

FWK4004 – ICGS Independent Investigator Framework: Tender Guide

Purpose: This guide provides a high-level overview of how to apply to join the ICGS Independent Investigator Framework (FWK4004). It is written for bidders who may be new to public procurement. This sits alongside the formal Invitation to Tender (ITT), which contains the full instructions and legal terms.

We welcome bids from all interested parties, including sole traders and small specialist providers. This tender is aimed at organisations and individuals with expertise in areas such as investigations (employment, HR, safeguarding, and misconduct), policing and intelligence, legal and regulatory compliance, ombuds and dispute resolution, safeguarding and social care, and equality, anti-bullying, and behavioural misconduct. Providers with relevant experience across any of these fields are encouraged to apply.

Key Dates (placeholders – to be confirmed in the ITT)

Milestone	Date
Tender Notice published	12/06/2026
Stage 1 opens in Atamis	12/06/2026
Suppliers event	29/06/2026 - 15:00-17:00
Deadline for Stage 1 clarification questions	12 noon on 15/07/2026
Stage 1 submission deadline	12 noon on 24/07/2026
Notification of Stage 1 outcome	07/08/2026
Stage 2 opens for shortlisted bidders	10/08/2026
Deadline for Stage 2 clarification questions	12 noon on 21/08/2026
Stage 2 submission deadline	12 noon on 04/09/2026
Practical assessment centre window & Panel Interview window	04/09/2026 to 30/10/2026
Notification of Stage 2 outcome	09/11/2026
Intended award notification date	04/12/2026

How the process works – at a glance:

1. Evaluation Stage 1

Procurement Specific Questionnaire (PSQ)

The 40 highest-scoring eligible bidders progress to Stage 2.

2. Evaluation Stage 2 – Quality Written Evaluation (written responses and assessment centre of practical exercise).

Following an evaluation of written responses and case studies, the top 30 scoring bidders will be invited to proceed to the final Stage.

3. Evaluation Stage 3 – Interviews

Following the interviews, scores from Stages 2 and 3 will be combined to identify the top 20 scoring bidders who will be awarded a place on the framework.

4. Contract award and onboarding – successful bidders sign the framework agreement and receive onboarding information.

Step 1: Register and access the documents

1. Create an account (or log in) on the Atamis procurement portal:

<https://atamis-ukparliament.my.site.com/s/Welcome>

2. Search for project “**FWK4004 – ICGS Independent Investigators**”
3. Select ‘**Register Interest**’
4. Wait a few minutes for the system to update, and then go to ‘**Proposals and Quotes**’
5. Download the ITT pack and all attachments. Save a local copy for your working files.
6. If you experience any portal issues, contact Atamis Support:

Helpdesk Operational Hours 08:00-18:00 Monday - Friday (Excluding Public Holidays)

Phone: +44 29 2280 9277

Helpdesk: [Raise a Support Ticket](#)

7. Register on the Central Digital Platform:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-act-2023-short-guides/suppliers-how-to-register-your-organisation-and-first-administrator-on-find-a-tender-in-three-easy-steps-html>

Step 2: Complete Stage 1 – Preliminary Evaluation

What you will submit in Stage 1:

- Written responses to the Stage 1 questions (up to 500 words each) – see ITT **Assessment of the PSQ – Conditions of Participation**.

How to prepare:

- Read the Stage 1 questions in full and draft concise answers that address each requirement directly.
- Ensure you have readily accessible evidence (e.g., concise examples of relevant investigations, qualifications, and accreditations) to meet any ITT requirements for document uploads or verification (See Annex 1 below)
- Follow the formatting instructions in the ITT and adhere to word counts for each question (See Annex 1 below).

How to submit:

- Upload your Stage 1 responses to [Atamis](#) no later than the Stage 1 submission deadline outlined in the ITT Timeline.

What happens next:

- Your Stage 1 response will be evaluated after the deadline.
- The 40 highest-scoring eligible bidders will be invited to Stage 2. You will be notified via the Atamis portal if you are proceeding to Stage 2.

Step 3: Complete Stage 2 – Written Evaluation

If you are shortlisted, you will be required to provide the following:

- Written responses to case studies/scenario questions (instructions and word limits in the ITT).
- You will be invited to attend an 'Assessment Centre' to complete practical exercises, which will take place during the window for Stage 2 (see timeline above and in ITT)
- This will be completed online using Microsoft Teams, where you will be provided with the exercises.
- These exercises must be completed under timed conditions, before being submitted by the end of the Assessment Centre that day.

How to prepare your Stage 2 submission: (See Annex 1 below)

- Answer each question directly and structure your response using clear headings (Need, Approach, Evidence, Risks, Outcomes).
- Cite relevant, recent examples of investigations, your role, methods used, and outcomes.
- Keep responses within any word or page limits set out in the ITT.
- Name your files clearly (e.g., "FWK4004_OrgName_Stage2_Written.docx").

Submission and next steps:

5. Upload all Stage 2 written response files to Atamis before the Stage 2 submission deadline within the ITT Timeline.
 6. Exercises from the 'Assessment Centre' must be emailed according to instructions provided on the day of the assessment.
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Step 4: Complete Stage 3 – Interviews

- Following an evaluation of Stage 2 written responses, the top 30 scoring suppliers will be shortlisted to Stage 3.
- Stage 3 will consist of online interview via Microsoft Teams (scheduled within the interview window). This will be conducted by a panel selected by the ICGS. The interview questions will focus on experience and key investigative skills.

How you will be evaluated

The final evaluation combines written responses and interview scores. Exact criteria and weightings are confirmed in the ITT.

Following evaluation and moderation, the top 20 scoring bidders will be offered a place on the framework.

Final results will be communicated via Atamis by the date provided in the ITT Timeline.

Checklist: Dos and don'ts

Do read the ITT carefully and follow every instruction and template.

- Do keep to word/page limits and submit before the exact deadline time.
- Do use clear, plain English and evidence your claims with brief examples.
- Don't upload Stage 2 materials during Stage 1 (and vice versa).
- Don't assume late submissions can be accepted—portal deadlines are strict.

Clarification Questions and Communication

We encourage bidders to submit questions and engage early during the tender window. To ensure fairness, all responses will be shared with all bidders via Atamis. Please note that all questions must be submitted through the Atamis portal.

The final deadlines for the submission of clarification questions can be found in the ITT Timeline.

Supplier Event

During the tender window, the ICGS will host an online Supplier Event for all interested bidders. This session will provide an opportunity to hear directly from the ICGS about the aims of the framework, the requirements set out in the tender, and the evaluation process. Bidders will be able to ask questions in real time, and a summary of all questions and answers will be published on Atamis afterwards to ensure fairness and equal access to information. Details of how to register for the Supplier Event, along with the date and time, will be provided in the Invitation to Tender.

Accessibility and Reasonable Adjustments

If you require reasonable adjustments to participate in this tender, please notify us via Atamis as early as possible. We will confirm available arrangements.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

Treat all tender materials as confidential. Handle personal data in line with GDPR and the instructions in the ITT. Do not include sensitive personal data unless the ITT explicitly requires it.

Before you submit – final checks

- Confirm you have answered every question and uploaded all the required files.
 - Check filenames and ensure documents open correctly.
 - Ensure your organisation details and contact information are complete in Atamis.
 - Submit well before the deadline to avoid last-minute technical issues.

Contact and Support

All communications must go via Atamis. For technical support with the portal, see contact details in step 1 above. For tender content questions, post a clarification in the portal, this must be done before the cut-off date for clarifications which can be found in the timeline within the ITT. We cannot respond to direct emails outside the portal.

Annex 1:

Submission requirements for evaluation stages 1 & 2:

At all stages of this procurement procedure, all responses must:

- a) With the exception of 'Assessment Centre' practical exercises which should be submitted via email following the instructions provided on the day, be submitted electronically in the Portal by the required closing date and time. Responses submitted after such date and time will not be considered;
- b) be in English and clear, concise and relevant and tender prices shall be in GBP and inclusive of VAT, except where the Pricing Schedule (Part 3 of Annex 3 in ITT doc) requires a VAT-exclusive price to be stated.
- c) include all the required documents, properly completed and uploaded;
- d) use the same numbering as stated in the applicable tendering document;
- e) include clear cross referencing to requirements in the Specification/Scope (Annex 1) and other Contract and/or tendering documents (as appropriate);
- f) adhere to the word count limits, which must be followed for each question. Information submitted over the word] limit will not be assessed;
- g) be formatted with 2.54 cm margins, and 12 point font size in Times New Roman font;
- h) not include the supplier's own standard terms and conditions as these will not be accepted;
- i) not request (or necessarily require) amendments are made to the Authority's terms and conditions of the draft Contract (which have not been agreed via the clarification process);
- j) include a signed and unamended Form of Tender and Certificate of Non-Collusion (Form 1 of Annex 4);
- k) not put the Authority in breach of its obligations under the PA 2023.

Without prejudice to any other compliance requirements in this ITT document, responses which do not comply with or adhere to the above may be rejected, following clarification (where appropriate).