

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT TO THE CCIAF

What legislative changes have been made?	<p>Legislation applied to the CCIAF currently, covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• contracting authorities are required to have regard to the National Procurement Policy Statement National Procurement Policy Statement.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk);• contracting authorities with an annual spend of £200m or more are required from April 2022 to publish procurement pipelines and to benchmark their procurement capability;• contracting authorities with an annual spend of £100m or more are required from April 2023 to publish procurement pipelines and to benchmark their procurement capability.• Many organisations with a much lower spend now take part in CCIAF to assess the organisation's commercial maturity in particular ALB's from Central Government Dept's and local authorities.
What are the forthcoming legislative changes?	<p>Procurement Act 2023 will go live 24 February, 2025. CCIAF assessment is to be completed by 28 February 2025, therefore participants are advised to complete the assessment under the existing regulations.</p>
What benefit does benchmarking bring?	<p>Benchmarking can play an important role in informing contracting authorities' assessment of whether they have the appropriate skills and capability to deliver value for money and benefit from future reforms to the public procurement regulations. Benchmarking allows the many examples of best practice in public procurement to be shared across all contracting authorities, enabling a culture of continuous improvement in procurement practice and capability, to not only save the taxpayer money but also drive sustainable economic growth.</p>
What does this benchmarking look like in practice, how will it be implemented?	<p>Benchmarking is encouraged to be undertaken against the new Commercial Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework (CCIAF), however organisations can choose which tool / framework to use.</p> <p>Cabinet Office (CO) have worked with the wider public sector to create a Common Standards Framework with them adopting CCIAF.</p> <p>Contracting authorities with an annual spend of £100m or more required from April 2023 to publish procurement pipelines and to benchmark their procurement capability.</p>

<p>What is the Commercial Functional Standard?</p>	<p>The Commercial Functional Standard GovS008 sets expectations and drives consistency in the planning, management and execution of commercial activities. It ensures contracts and relationships with suppliers realise value for money and result in the delivery of high-quality public services.</p> <p>This Commercial Functional Standard is part of a suite of management standards that promotes consistent and coherent ways of working across government, and the wider public sector, and provides a stable basis for assurance, risk management and capability improvement. The suite of standards, and associated guidance, can be found at GOV.UK government functional standards Government Functional Standard GovS 008: Commercial and Commercial Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). Functional standards cross-refer to each other where needed, so can be confidently used together.</p>
<p>What is the Commercial Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework (CCIAF)?</p>	<p>The Commercial Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework is a tool designed to help drive continuous improvement in commercial practices across Central Government and the wider public sector, by enabling organisations to benchmark their commercial operations against the Commercial Functional Standard and best practice.</p> <p>This replaces the Government ‘Commercial Standards Assessment Framework - GovS 008: Annex E’, which was launched in 2019, and has had around 50 central government departments using it as a framework to self assess commercial performance and support continuous improvement.</p>
<p>How does the Commercial Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework relate to the Commercial Functional Standard?</p>	<p>The Commercial Functional Standard is the ‘parent’ document, and for commercial practitioners the standard provides the reference and mandate for the Commercial Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework. The Framework promotes continuous improvement by allowing organisations to assess their performance against the commercial practices defined in the Functional Standard.</p>
<p>How has the Commercial Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework been developed?</p>	<p>Cabinet Office has taken a variety of inputs to develop this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feedback and workshops with current cohort of users, within the Continuous Improvement (CI) Forum who have completed Self Assessment’s (SA’s) - lessons learnt ● Feedback from other Cabinet Office (CO) internal business areas e.g. Outsourcing team re alignment with their development of the new Sourcing Playbook ● Other teams developing their functional standards e.g. security and fraud ● Review of other existing Continuous Improvement programmes and frameworks ● Detailed mapping of NHS framework, and co-design / co-authoring workshops

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taken due regard to key policy areas, National Procurement Policy Statement (NPPS) and proposed national priority policies <p>GCF have worked in partnership with a range of stakeholders including existing users, government departments and public sector bodies, including the NHS, to build on existing Continuous Improvement programmes and frameworks. This work was read across a wide range of contracting authorities, with particular focus on ensuring a Framework that delivers on common needs and values.</p>
<p>How does the Commercial Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework help compliance with legislative requirements?</p>	<p>The Assessment Framework details commercial practices which organisations can assess themselves against.</p> <p>Some of these commercial practices will be reflective of legislative requirements. Through the assessment, departments have the ability to view where they are compliant with legislative requirements and have the systems/processes to support compliance or where they may need to be strengthened.</p> <p>Once an organisation has submitted a self assessment against the CCIAF, they will receive a feedback summary report, which includes benchmarking data.</p>
<p>Will Authority's be required to align the Framework with their own processes and terminology? For example, commercial could refer to revenue generation.</p>	<p>For the purposes of the Assessment Framework, the term commercial is a commonly used term in central government to define broad procurement activity but does not include wider commercial activity including income generation.</p>
<p>How does this align to the commissioning process undertaken by some Contracting Authorities?</p>	<p>The Commissioning process can be aligned to the assessment framework as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessing needs: Theme 1 • planning services: Theme 1 & 2 • procuring services: Theme 3 & 4 & 8 • monitoring quality: Theme 5 & 6
<p>What is considered as Third Party Spend/Spend Under Assessment?</p>	<p>Third party spend is commercial spend with non-Government organisations. For the NHS this could be defined as non-pay spend.</p> <p>It is intended that all addressable contracted third party spend in an organisation is in scope. Some organisations may exclude certain subsidiaries, spend categories or geographies and this should be stated in their submission within the 'commercial spend under assessment' section of the self-assessment tool. In these circumstances there should be justification and</p>

	confirmation of the reason for exclusion in line with sector specific governance procedures.
What time period does the Third Party Spend figure cover?	The figure would be your most recent annual spend which can be found in your latest annual report.

IMPLEMENTATION

How does the scoring work and who sees it?	<p>Self assessments are completed by organisations followed by a peer review and results are submitted to Cabinet Office. Cabinet Office collates scores, and identifies best practice to be shared in masterclasses, supporting continuous improvement. All departments will have the ability to view their scores against all other departments in an anonymised format.</p> <p>NHS trust Self-Assessment submissions will be managed by NHS Commercial Function who will liaise with the CO, which will provide the data outputs and CCIAF plan(s). CCIAF Continuous Improvement plans for NHS trusts are not currently mandatory.</p>
Will parent Departments be expected to report on behalf of their ALBs?	<p>The Self-Assessment process has been strengthened to allow increased transparency through the requirement for all ALB's to submit their own Self-Assessment (unless there is no Commercial activity undertaken). Parent Organisations are expected to support subsidiaries within their organisation to complete individual assessments. For central government organisations these assessments should be submitted separately and not as an overall assessment for the organisation.</p>
Will parent Departments be able to see reports submitted directly by ALBs?	<p>Whilst ALBs will submit their reports directly to GCF SAS team using the online tool, it is expected that parent departments will be working closely with ALBs to oversee the process and therefore have sight of the reports. The parent departments will also have access to how their ALB has performed.</p>

ONBOARDING TO THE COMMERCIAL CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

Will there be an assigned point of contact?	<p>The Commercial Continuous Improvement Team will be the key point of contact, the team can be contacted by emailing commercialstandards@cabinetoffice.gov.uk. For NHS the team can be contacted by emailing england.ccf.cciaf@nhs.net</p>
What support will be available?	<p>There will be a point of contact for all Central Government Departments, ALBs and NHS. NHS support can be requested by contacting NHS CCF team on england.ccf.cciaf@nhs.net</p>

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT COMMUNITY

How do we identify our peers for Peer Review?	<p>The Cabinet Office GCF Team will manage a central peer review system with each cohort member being allocated a peer reviewer and also being asked to peer review an organisation themselves. You are normally matched in week 2 or 3 of the CCIAF self assessment process.</p>
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How will information generated through Self-Assessment be used across the wider public sector?	<p>The Self-Assessment will generate large amounts of data, this will be used to identify areas of best practice within an organisation, these organisations will likely be invited to deliver a Masterclass session to the wider public sector. The Self-Assessment will also be used to establish continuous improvement plans for areas that the Self-Assessment has identified as weaker within an organisation.</p> <p>Yes, Cabinet Office will also be able to facilitate networking between organisations to generate and share best practice</p>
Will my organisational data generated through the framework be in the public domain?	<p>No. An aggregated score of all participants is included in the GCF Annual Report.</p>

Questions raised in previous cohorts

Below are questions received to our mail box from the previous cohort and response provided:	
<i>With the assessment window being over a few months, should the attainment level selected for a criteria reflect where our team is when the assessment commences?</i>	<p>You will want to reflect in your assessment what the organisation's standings are at the date of submission, as opposed to where your team are at prior on the commencement date.</p> <p>In doing this the report produced will capture the most recent standing of your organisation.</p>
<i>What document security classification is the system approved for?</i>	The system is approved to handle content classified as OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE or equivalent. If you have documents that exceed this classification, we recommend liaising with your Peer Reviewer to determine an appropriate method for sharing.
<i>Have there been any amendments to the questions or new questions added to the tool?</i>	There have been no new additions; the questions remain the same as those from 2022
<i>What types of files can I upload?</i>	The supported file types include: *.doc, *.docx, *.rtf, *.xls, *.xlsx, *.xlsb, *.csv, *.ppt, *.pptx, *.pdf, *.txt, *.jpeg, *.jpg, and *.png.
<i>What triggers the "changed since last assessment" flag?</i>	If you make any changes to an attainment level, this will trigger the "changed since last assessment" flag.
<i>If I have previously completed a full self-assessment, including a peer review in an earlier cycle, should I only submit criteria where there have been changes in attainment levels for peer review?</i>	You are required to submit ALL criteria for peer review; however, only those criteria that have experienced changes in attainment since your last peer-reviewed assessment will be subject to review. For your peer reviewer's reference, these will be indicated as "Changed since last assessment", criteria that have remained unchanged since your last assessment will be marked as "No change since last assessment" .
<i>Practice Area 1.1 Overall commercial strategy and plan – is the commercial strategy actually a procurement strategy or commercial strategy as we have 2 separate documents and the teams do differing roles.</i>	Yes for the Wider Public Sector we think the Procurement Strategy is acceptable but if there are any synergies between the 2 documents please share both as evidence. Also provide a narrative on how these documents are used and when updated. You could also provide communications which have been sent to the procurement Team on this as evidence that the documents are communicated to procurements as a whole.
<i>Practice Area 1.2 Commercial pipeline and planning and working with partners – what are gold and silver and bronze contracts?</i>	We will expect organisations to base their evidence on the local contract tiering tool that they use within their organisation. WPS are not mandated to use the Model Services contract tiering tool used by the central government and ALB's. For further information please refer to Annex B in the CCIAF.
<i>Practice Area 1.3 Commercial governance and management framework – I assume by lines of defence' assurance you mean controls are in place around the procurement</i>	Yes we are asking for any evidence on the due diligence conducted at the pre-procurement stage before an opportunity is advertised. This can be internal or external commercial governance followed by the organisation.

<p>function and processes and discussed in our constitution?</p>	
<p>Practice Area 4.2 Procurement/commercial activity, bid evaluation and supplier selection – “follow commercial policy requirements to advertise eligible commercial opportunities on the relevant procurement portals; before inviting offers from the supply market.” Are you talking about using PIN notices as we are not aware of Government commercial policy requirements. Can you please provide and example of a ‘should cost’ model?</p>	<p>We expect organisation to adhere to national and local commercial policies i.e. - Net Zero, SME engagement, Modern Slavery, Social Value etc before an opportunity is advertised. The link below is the guidance for should cost modelling. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/should-cost-modelling-tools-and-templates</p>
<p>Practice Area 6.2 Supplier relationship management – can you please provide an overview of ‘360’ type approach”</p>	<p>360 approach - Is having a holistic view of the relationship between the supplier and authority. This is a supplier feedback approach on how well the supplier is performing from the client side, form other users etc and how the supplier believes they are performing hence the 360 approach. Evidence could include supplier review minutes of meetings, KPI’s and SLA’s for specific contract and supplier reports and seeking previous performance feedback from Peers, stakeholders and users.</p>
<p>Practice Area 7.1 Using commercial systems and tools – what do you mean by “contract management is systems enabled” is it just we have an IT system managing this or something more in depth?</p>	<p>Yes, an automated system that procurement would use to manage the contract post award stage.</p>
<p>Practice Area 7.2 Reporting and utilising commercial intelligence and insights – can you please define / provide an example of a commercial reporting framework? Can the commercial function be translated to Procurement function as already alluded to? We have 2 separate teams which complete different tasks.</p>	<p>Commercial reporting framework - It can be a suite of procurement function performance reports that are submitted to the board or heads of department on a periodic basis and is signed off as approved. This can be defined locally and is not prescribed by the Cabinet Office.</p>
<p>The CCIAF is being undertaken by an array of different public sector organisations of varying sizes and scope of responsibilities. For example, an NHS Mental Health Trust scale and remit is vastly different from the Ministry of Justice. As such, some of the metrics and activity being measured by the CCIAF will be more or less relevant and undertaken to</p>	<p>It is vital that, as an organisation and as a peer reviewer, the context of the function being reviewed is taken into account. A smaller organisation shouldn’t be penalised and unable to achieve a “best” status. Proportionality needs to be borne in mind when applying the scoring model. Clear explanation by the organisation on why some criteria may be irrelevant should be covered in their response. Where criteria applies but the depth of activity may be at a lesser scale (whilst still delivering the required output to meet the overarching organisational objectives) should be explained and evidenced.</p>

<p><i>different degrees across all of the organisations being assessed.</i></p> <p><i>How should this be taken into account when undertaking the assessment to ensure smaller organisations are not disadvantaged by their smaller scale but still delivering excellence?</i></p>	<p>For example 4.3.6 “<i>Scenario Analysis is used when developing contracts to ensure adaptability to future requirements where applicable</i>” for larger organisations may include stress testing and scenario modelling with stakeholders. For smaller organisations, this may not be proportionate and a mix of options appraisals, market review and risk assessment would deliver the same levels of assurance for that organisation.</p>
<p><i>I’m unsure about what to include in the Organisation Overview section of the Cover Sheet.</i></p> <p><i>Are you able to provide an example?</i></p>	<p>In the Organisation Overview section of the Cover Sheet, we would expect a high-level description of the organisation and what its purpose is. Noted below is an example:</p> <p><i>“The Commercial function is currently split across three areas under a Head of Procurement:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>- Category Management = 9 roles, including a Head of Category Management.</i> <i>- Contract Management = 10 roles, including a Head of Contract Management.</i> <i>- Assurance = 3 roles, including a Head of Procurement Assurance.</i> <i>- Special projects = 1 role (temporary, looking at business alignment and pipeline requirements).</i> <p><i>A number of roles (3 of 24) are currently filled via an external Commercial Partner (Arcadis), all of which are in the Category Management area”</i></p> <p><i>“The commercial service is made up of 2 sections, procurement and logistics.</i></p> <p><i>3 people work full time in the procurement team who are responsible for the management of non-pay expenditure excluding pharmaceutical spend.</i></p> <p><i>5 people work in the logistics team, this function provides a receipt & distribution service consumable items procured from the Supply Chain”</i></p>