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## 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To detail the methodology to be adopted for procurement planning within Translink that ensures an effective plan is developed prior to any purchasing activity being undertaken.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 The Planning Process

2.1.1 Plans must be formulated for all purchasing activities. The events listed at 2.1.1.1 require this process to be worked through and a summary of the decisions made recorded by the Purchasing Department in the file. All requirements which are to go through the full tendering process require a Request for Contract Action (RCA) form to be completed. This is to ensure best value for money is obtained by Translink and to create a transparent audit trail of decisions exists. This form reflects and covers areas of the NITHC / Translink Financial Memorandum Final Version 28/07/2006 that must be complied with.

2.1.1.1 For all items above the value of £10,000 including each new purchases, or for requirements which have contracts coming to an end.

2.1.2 The Procurement Control Totals listed in the NITHC / Translink Financial Memorandum Final Version 28/07/2006 that must be complied with are illustrated in Annex 3 below.

2.1.3 The plan should be developed by the Project Manager and the Purchasing Manager, or his representative, and agreed with all stakeholders e.g. Users, Sponsor, Budget Holder, Project Team as appropriate.


2.1.4 Where a Project Manager is appointed they will assume overall responsibility for all actions carried out within the Project's remit and will take ownership and input into the plan.

### 2.2 Stages in the Procurement Process that require planning:

2.2.1 The key issues which have to be considered when developing a plan are listed below. Roles, responsibilities and timescales for these activities must be defined as part of the planning process:

#### Identify the requirement:


- Definition of basic requirements
- Allocation of Project Manager or requirement owner and a Procurement Team, roles and responsibilities within the team are clearly identified. Resources to undertake the project: are these within Translink or will Translink have to appoint consultants to manage the project?

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- Economic appraisal and / or Budget investment authorisation complete or to be completed. Note the NITHC / Translink Financial Memorandum Final Version 28/07/2006 requires that a commensurate economic appraisal should be applied to all proposals to spend, and this includes demonstration of the value for money aspects of the proposal.
- Realistic timescales are established: this includes high level milestones for the project, together with dates when approvals within Translink/NITHC/DRD are required.
- Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 - Consideration must be given to Equality and Sustainable Development issues.
- Translink must check if the requirement could avail of an opportunity to enter into Public / Private Partnerships where this would offer better value for money over conventional procurement. Note, prior departmental approval must be secured for all PPP arrangements and the Department should be consulted on all such proposals at an early stage.
- Lessons learnt from previous procurements, particularly for similar goods or services, are considered and inform the plan and procurement strategy.
- Preparation and authorisation of Technical Specification, Drawings and Documentation package
- Prepare an estimated delivery schedule for requirements
- Preparation of Safety Plan/Risk assessments (as appropriate)
- Environmental policy (relevant to the contract)
- Advice on occupational health and safety issues, safety legislation requirements and environmental issues
- Assess if the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations are applicable


### **Preparation of a Procurement Strategy**

The procurement strategy helps to define the type, size and phasing of the procurement. This means that lots of things should be considered as early as possible and the direction of the procurement is taken from some examples of the areas to consider are shown below. The strategy could cite the business justification then may go on to detail how you will deliver the requirement, how this will meet Translink's needs and the risks involved in the process that you should account for and the actions needed to mitigate these risks. In its widest sense, the


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strategy should cover every aspect associated with delivery of a capability requirement, i.e. not just the commercial implications:

- Factors influencing risk: uncertainty and/or innovation in the requirement.
- The length and flexibility of the timescales for implementation.
- The possibility of change in Translink's operations.
- Availability of project management and technical expertise.
- The ability of the market to respond.
- Options and risks developed, to obtain the most cost-effective purchase. Evaluate sources of supply (e.g. make or buy, capital purchase, leasing, off the shelf product). Note on Leasing: Prior departmental approval must be secured for all *property* and *finance leases*. Before entering into any lease (including an operating lease), NITHC and therefore Translink shall demonstrate that the lease offers better value for money than purchases (NITHC /Translink Financial Memorandum – Final Version 28/07/2006, section 10.4).
- Develop a Contracting Strategy; this refers to the actual method of procurement, the sort of contracting path that will be taken. It requires consideration of the timescales involved, the current contracting arrangements, the issues surrounding re-competition and the duration of the contract. The larger picture will have to be considered including the impact of a new contract on any existing contracts e.g. there may be a need for working agreements with 3<sup>rd</sup> parties, staff transfer (TUPE), asset transfer, property leases and sales, ownership of Intellectual property.
- Types of contract – collaboration in procurement is an important tool that can help deliver improvement in public services through greater value for money and resource efficiency. For Translink collaboration must be considered as part of the contracting strategy. In the first instance internal already established contracts and agreements should be considered then contact should be made with the Central Procurement Directorate to establish if there are any contracts already in place or coming up for renewal that Translink could utilise. Following this if required OGCBuying.solutions should be contacted for the same. Then other collaboration methods should be examined before any decision to advertise is made. The contract type should also be considered; can a Framework agreement be used? How many contracts (multiple v single suppliers) are needed e.g. can this be divided easily into smaller lots to help Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs)? Does a qualified supplier list need to be developed? Also consider issues of re-competing at the end of the contract period make sure you don't get 'locked in' e.g. Consider the impact of your decisions on the Supply Market.

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- More detail will then have to be added including the type of commercial arrangement sought (e.g. partnering, single or multiple suppliers etc), the form of contract, the negotiation plan and draft terms, conditions and schedules, supply chain management, commercial incentives and rewards, review periods, payment mechanisms.
- The requirement must be well defined at this stage to ensure the strategy and plan are capable of delivering a solution to meet the need and to ensure the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) notice has the correct scope.
- Procurement routes and Public Procurement Regulations. E.g. Does the requirement exceed EU Procurement Legislation thresholds? Which procedure to use and what time allowances must be made (See EU Procurement Legislation Guidance TPP109).
- Review resource requirements, and plan to obtain additional support. Consider specialist advisors (legal etc) will these be required, and when?
- For property and construction projects, there must be a full evaluation of integrated procurement strategies e.g. Design and Build, Prime Contracting
- Agree a suitable pricing mechanism e.g. firm price or variable – stage payment plans linked to deliverables and performance.
- Consider the commercial need for important Terms and Conditions e.g. Break and Intellectual Property Rights that may be called upon in the event of a disagreement with the contractor.
- Set value for money evaluation criteria and process, this may include some of the following:
  - Timescales for production
  - Assessment of supplier Quality, Safety and environmental Plans (if appropriate)
  - Supplier performance measures
  - Review of supplier insurance coverage
  - Member of Constructionline (if appropriate)
  - Compliance to Terms and Conditions
  - Most economically advantageous tender
  - The tender board panel members
  - Timing and turnaround of evaluation
  - Tender return dates and available slots with Tender Controller.
  - Weighting, Scoring and Pass Marks
  - Authorisation needed.
- The Project Manager should produce a Procurement Strategy Paper (if required) with the aid of the Purchasing Manager or his representative if they are available.

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### Sourcing the Market and Advertising Policy:


- Market sounding is the process of assessing the reaction of the market to a proposed requirement and procurement approach (if appropriate).
- All tenders with fall between £30,000 and the EU Thresholds shall be placed on the Translink website under the tender page and once awarded an award notice may also be placed on the website. For examples of the minimum information that should be presented in these notices refer to TPF3052.
- All tender competitions which fall within the scope of The Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006 should be advertised as appropriate in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) and placed on the Translink website under the tender page.
- Translink only issue tender advertisements to commercial journals in special situations upon the approval of the Purchasing Manager or his representative needs to be obtained.
- If the requirement is above the Thresholds (See EU Procurement Legislation Guidance TPP109) an OJEU advert will be needed. Consider in detail the requirement and ensure any need for flexibility in the future is accounted for and the scope is appropriate. Check funding is identified and committed by the department to this requirement.
- Research the market for potential suppliers (if below thresholds)
- Screen responses - Issue Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) (if required). Conduct site visits if requirement is high value, check registration with Companies House and assess financial standing of the potential supplier. Note: Translink are required to take proportionate steps to assess the financial and economic standing of any organisation or other body which it intends to enter into a contract.

### Invitation to Tender (ITT)

- Prepare ITT. Ensure the ITT is clear and easy to read, this will increase the responses and will help the Project Manager to read the responses. Areas to include: Cover letter, Specification, Terms and Conditions, Special Notices and Instructions to Tenderers (SNITS) e.g. format for return, number of copies, and Return Labels.

### Seek Tenders

- Issue ITT to those pre-qualified
- Tender return

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- Tender evaluation (technical and commercial)
- Post tender negotiation (as appropriate)

### **Contract Award**

- Inform successful bidder of intention to award the contract
- Notify all unsuccessful bidders
- Implement the 10 day standstill period (if applicable)
- Award contract and await acceptance
- Issue OJEU award notice (if applicable, See EU Procurement Legislation Guidance TPP109 for timescales required)
- Debrief unsuccessful bidders

### **Post contract Award**


- Implement processes and check contract management is initiated
- Ensure contract management team is given handover details from the procurement team (if applicable)
- Monitor contract performance
- Conduct relationship management (if the contract is of strategic importance to Translink or if it is high value).
- Post project evaluation
- Conduct vendor rating
- Document archiving procedure

2.2.2 This list of activities is not exhaustive and should be reviewed as appropriate to the procurement activity.

## **3. Requests for Contract Action**

### **Process**

- 3.1** Purchasing Staff must not initiate the tendering cycle until the Request for Contract Action (RCA) has received technical and financial approval by the appropriately authorised personnel within the project team and contains all the relevant information.
- 3.2** On completion the RCA should detail all the essential information required to plan and execute the procurement. The RCA form is usually originated by an appropriately authorised Project Manager, the 'Originator', and is then passed to other members of the team for additional technical, financial and purchasing approvals.
- 3.3** All RCA Forms must be provided to Purchasing Manager in the first instance in order for it to be approved into workflow, he/she will be responsible for allocating as quickly as possible, a commercial lead that will take the appropriate action on it.


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- 3.4** Upon receipt of a RCA the Purchasing Department must record and input information on a computerised RCA Monitoring System and allocate the RCA a reference number and identify a brief description of the goods or services required, and placed on a registered file as soon as possible after receipt. Once a contract has been placed or an amendment issued, the entry should be shown as cleared in the records.
- 3.5** The key issues to be addressed shown on the RCA Form (see FORM NO. TPF3042). In particular, the following should be considered; the requirement, procurement proposals, potential tender list, advertising, economic order quantities, quantity discounts and the feasibility of the contract placement date.
- 3.6** There are three types of approval required before the Purchasing Department may proceed with tender / contract action. Firstly, the Originator must confirm that the requirement is included in an approved programme of work or equipment procurement and the date of approval must be provided. Secondly, the form must illustrate that the Health and Safety Department have been informed about the requirement and their recommendations have been included. At the same time, they must confirm that the total estimated cost of the requirement has been recorded as a known liability against financial estimates and the funds are available (e.g. Letter of Offer). Thirdly the Purchasing Manager or their representative must ensure that the various procurement aspects have been considered.
- 3.7** If additional financial sanction approval is subsequently approved at the appropriate level of authorisation after the RCA has been submitted, to the Purchasing Department this subsequent approval must then be supplied in a form that can be retained for audit purposes to the Purchasing Department.
- 3.8** It is not necessary to have financial endorsement on the RCAs for items that are to be included in the specification / contract as Options received during the tendering process. However a technically and financially endorsed RCA must be provided in the event that the Options are exercised under the contract.

### **Advance Copies**


- 3.9** The negotiation of contract conditions and prices for goods and services often proceeds against a tight delivery timescale. To aid preparatory work, arrangements may be made for the purchasing department to receive an advance copy of appropriate RCAs prominently marked 'ADVANCE COPY'. This will aid procurement and sourcing strategy, raising contract files, drafting ITT documents, preparing advertisements, considering pricing action to be taken.
- 3.10** It is important to note that any preliminary discussion or correspondence between Translink and any potential contractor(s) must be on a 'without commitment' basis.

### **Clear and realistic information**

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- 3.11** It is the responsibility of the Purchasing Department, in consultation with the Project Team members to ensure, before purchasing action is taken, that the information supplied is complete and clear for the purpose of placing a satisfactory contract.
- 3.12** The Purchasing Department can assist with and will examine the information contained in RCA to ensure it is adequate and realistic as outlined below:
- 3.13** To acquire an understanding of the requirement, areas of risk or potential shortcomings, previous experience of purchasing the same item, difficulties in the past, etc., this will facilitate the preparation of a more effective ITT and a taut contract. The project team must ensure that the associated specification is not unnecessarily prescriptive or drawn up in such a way as to stifle competition or to preclude innovative solutions to the requirement.
- 3.14** Consideration should also be given to whether there are any contracts already in existence to which the new requirements for the same or similar items might sensibly be added. If a further requirement arises within a reasonable period e.g.12 months of an earlier order, the new requirement should normally be added to the existing contract in preference to running a new competition.
- 3.15** The aim must be to secure the maximum advantage of discounts/economic ordering arrangements in order to obtain the best value for money. These should be highlighted on the RCA and can be done by aggregating RCAs, by considering, where beneficial, the suggestion for collaboration with Other Government Departments for the same or similar items or it may be possible for quantities on RCAs to be marginally increased in order to qualify for a lower unit price which could result in a lower total cost.
- 3.16** If there is any proposal to purchase non-competitively RCAs for Single Tender Action must include, or have appended, the procurement and support strategy approved by the Project Manager, giving the reasons for advocating non-competitive procurement and this must also be endorsed by the Purchasing Manager and or his representative.
- 3.17** The list of potential tenderers for inclusion in the RCA. Such consultation should ideally take place before the RCA is finally approved and should take account of the need to keep the list to a manageable number of companies, having regard to the nature and value of the requirement.
- 3.18** To ensure that any OJEU or other advertising requirements are identified at the outset and any associated time constraints taken into account in planning the procurement.
- 3.19** To consider the feasibility of the date by which the contract is to be placed or contract amendment is to be effective. If more time is required, it is essential that the Purchasing Department discuss with the Originator and other members of the project team to discuss priorities and, if necessary, agree a revised date.
- 4. Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000; Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) and Data Protection Act**




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**4.1** It should be noted at planning stage the main features of the Freedom of Information Act as they apply to public procurement and taken from the Central Procurement Directorate Information Disclosure Guidance are:

1. a general right of access to information about all public contracts and procurement activity held by public authorities, subject to certain conditions and exemptions;
2. it applies to information which is held by another person on behalf of the contracting authority (e.g. information or data held by an outsourcing partner);
3. there is no requirement to have a particular status, such as being an unsuccessful bidder, to make a request and be given information;
4. neither the identity of the requester, nor the use to which the information may be put, are grounds for withholding information (hence it is legitimate for one supplier to seek information on another purely for commercial purposes);
5. it is retrospective in that it applies to all information which is 'held' by the public authority at the time a request is received and therefore also covers existing contracts and those which are completed;
6. individuals may ask for an internal review of a decision to withhold information, and subsequently a requester's right of appeal is to the Information Commissioner's Office in the first instance;
7. a duty imposed on public authorities to adopt and maintain a scheme for the publication of information must be approved by the Information Commissioner (a "publication scheme"); and
8. there is nothing to stop the use of information obtained under FOI in litigation (there is therefore the potential for requests for information under FOI to be used to gain pre-litigation disclosure of information relating to potential claims).

**4.2** To accelerate internal procedures designed to ensure compliance with the 20 working day statutory response time for Freedom of Information requests tender documents i.e.


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the Invitation to Tender should include a Freedom of Information Statement for completion by Tenderers. The advantage of this approach is that Tenderers state which information they consider sensitive together with reasons for and period of sensitivity, requests for information which is not considered sensitive can consequently be processed quickly and efficiently.

- 4.3 Tenderers must also be advised that the information contained in their tenders may be released under the Freedom of Information legislative requirements. A clause to this effect should be published in all Invitation to Tenders released by Translink and should be used by all Public Authorities in Northern Ireland.
- 4.4 This clause states that contractors are responsible for co-operating with the Public Authority, at their own cost to enable the Authority or its customer to comply with its information disclosure requirements. Most requests for procurement information will have some supplier implications and potentially the overhead in consulting on all cases could be significant. Whilst this may be a fact of life for the authority, it should be recognised that suppliers will also carry an overhead in responding to the authority. A pragmatic approach within the bounds of reasonableness to consultation with the supply base is therefore recommended.
- 4.5 There are numerous exemptions to the release of information under FOI and for a full list please refer as a starting point to the CPD Information Disclosure Guidance. However exemptions are precarious under FOI so seek advice from the Department for Constitutional Affairs if required.
- 4.6 Requests for EIRs can be written or oral. Under the EIRs, environmental information is a defined term. It does not mean any information which can be subjectively described as environmental. The general position is that although some information used in certain procurement exercises will be caught by the EIRs, there are no grounds for a view that an application under the EIRs would lead to information relevant to a procurement exercise being disclosed which would not otherwise be disclosed.
- 4.7 In terms of comparison with the FOI Act, the Data Protection Act (DPA) applies to information held about an individual and requested by that individual. Although such a request might originally be received as a request under the FOI Act, an authority's request handling procedures should quickly identify it as exempt under the FOI Act and route it to their DPA process. This has no particular procurement aspect other than it may be necessary to build in a DPA clause into the final contract documents and so the Department for Constitutional Affairs guidance on a S40 Personal Information exemption is applicable.

## 5. RELATED DOCUMENTS & IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL READING

- 4.1 Procurement Manual    TPM001 Section 5
- 4.2 Procedure (s)            TPP109 EU Procurement Legislation  
                                       TPP121 Sustainability & Procurement

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TPP115 Document Control

- 4.3 Form(s) No(s) TPF3042 RCA
- 4.4 Procurement Process Map: ANNEX 1 – Excel document
- Procurement Timescales document: ANNEX 2 – Excel document
- Procurement Control Totals ANNEX 3 – Word document shown below.

**RELATED DOCUMENTS AND FURTHER READING:**

CPD Guidance note(s): Particularly 01/06 OGC Guidance Liability in Government Contracts.  
 02/08 Information Disclosure Guidance for Public Sector  
 Procurement Practitioners  
 OGC Website [www.ogc.gov.uk/documents/foi.pdf](http://www.ogc.gov.uk/documents/foi.pdf)  
 Department for Constitutional Affairs [www.dca.gov.uk](http://www.dca.gov.uk)

**ANNEX 3**

**Values as of 1<sup>st</sup> March 2009 for implementation**

The Procurement Control Limits listed in the NITHC /Translink Financial Memorandum – Final Version 28/07/2006 have been amended by version of 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008. With reference to the ‘Central Procurement Directorate PROCUREMENT GUIDANCE NOTE 01/04 Subject: PROCUREMENT CONTROL LIMITS (PLCs), Updated 1 January 2009’ the PLC’s are to be disregarded as instructed by DRD PTPD on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2009. The following extract is therefore to be implemented and is from the NI Transport Holding Company Financial Memorandum amended 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008:


**Procurement Control Limits**

**Appendix 3 - General Delegated Authority for Purchase of Goods and Services**

**Procurement Control Limits**

**NITHC/Translink will be expected to adhere to the DRD Procurement Control Limits as set out in the following table:**

Estimated Value of Order (excluding VAT)	Number of Quotations/Selected Tenders Required
Up to £1,000	Requisitioner draws off Agresso Catalogues,

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	frameworks etc. created by Buyers
Greater than £1,001 to £10,000	2 or more quotations where possible and practical sought by requisitioners. All requisitions will be vetted by Buyers
Greater than £10,000 to £30,000	3 or more written quotations/selected tenders where possible and practical sought by requisitioners; [i.e. where no formal contract exists]
£30,001 – OJEU Thresholds	Advertise on Translink Website, and industry journals where appropriate. Suppliers on Pre Qualification Questionnaire lists will also be used.
Over OJEU Thresholds	Full OJEU Tender Process

Note 1: Written quotations / selected tenders means inviting offers from selected suppliers without public advertisement. It should be noted that procurement by quotation is usually on the basis of the suppliers' terms and conditions. For procurements which need to cover risks such as insurance, IPR (intellectual property rights), confidentiality, security, etc or in the case of service contracts where it is important to cover issues such as non-performance or disputes, **it is always advisable to issue written conditions of contract.** Queries regarding purchasing should be addressed to the DRD Purchasing Manager Central Procurement Directorate at Clare House, 303 Airport Road West, Belfast, BT3 9ED.


Note 2: Contracting authorities should group together their planned expenditure so that they can consider the appropriate thresholds for procurement. The sub-division of a procurement order with the objective of avoiding the seeking of the appropriate number of quotations / tenders specified in the above table runs contrary to procurement guidance and is not permitted.

Note 3: It may not always be possible to obtain the required number of quotations. In this event a detailed reason must be noted on the relevant documentation including the options explored and actions taken to obtain the required quotations.

Note 4: In the application of the above table, a Branch may fix lower financial limits if it is considered appropriate. Care should be taken to ensure that there is no possibility of any undue patronage and staff involved in the procurement process must make a declaration of interest where appropriate. In all their dealings, purchasers should do their best to preserve the highest standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity.

Note 5: All original documentation, including faxed and email quotations must be retained in hard copy format for 7 years.

Note 6: The schedule contained in the guidance has been varied in line with Translink's business needs while safeguarding the principles of transparency and value for money.

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**Guidance to be implemented from the Central Procurement Directorate PROCUREMENT GUIDANCE NOTE 01/04 Subject: PROCUREMENT CONTROL LIMITS (PLCs), Updated 1 January 2009'**

**Note:** Procurement by quotation is usually on the basis of the suppliers' terms and conditions. A tender normally requires that the procurement be subject to the contracting authority's terms and conditions. Contracting Authorities should ensure that the indemnity levels in their Terms and Conditions and the levels of financial thresholds for contracts, particularly contracts below £30K are proportionate to the risk. Please see Guidance Note 01/06 Liability in Government Contracts for more detail."

**In addition this Guidance note also sets out the following which is again viewed as Translink Standard practice also...**

**"Below Threshold Contracts**

Below threshold contracts offer significant opportunities for businesses particularly SMEs, SEEs and start-up companies. Where possible suppliers within these sectors should be included among those invited to participate in the procurement exercise. For competitions below £30K, selecting tenders can be facilitated by eSourcing tools, where suppliers can register by category and sector. Where electronic systems are used, quality management information can be captured to show what types of contracts particular sectors have competed for and the number of contracts awarded.

If vendor registration lists are being used in the selection process contracting authorities should ensure that such lists are regularly refreshed and provide an easily accessible and transparent process for suppliers who wish to be considered for inclusion on a list.

To maintain competitiveness in the market and provide protection against accusation or the perception of collusion, contracting authorities should also avoid inviting the same suppliers to bid for procurements."


Please find the full guidance note listed on the CPD website at:

[http://www.cpdni.gov.uk/guidance note 01-04 procurement control limits - 2009-3.pdf](http://www.cpdni.gov.uk/guidance%20note%2001-04%20procurement%20control%20limits%20-%202009-3.pdf)

**Values below valid up to December 2008 only**

**General Delegated Authority for Purchase of Goods and Services Procurement Control Totals extract from Appendix 3 of the NITHC /Translink Financial Memorandum – Final Version 28/07/2006**

Procurement Control Limits

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NITHC/Translink will be expected to adhere to the DRD Procurement Control Limits as set out in the following table:


<b>Estimated Value of Order          (excluding VAT)</b>	<b>Number of Quotations/Selected          Tenders Required</b>
Up to £1,000	2 oral quotations [i.e. where no formal contract exists] [fax / email confirmation must be obtained]
Greater than £1,000 to £10,000	3 written quotations /selected tenders [i.e. where no formal contract exists]
Greater than £10,000 to £30,000	4 written quotations/selected tenders [i.e. where no formal contract exists]
Greater than £30,000 up to EU Thresholds	Full Tender Action [i.e. where no formal contract exists]

Note 1: Written quotations / selected tenders means inviting offers from selected suppliers without public advertisement. It should be noted that procurement by quotation is usually on the basis of the suppliers' terms and conditions. For procurements which need to cover risks such as insurance, IPR (intellectual property rights), confidentiality, security, etc or in the case of service contracts where it is important to cover issues such as non-performance or disputes, **it is always advisable to issue written conditions of contract.**

Note 2: Contracting authorities should group together their planned expenditure so that they can consider the appropriate thresholds for procurement. The sub-division of a procurement order with the objective of avoiding the seeking of the appropriate number of quotations / tenders specified in the above table runs contrary to procurement guidance and is not permitted.

Note 3: It may not always be possible to obtain the required number of quotations. In this event a detailed reason must be noted on the relevant documentation including the options explored and actions taken to obtain the required quotations.

Note 4: In the application of the above table, a Branch may fix lower financial limits if it is considered appropriate. Care should be taken to ensure that there is no possibility of any undue patronage and staff involved in the procurement process must make a declaration of interest where appropriate. In all their

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dealings, purchasers should do their best to preserve the highest standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity.

Note 5: All original documentation, including faxed and email quotations must be retained in hard copy format for 7 years.