

1.0 Scope of the Technology / Research Investment Process

- 1.1 This process is intended to provide a structured and formalised approach to the procurement of Research & Development (R&D) and technical services by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) that is consistent with the NDA Quality Management System (QMS). This process also provides the mechanism and management structure by which proposed R&D scope can be discussed and agreed upon. The process ensures that NDA strategic and procurement requirements are met, project outputs are reviewed and that the impact of the investment is monitored. The process ensures that there is flexibility to do what is needed within the constraints of the budget and, if necessary, prioritise.
- 1.2 This procedure outlines the various stages of the process including the initiation of Mini-Tenders, the assessment of contractor R&D proposals, the signing of the Purchase Requisition (PR), the placement of the Purchase Order (PO), the monitoring of project progress, the assessment of contractor output and ultimately the impact of the project on the NDA mission. It identifies the key individuals involved at each stage of the process, together with their responsibilities, accountabilities and expected action. Furthermore, it will adopt a Gated Process to ensure research proposals are consistently challenged and managed.
- 1.3 This procedure will be reviewed annually or before if required and updated as necessary.
- 1.4 This procedure does not cover the procurement of Strategy Support services by the NDA.

2.0 Key Definitions

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Mini-Tender: A concise document identifying the technical area of interest prepared prior to engagement of contractors. The Mini-Tender document should comprise the purpose, a very brief background statement, the category of work (the driver for the R&D, e.g. informing strategy, delivering innovation or maintaining skills), the R&D topic (linked to the 5 year R&D plan), scope of work, who the work will be disseminated to, required milestones / deliverables, tender requirements, a list of supporting information, contract type (fixed or reimbursable), probable start date, preferred completion date and indicative cost – EGPR04-F01.

Output Assessment: A review and appraisal of the project carried out upon completion of the project. This should include comparison of the actual output with the original contractor proposal. The initial output assessment (EGPR04-F04) should be completed by the NDA Sponsor or their representative and submitted to the NDA Research Manager.

Impact Assessment: A review of the current and future impact of the project carried out either upon completion or on an annual basis. The impact assessment (EGPR04-F05) should be completed by the Contractor and checked by the NDA Sponsor, their representative or the R&D Team, and, if appropriate, discussed at an NDA Internal R&D Board meeting and/or included in the annual Direct Research Portfolio report.

NDA Internal R&D Board: A regular meeting, chaired by the Head of Technology / Function Head, which discusses research proposals and advises the chair on the scope. This meeting will comprise the Head of Technology, Research Manager / Function Manager, representative from Procurement, representative from RWM and NDA Sponsors as appropriate. Additional members of the NDA will be invited as required. Selected contractors may be invited on a part-time basis when appropriate.

2.2 Responsibilities and Accountability.

Head of Technology / Function Head: Responsible for the delivery and authorisation of this process including chairing the NDA Internal R&D Board, endorsement of Mini-Tender scopes at Gate 0 (see Fig. 1), authorisation of funding and accountable for the provision of authorised

funding within their prescribed limits as described in the NDA QMS. In addition, the Head of Technology / Function Head may provide technical contribution to the assessment of contractor proposals at Gate 1.

Research Manager / Function Manager: Responsible for advising NDA Sponsors on the preparation of Mini-Tenders, providing technical contribution to the assessment of contractor proposals at Gate 1, checking the Purchase Requisition form (and any associated paperwork e.g. Single-Source Justification Form), monitoring project progress until project completion, collating Output / Impact Assessments from NDA Sponsors and coordinating the distribution of R&D Outputs as appropriate. They should monitor the balance of the overall R&D portfolio (Lot vs. Lot, Short-term vs. Long-term) and if appropriate take action to re-balance it.

Procurement Manager / Function Manager: Responsible for advising the Research Manager on procurement procedures, coordinating commercial contribution to the assessment of contractor proposals at Gate 1, coordinating the overall assessment of contractor proposals at Gate 1, coordinating the feedback to contractors upon the completion of contractor assessments at Gate 1 and coordinating the raising of Purchase Orders as appropriate.

NDA Sponsor or representative: Responsible for preparing Mini-Tenders, presenting Mini-Tenders to the NDA Internal R&D Board for discussion, providing technical contribution to the assessment of contractor proposals at Gate 1, providing technical support to the projects as appropriate (e.g. reviewing of draft reports) and preparing Output / Impact Assessments of the projects, as appropriate. If a Mini-Tender has been produced by a Nuclear Waste and Decommissioning Research Forum (NWDRF) Working Group, the sponsor or representative must endorse it and present it for consideration by the IR&D Board.

Technical Lead: Where appropriate a Technical Lead will be nominated to aid the NDA Sponsor in providing technical support. The Technical Lead could come from an SLC or another organisation with significant nuclear decommissioning liabilities.

Project Controls Advisor: Responsible for preparing the Purchase Requisition Form for checking by the Research Manager and authorisation by the Head of Technology.

Quality Systems Manager: Responsible and accountable for ensuring this procedure meets the requirements of the NDA's QMS and that this is formally incorporated into the QMS.

3.0 Procedure:

3.1 The following procedure provides the key steps of the process, highlighting within each step the stakeholders, the role(s) and responsibilities of the individuals, and any guidance on actions, where necessary. The key steps and the lead individuals / organisations involved are shown in Figure 1.

3.2 Initiation of Mini-Tender Scope

The idea for the Mini-Tender can have a number of sources:

- (a) Idea generated by NDA Sponsor based upon their technical knowledge of the area
- (b) Idea generated from review of Site Licence Companies' (SLCs) Life Time Plans (LTPs) and Technical Baseline and underpinning Research and Development (TBuRD) documents
- (c) Idea generated by external organisation (e.g. Nuclear Waste and Decommissioning Research Forum or associated Working Group)
- (d) Idea generated by Framework Contractor
- (e) Idea generated during the completion of an existing project

Care should be taken in any discussions with external organisations not to compromise NDA's ability to compete the required research services in accordance with Government procurement policy.

- 3.3 The Research / Technology Investment Process will be utilised if direct funding is sought from NDA for research services other than for Supply Chain and other NDA R&D investment initiatives (e.g. the collaboration with Innovate UK call “Developing the civil nuclear supply chain”, Epidemiology research programmes, joint funding of access to NEA Databank).
- 3.4 Mini-Tenders can be initiated by the NDA Sponsor, their representative (internal or external) or by the NWDRF or Working Group. While each initiator may produce a first draft of the mini-tender using EGPR04-F01, the NDA Sponsor or representative is responsible for the final quality and endorsement of the proposal. Engagement with the Research Manager / Function Manager during the preparation of the Mini-Tender is strongly recommended.
- 3.5 For Mini-Tenders, three categories of work, i.e. R&D drivers, have been identified:
- (a) Informing strategy / policy
 - (b) Delivering innovation
 - (c) Maintaining skills
- A Mini-Tender may be associated with a single category or multiple categories. These categories are also used in the Impact Assessment.

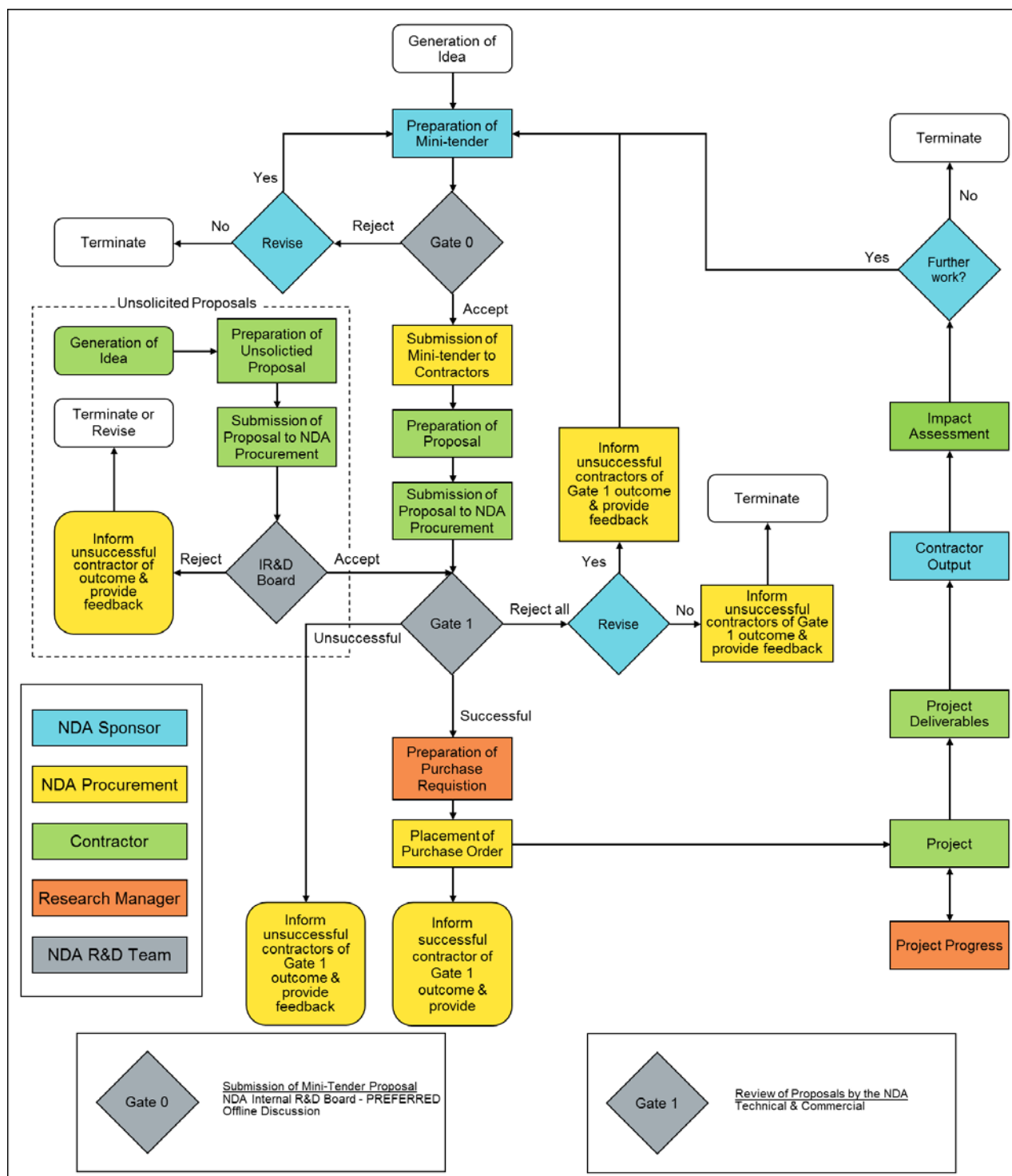


Figure 1: Process Flow Diagram for Mini-Tender to Purchase order Placement for Framework Contractors

- 3.6 During the preparation of a Mini-Tender consideration must be given to whether the proposed work scope overlaps with an SLC work scope. Directly supported R&D work must not be commissioned to provide a specific solution for an SLC to implement, however, the results can be made available to an SLC or SLCs for information. The decision to use the results of any NDA directly supported R&D lies with the individual SLC.
- 3.7 The generation of the Mini-Tender document may be completed in consultation with the framework suppliers, however, this process must ensure that all framework contractors have an equal opportunity for input in accordance with EU Public Procurement Directives.
- 3.8 Gate 0 – Submission of Mini-Tender Proposal
The purpose of the gate is to facilitate discussion for all NDA Mini-Tender stakeholders:-
- NDA sponsor;
 - Head of Technology / Function Head;
 - Research / Function Manager;
 - Procurement; and
 - Strategy / Function Team members as required.
- Note:** The main route for Gate 0 is the NDA Internal R&D Board meeting although to promote efficient procurement of research services it can be carried out offline provided that the NDA Sponsor can demonstrate to the Head of Technology / Function Head that the appropriate stakeholders have been engaged and have expressed their approval of its progression through Gate 0.
- 3.9 The NDA Sponsor would be expected to provide a short presentation of the Mini-Tender submission, highlighting any key features, specific areas of interest, significance and importance. Other NDA stakeholders will then be invited to contribute to subsequent discussion, and the proposal will be progressed in accordance with Figure 1.
Note: The appropriate dissemination of NDA research (e.g. news articles, web stories, peer-reviewed journals) is required and should be considered at the Mini-Tender stage. Raising the impact of projects through additional dissemination is strongly encouraged. For external publications the NDA Sponsor must authorise any publications and therefore early engagement with the NDA Sponsor is recommended to ensure sufficient time is available for reviewing prior to publication.
- 3.10 In the event of approval, it will be recorded in the minutes of the appropriate NDA Internal R&D Board meeting. For offline approvals it will be recorded in the minutes of the subsequent NDA Internal R&D Board meeting.
- 3.11 Should the Mini-Tender be 'Sole Source', then the NDA Sponsor must highlight and justify this at Gate 0.
- 3.12 The technical review panel for Gate 1 should be determined at Gate 0. In the event of any external review or input being required, this must be highlighted at Gate 0 and captured in EGPR04-F01.
- 3.13 Upon Gate 0 approval, the NDA Research Manager / Function Manager will provide NDA Procurement with the authorised Mini-Tender proposal, which will be offered to the framework suppliers in accordance with the NDA QMS.
- 3.14 In the case of sole source justification, the supporting evidence will be provided by the NDA Sponsor, via the Research Manager, to Procurement who may at their discretion reject or seek further supporting information.
Note: After the issue of the Mini-Tender proposal to the framework suppliers, there should be no further direct correspondence or dialogue between the NDA Sponsor and framework contractors.

However, any tenderers' questions may be raised through Procurement, and answered through the same route. Any questions and answers will be shared between all framework contractors to ensure parity between the parties.

3.15 Preparation and Submission of Proposal

Framework suppliers must respond to the Mini-Tender proposals using the standard NDA template shown in EGPR04-F02. Priced and unpriced versions must be returned to Procurement on or before the submission deadline.

3.16 Gate 1 – Review of Proposals by the NDA

Proposals received by the NDA in response to the Mini-Tender will be technically reviewed (as a minimum) by the NDA Sponsor or representative and the NDA Research / Function Manager and commercially reviewed by NDA Procurement. This triumvirate is not intended to be exclusive, and other NDA personnel may be included in this review as necessary. The results of the review will be formally recorded on the Mini Competition Scoring Template, shown in EGPR04-F03.

Note: The balance between commercial and technical score weightings should be determined at Gate 0.

3.17 The NDA Sponsor may also use an external peer review panel (e.g. NWDRF sub-group) to obtain additional technical input into the process; however, this will be agreed at Gate 0.

Note: It is possible that no proposal will meet the minimum technical requirements and in this case all proposals will be rejected and either the Mini-Tender reviewed and reissued or the idea terminated.

3.18 NDA Procurement will combine the technical and commercial scores and provide the Research Manager / Function Manager and NDA Sponsor with the completed assessment form and a copy of the successful costed proposal.

3.19 Unsolicited proposals from the supply chain will generally not be accepted. However, in the event of unsolicited proposals arising as part of an ongoing framework contract, these should be discussed at an NDA Internal R&D Board Meeting before being reviewed at Gate 1. A PR will then be raised if the proposal is deemed to merit funding and meets the requirements of a sole source.

3.20 Purchase Requisition Authorisation

The Project Controls Advisor or Research / Function Manager will prepare the necessary purchase requisition (PR) (and any associated paperwork) based upon the successful proposal and will be expected to brief the Head of Technology / Function Head on any issues requiring discussion prior to their signature on the PR.

3.21 The Head of Technology / Function Head (or designate) will be responsible for expediting the authorisation of the PR in line with NDA delegated authority, and returning this to the NDA Research Manager / Function Manager within a reasonable timeframe.

3.22 Where the financial authorisation requires a director's signature, this will be sought by the Research Manager / Function Manager.

Note: Copies of the successful contractor proposal, Gate 1 assessment and single source justification (if required) should be included with the PR. Procurement should scan the signed PR and associated documents and save them to Livelink in a designated folder.

3.23 Placement of Purchase Order

The Research Manager / Function Manager will provide NDA Procurement with an authorised PR. NDA Procurement will then be responsible for progressing this through their financial system and placing a purchase order (PO) with the Framework Contractor. The process followed should be in accordance with the NDA QMS.

3.24 Monitoring of Project Progress

The Research Manager / Function Manager should monitor the progress of individual projects on an appropriate timescale e.g. monthly using the NDA Research progress report template. The NDA Sponsor or representative and Head of Technology / Function Head should be notified by the Research Manager / Function Manager of any significant variances from plan and/or any new significant risks/opportunities identified.

3.25 Project Deliverables

If the security classification of the deliverable allows it, electronic copies of deliverables should be emailed to research@nda.gov.uk, the NDA Sponsor and the agreed distribution list. Alternatively an electronic copy of the deliverable should be posted to the NDA Sponsor, Research Manager / Function Manager and the agreed distribution list. The deliverables should clearly identify the relevant PO number.

Note: Standard security considerations should be taken depending upon the deliverable's level of protective marking.

3.26 Project Close-out

Upon completion of the project the contractor should complete a Project Summary and Impact Assessment (EGPR04-F05) of the project. The project should be reviewed by the NDA Sponsor and the Research Manager / Function Manager and, if appropriate, the NDA Internal R&D Board and external personnel using EGPR04-F04, "Contractor Output Review".

3.27 Invoices should be paid in line with the invoicing schedule agreed at project kick-off. However, in general, final payment should not be made until the project summary documents and impact assessments have been received.

3.28 If required, a brief summary of the project, its conclusions and recommendations should be presented by the NDA Sponsor at the NDA Internal R&D Board / Appropriate Function Meeting. This discussion may inform strategic decisions to commission new or further research projects.

3.29 The impact of the project should be reviewed by the NDA Sponsor and, if appropriate, discussed at the NDA Internal R&D Board. EGPR04-F05 is provided to guide the NDA Sponsor's impact assessment and to allow further analysis of the overall impact of NDA directly funded R&D to be completed.

3.30 Once approved by the NDA Sponsor and Research Manager / Function Manager the Project Summary and any appropriate deliverables (e.g. Technical Reports) may be published on the NDA website and/or Knowledge Hub provided the security classification of the documents allows it.

3.31 Supplier Performance Assessment

Overall supplier performance for each Lot should be reviewed by the NDA Sponsor(s), Research Manager / Function Manager and Procurement on an annual basis, or earlier if appropriate.

3.32 An overall annual review meeting with each supplier should take place. This will provide a forum for both formal feedback and an opportunity to share and exchange knowledge.

4.0 **Documentation & Records**

4.1 Procurement will forward the PO number to Research Manager / Function Manager.

4.2 Copies of the Mini-Tender, successful contractor proposal, Gate 1 assessment, purchase requisition and single source justification (if required) will be kept as formal records in Livelink.

4.3 Contractor progress reports will be kept as formal records in Livelink.

4.4 Deliverables will be kept as formal records in Livelink.

4.5 Output / impact assessments will be kept as formal records in Livelink.

4.6 Supplier performance assessments will be kept as formal records in Livelink.

4.7 Correspondence and other documentation will be filed appropriately in Livelink.