



Invitation to Preferred Supplier List

June 2021

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[Appendix 1 – Preferred Supplier List Terms and Conditions](#)

[Appendix 2 – Lot 1 – Qualitative Questionnaire](#)

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Instructions for responding to the Invitation to Preferred Supplier List

The purpose of this questionnaire is to invite a number of suitably qualified and experienced companies to submit a proposal to be listed on the Transport Focus Preferred Supplier List (PSL). Transport Focus will use the information that you provide in response to this invitation to determine which organisations are most suited, in the opinion of Transport Focus, in terms of the criteria evaluated in this document.

This invitation is only to suppliers who wish to join the PSL this year (2021/22).

Suppliers wishing to join the PSL will need to provide information no later than **18:00 on 15 July 2021** to support their application in line with the Invitation to Preferred Supplier List (IPSL) and will be evaluated against the set criteria. At the end of each year new suppliers will only be added to the list if there is a vacancy or where a new supplier demonstrates a score higher than an existing supplier.

Responses to the IPSL must be submitted in accordance with the following instructions. Transport Focus may not accept applications not complying with these instructions.

1. Each respondent should submit all the information requested presented in order to match the IPSL:
 - **Section 1, 2 and 3 are mandatory and have no scoring**
 - **The remaining sections are scored**
 - **If you are applying for Lot 1 you will need to complete sections 4, 5, 6 and 8**
 - **If you are applying for Lot 2 you will need to complete sections 4, 5, 7 and 8**
 - **If you are applying for both Lots you will need to complete sections 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8**
 - **The evaluation criteria for Lot 1 are in appendix 2 and for Lot 2 are in appendix 3.**
2. Response to sections 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 should be no longer than 50 A4 pages in total and the font size must be 11.
3. Transport Focus will treat all responses in confidence and they will not be passed on to any other organisation or group.
4. Only information provided as a direct response to the IPSL will be evaluated. Information and detail which form part of the general company literature or promotional material will not form part of the evaluation process.

5. Please note that we may require clarification of the answers provided or ask for additional information. This may take the form of a face-to-face meeting, phone call or written communication.
6. Your response to our questionnaire must be duly completed and an electronic version of your response and all necessary supplementary information should be emailed to tenders@transportfocus.org.uk. Any enquiries relating to completion of responses should also be emailed to the above address.
7. All questions must be answered. To avoid confusion please repeat information in the event that the answer is similar to another rather than referring to an earlier answer.
8. The IPSL includes mandatory requirements, which are detailed above in this document. It is important that suppliers read these carefully and provide the information requested. **Failure to comply with any applicable mandatory requirements may mean exclusion from the selection process.**
9. Responses to the IPSL should be signed and dated by the applicant and submitted with any supporting documentation to the email address shown above and not later than the date and time stated below.
10. Responses must arrive, marked as instructed above, to the address provided above, no later than **18:00 on 15 July 2021.**
11. Late returns will not be considered. You will be informed if your response to this IPSL has failed to meet the deadline. No appeals will be allowed.
12. All responses to questions/clarifications regarding this document will be placed on the FAQ document which may be accessed via:
www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/preferred-supplier-list-psi
13. Although formulation of responses may involve cost and expense to the applicant, Transport Focus is under no obligation to, and therefore will not, reimburse the applicant in this respect.
14. Transport Focus recognises that consortium bids are possible. In the case that a consortium bid is proposed, the IPSL sections must be answered by the party responsible for the relevant part. In the case of financial information, suitable information must be presented in order for Transport Focus to make a complete appraisal of the proposed consortium and its parts.

Introduction to Transport Focus

Transport Focus¹ is an independent public body set up by Parliament to protect the interests of Britain's rail passengers, England's bus and tram passengers outside London and coach passengers on scheduled domestic services in England. In addition to representing passengers, Transport Focus now represents users of the Strategic Roads Network (SRN) in England. We also work closely with Welsh and Scottish governments. We are an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Transport.

Our mission is to get the best deal for passengers and road users. With a strong emphasis on evidence-based campaigning and research, we ensure that we know what is happening on the ground.

For more information visit: www.transportfocus.org.uk/about/

Who uses our research?

Transport Focus uses its knowledge to influence decisions on behalf of passengers and road users. Our vision is to ensure that operators, funders and regulators of transport systems '*put transport users first*'. Through our publications we aim to take our research evidence and produce documents which are useful to the industry.

We work with and influence the entire rail industry and post the Williams Rail Review white paper we will be heavily involved in the new industry structure. We also work closely with the bus, coach and tram industries and the roads industry.

¹ Transport Focus is the operating name of the Passengers' Council, formerly known as the Rail Passengers' Council.

Type of research

Transport Focus currently undertakes around 20-25 individual research projects each year which is equally split between qualitative and quantitative projects.

We also commission and manage research which is partly or fully funded by our key stakeholders. Our research projects on average cost between £35,000 and £80,000. We typically spend around £1,000,000 on research projects contracted through the Preferred Supplier List per year.

We publish all our research on our website, to view examples visit:
<http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/overview>.

Introduction to Preferred Supplier List (PSL)

Transport Focus has established a preferred supplier list (PSL) which provides a list of pre-qualified research providers to undertake various projects within our research programme.

The PSL enables Transport Focus to procure non-OJEU research contracts by breaking research into types (Quantitative and Qualitative).

There are two Lots within the PSL covering ad hoc quantitative and qualitative projects for all modes of public transport with a focus on rail, bus, coach, tram and road users.

- Lot 1 - Qualitative projects – maximum limit of 10 suppliers
- Lot 2 - Quantitative projects – maximum limit of 10 suppliers

In order to be appointed to the PSL, suppliers will need to demonstrate that they have the capacity and expertise to carry out a broad nature of work. Suppliers who are appointed to the PSL can respond to any research proposals we issue; individual projects will be awarded on a case-by-case basis based on the best value-for-money quote.

We currently have eight suppliers on each lot. Suppliers wishing to join the PSL are invited to submit tenders for either or both lots no later than **18:00 on 15 July 2021**. The highest scoring suppliers will then be selected for each lot. We will select a minimum of five and a maximum of ten suppliers for each lot, depending on the range and quality of the tenders we receive.

At the end of each year new suppliers will only be added to the list if there is a vacancy or where a new supplier demonstrates a score higher than an existing supplier.

PSL process and timescales

All Transport Focus research projects will be tendered out through the PSL. This invitation is only to suppliers who wish to join the PSL this year (2021/22).

- Suppliers can request the opportunity to join either qualitative (Lot 1) or quantitative (Lot 2) or potentially both (see appendix 2 and 3 for the criteria that will be used).
- We will appoint a maximum of ten suppliers to our preferred supplier list for each Lot.
- Approved suppliers will be notified in writing once they have been accepted on the PSL.
- Transport Focus will review the evaluation criteria for entrance on the PSL on an annual basis and if any changes are made to the criteria we will ask existing suppliers for additional information.
- At the end of each year all suppliers who are on the PSL will have their performance and PSL scores reviewed based on the quality of quotes and performance delivering any projects. Where we consider suppliers have consistently been unable, or unwilling, to meet our requirements over the course of the year we will remove suppliers from the PSL.
- Suppliers being removed from the PSL will be notified in writing and will have two weeks to appeal against the decision. Notifications will be given before the end of March.
- New suppliers wishing to join will need to provide information no later than **18:00 on 15 July 2021** to support their application in line with the Invitation to Preferred Supplier List and will be evaluated against the appropriate criteria.
- New suppliers will only be added to the list if there is a vacancy or where a new supplier demonstrates a score higher than an existing supplier.
- There is no time limit which has been placed on the termination of the PSL; this will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- The terms and conditions for the Preferred Supplier List will be as attached in the terms and conditions document (appendix 1). These terms will apply to all work carried out under the Preferred Supplier List.

- The scope of work, price and timescales will be agreed on a project-by-project basis and will in no way amend the attached terms and conditions (appendix 1) that override this whole agreement.
- If you have any questions or queries about the terms and conditions attached please feel free to contact us to discuss further.

Timeline

Please see below the estimated timescales for applying to join the PSL:

Instructions to PSL published on our website	3 June 2021
Last date for receipt of clarification questions	23 June 2021
Supplier Returns Completed Document	18:00 on 15 July 2021
Evaluation and shortlisting pitch interviews (if required)	End August 2021
Suppliers Informed of the Outcomes	Early September 2021
Preferred Supplier List Start Date	1 October 2021

Post PSL implementation

Criteria for awarding research projects

Once on the PSL, suppliers can quote for individual projects as they arise. We will issue a project proposal to all suppliers on the PSL for the appropriate Lot and will award the work based on the response which demonstrates the best combination of quality and value for money. It is not mandatory for suppliers to quote on every single project we issue.

The supplier appraisal and review process

Once the PSL is in place Transport Focus will continue to develop the buyer/supplier relationship using a two-stage process for feedback.

Stage 1: Research project review

Suppliers will be reviewed post project and given feedback on their performance and delivery of the required services. Suppliers who sent in quotes but failed to win the project will be given feedback providing suggestions for improvement. Transport Focus will keep record of all communication for the annual review.

Stage 2: Annual review

The annual review will decide whether a supplier should remain on the PSL for the following year or whether they are removed from a Lot; (a supplier could be on more than one Lot). The annual review process will take place before the end of October each year.

The process will involve Transport Focus reviewing the supplier's performance and scores against the evaluation criteria. Where we consider suppliers have consistently been unable, or unwilling, to meet our requirements over the course of the year we will remove them from the PSL. As part of this process new suppliers could also bid to be on the PSL and would only qualify if there was a vacancy or they scored higher than an existing supplier.

Suppliers who have been removed from the PSL will only be able to re-apply for the PSL if they can prove there have been significant changes in the areas which have previously been identified as areas of concern by Transport Focus. This does not mean they will automatically be added back on the PSL.

Suppliers who are notified of their removal from the PSL will have two weeks to appeal against the decision.

Note: There may be occasions where ad-hoc reviews are required. The research team may have a review with a supplier at either their request or the request of the supplier

All information supplied will be treated as **strictly private and confidential**.

Section 1 – Organisation information

- 1.1 Name of the organisation
- 1.2 Address for all correspondence
- 1.3 Contact Name(s)
- 1.4 Contact Position
- 1.5 Telephone Number(s)
- 1.6 E-mail address
- 1.7 Website address
- 1.8 Company Registration Number
- 1.9 Date of Registration
- 1.10 Registered address if different from the above
- 1.11 VAT Registration number
- 1.12 Is your organisation (Please tick **one**)
 - Public Limited Company
 - Limited Company
 - Partnership
 - Sole Trader
 - Other (please specify)
- 1.13 The number of permanent and third party staff currently involved directly in the provision of services similar to those required by Transport Focus.
- 1.14 The date of your organisation's formation.
- 1.15 Is your organisation a subsidiary of another organisation? If so, please provide the name and registered office address of the holding or parent company and the ultimate parent (if applicable).
- 1.16 Does the Company have Employers' liability, Public liability and Indemnity Insurance? (If so please state the level of cover).

- 1.17 Organisational Structure (please supply an organisational structure for your company).
- 1.18 Does the organisation have any contracts in the public sector over the value of £50,000 per annum? If so how many?
- 1.19 Has your company had any public-sector contracts prematurely terminated in the last five years? (If so, please provide details)
- 1.20 Does the organisation have any contracts (such as a non-compete agreement) within transport or other sectors which would prohibit you from submitting proposals for any projects? If so please provide details.
- 1.21 Please provide details of any relevant accreditations your company holds, e.g. ISO9001, ISO 20252 and IQCS or equivalent standard. Please include a copy of any certificate.
- 1.22 Please indicate which professional or trade bodies your organisation belongs to, e.g. MRS, ESOMAR and AQR.
- 1.23 Details of your organisation's Health and Safety at Work Policy.
- 1.24 Briefly provide evidence of compliance with the Eco-management audit scheme or any other relevant recognised environmental standard with which your company complies.
- 1.25 Please enclose a copy of your organisation's Equality and/or Equality and Diversity policy statement(s).
- 1.26 Please enclose a brief summary of your organisation's business continuity plan(s).

Section 2 – Financial information

The information supplied in this section will be evaluated to assess the longer-term financial viability of your organisation.

This information will be used as a 'pass and go' by Transport Focus to determine whether suppliers have the financial ability to meet its requirements over the long term. Transport Focus will obtain a credit rating score for each supplier.

All of this financial information will be continuously reviewed and if there are any issues Transport Focus will contact the individual suppliers to discuss, but it may result in a supplier being removed from the Preferred Supplier List.

Where a consortium bid is proposed, please present the information for each consortium member individually.

Please provide the figures for the three most recent years (if available).

Documentation to be submitted:

- 2.1 Please provide one copy of the last three years audited accounts.
- 2.2 Please provide details of any post balance sheet events or contingent liabilities, which have arisen since the last set of your accounts, were published, which you have submitted. (Note: Any UK organisation should declare material post Balance Sheet events, e.g. events which would have required disclosure if they had been known when the accounts went to print).
- 2.3 Please provide details of your latest forecast for revenue and expenditure for your current financial year.
- 2.4 Please confirm that, if awarded this contract, it would be executed by the legal entity for which the financial information is provided (i.e. the organisation and/or partnership) and would not form part of a subsidiary operation for which information has not been provided.

Please provide the following Ratio's for the present financial year:

- 2.5 Gross Profit %
- 2.6 Net Profit %
- 2.7 Sales per Employee
- 2.8 Gearing
- 2.9 Net Debtor Days
- 2.10 Bank Details:
 - Name of Bank:
 - Address of Bank:
 - Telephone Number:
 - Suitable Contact Name and position:

Section 3 - References

Please provide details of two recent contracts that are relevant. Where possible at least one should be from the public sector. If you cannot provide two references, please explain why. References relating to consortium members and sub-contractors should be clearly marked as such and should be provided in addition to the two recent references required.

		Reference 1	Reference 2
3.1	Customer Organisation (name)		
3.2	Customer contact name and phone number		
3.3	Date contract awarded		
3.4	Contract reference and brief description		
3.5	Value		
3.6	Date contract was completed		
3.7	Have you had any contracts terminated by a client in the last three years, or any contracts where damages have been claimed by the contracting authority?		Yes / No
3.8	If 'yes', please give details:		

Section 4 – Quality assurance

- 4.1 Does the organisation have quality-assurance procedures in place throughout the project life cycle including fieldwork, analysis and reporting? If so, can you give a brief overview of these procedures?
- 4.2 Please give a brief outline of your policy regarding the use of sub-contractors and, if applicable, the extent to which you might envisage using them for this requirement; (please specify which Lot). Please include procedures relating to quality assurance and what arrangements are in place should the business relationship with the subcontractor cease.
- 4.3 What policies and procedures are in place for managing and maintaining information/data security? (The successful applicant must be compliant with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Please indicate whether your organisation will be able to meet this obligation.)

Section 5 – Project management

- 5.1 Please provide details of any processes and quality control systems in place for delivering research projects on time and within budget.

- 5.2 Please provide a summary of how you manage risks and how you plan to continue operating in the event of a major incident e.g. serious systems failure, fire or water damage, staff issues. This must be no longer than one side of A4.

- 5.3 Please provide details of the approach you use when working collaboratively with other suppliers or multiple clients to deliver project outputs.

- 5.4 Please provide details of processes/controls in place for managing and monitoring the quality of fieldwork.

Section 6 – Lot 1: Qualitative capabilities

Proven expertise in a range of qualitative research techniques including focus groups, depth interviews, deliberative techniques and ethnography.

- 6.1 Outline how you would recruit in circumstances such as very tight deadlines or to a difficult specification, for example those who have considered and discounted purchasing a hybrid vehicle in the next five years.
- 6.2 Describe your expertise in working with seldom heard groups.
- 6.3 Provide details of your organisation's approach to qualitative analysis.
- 6.4 Describe your ability to deliver engaging presentations and workshops to Transport Focus's stakeholders.

Please provide an example of a presentation or workshop that you have recently carried out, including how you approached tailoring and engaging the particular group of stakeholders involved.

- 6.5 Please provide brief examples of where you have used different qualitative techniques (e.g. projective technique, story-telling, deliberative, digital ethnography).

Section 7 – Lot 2: Quantitative capabilities

Proven expertise in a range of quantitative research techniques, including face-to-face, telephone, self-completion, mystery shopping and online surveys.

- 7.1 Provide details of your organisation's data-capturing capabilities (e.g. tools used and processes for data input).
- 7.2 Provide details of your organisations sampling capabilities.
- 7.3 Provide details of your organisation's data-analysis capabilities (e.g. modelling, advanced statistical techniques).
- 7.5 Describe your ability to deliver engaging presentations and workshops to Transport Focus's stakeholders.

Please provide an example of a presentation or workshop that you have recently carried out, including how you approached tailoring and engaging the particular group of stakeholders involved

- 7.6 Outline your approach to sampling to a difficult specification, for example those who have considered and discounted purchasing a hybrid vehicle in the next five years.
- 7.7 Describe your expertise in working with seldom heard groups.

Section 8 – Qualitative and Quantitative competence

- 8.1 Brief description of relevant experience in transport sector/Transport Focus's line of work (please specify by Lot).

Please ensure you outline your experience in both public transport and roads.

- 8.2 Please provide evidence of relevant staff/sub-contractor experience, training, qualifications and professional membership and how performance is monitored (please specify by Lot).

- 8.3 Please provide evidence of utilising innovative technologies at any stage of the project e.g. design, sampling, delivery, reporting etc. (please specify by Lot).

Section 9 – Output and Design Capabilities

- 9.1 Please describe and provide examples of the range of research outputs you can produce
- 9.2 Please describe your capability to produce deliverables in innovative formats, including recent examples
- 9.2 Provide examples of your in-house design capabilities, if applicable
- 9.3 Provide examples of research outputs that have been published in the public domain, if applicable



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Transport Focus is the operating name of the Passengers' Council