates. Opportunities for cost savings and added value will be explored through regular benchmarking and performance reviews.




Performance Monitoring: All suppliers appointed to the Framework are subject to performance management procedures. Key performance indicators (KPIs) will be tracked regularly, covering areas such as service quality, responsiveness, health and safety compliance, customer satisfaction and delivery against agreed timescales.




Customer Support: The Framework Manager will provide responsive, expert guidance to all participating organisations throughout the procurement and contract management process. This includes assistance with direct awards, further competitions and interpretation of Framework terms.



Supplier Relationship Management: Effective engagement with suppliers ensures consistency, quality, and innovation across all services delivered under the Framework. Issues will be escalated promptly and remediation plans will be agreed where necessary.



Transparency and Accountability: Clear reporting mechanisms will be in place to give customers visibility over Framework operations, supplier performance and contractual compliance.



Feedback and Improvement: Customer feedback will be actively sought and used to enhance the Framework operations and support service development, ensuring that the Framework remains relevant, responsive and fit for purpose.

Through these commitments, the Framework Manager upholds the integrity of the GEM Framework and supports its continued success in delivering quality and value for the education sector and wider public service users.



