Specification Contents

Quickfire Guide

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A good specification could include:

Outputs	Focus on the outputs required without fixing the method(s) the supplier should use (output specification).
Tight	Be sufficiently tight so that the product or service fits the user's needs. However not so fixed that it discourages creativity and/or innovation that could improves Value for Money (VFM).
Special Conditions	Consider whether to include special conditions relating to the performance of the contract. This may cover economic, innovation-related, environmental, social or employment-related conditions e.g. community benefit and prompt payment of sub-contractors clauses.
Criteria	Include criteria for the acceptance of the products or services at the point of evaluation.
Service Levels	Include service levels and a process for measuring ongoing performance.
Avoid over-specification	Avoid over-specification of performance that is over and above what is considered "fit for purpose" or beyond what is actually required). This aims to reach a balance between whole life cost and quality.

e-Commerce	Take account of any e-Commerce requirements.
Sustainable Procurement Duty	Comply with the Sustainable Procurement Duty.
Environmental considerations	Detail environmental and climate performance levels, where appropriate.
Design	Take into account suitability of design for all users. Specify a conformity assessment e.g. ensuring a web site meets accessibility standards through specifying appropriate font sizes.
Legislation	Take account of relevant legislation e.g. health and safety and equality.
Licensing	Take account of all licensing requirements that a supplier must have to operate in an industry/sector. These requirements must be relevant to the performance of the contract e.g. a supplier of water and waste water services must hold a current retail license for the provision of water and waste services in Scotland
User Instructions	Provide for user instructions where appropriate
Packaging	Detail required packaging, marking and labelling where appropriate.

Assessments	Conformity assessment procedures relevant to the product(s)., e,g, implementing conformity assessments to ensure accessibility for disabled persons is adhered to.
Quality	Outline required quality levels.
Product Requirements	Outline performance, use of the product, safety or dimensions, including the generic under which the product is sold. Please note you cannot specify a particular product or brand and must allow for the offer of equivalent products.
Production processes	Production processes and methods at any stage of the life cycle of the supply or service. For example to meet ethical, social or environmental objectives.
Fair participation	Encourage fair participation. Do not write in a way that distorts market competition or unduly limits supplier entry to the procurement process.
Practicality	Ensure that any requirements for limits, tolerances, deliverables, timescales etc. are practical and realistic.
Commercial considerations	Consider commercial and ongoing performance management aspects of the contract throughout the supply chain e.g. payment terms, including those to sub-contractors.
Evaluation criteria	Support a structured method of tender evaluation.

Formal contract	Be the basis of the formal contract between the Organisation and the supplier.
Cyber Security	Consider and communicate minimum cyber security requirements where these form part of award criteria.
Testing	Define testing and test methods. This includes any certification that may be required as proof from regulatory authorities to meet the standards required
Miscellaneous	The specification may also refer to factors of the production process, provision or trading of goods and services. These factors may not form part of the material substance of the product, e.g. when technically describing the products or services you want to purchase, you may require that they do not involve toxic chemicals or are produced/provided using energy-efficient machines.