



UK Research  
and Innovation

# Responsible Procurement Charter







**ETHICS**

**VALUES**

**INTEGRITY**

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

**PRINCIPLES**



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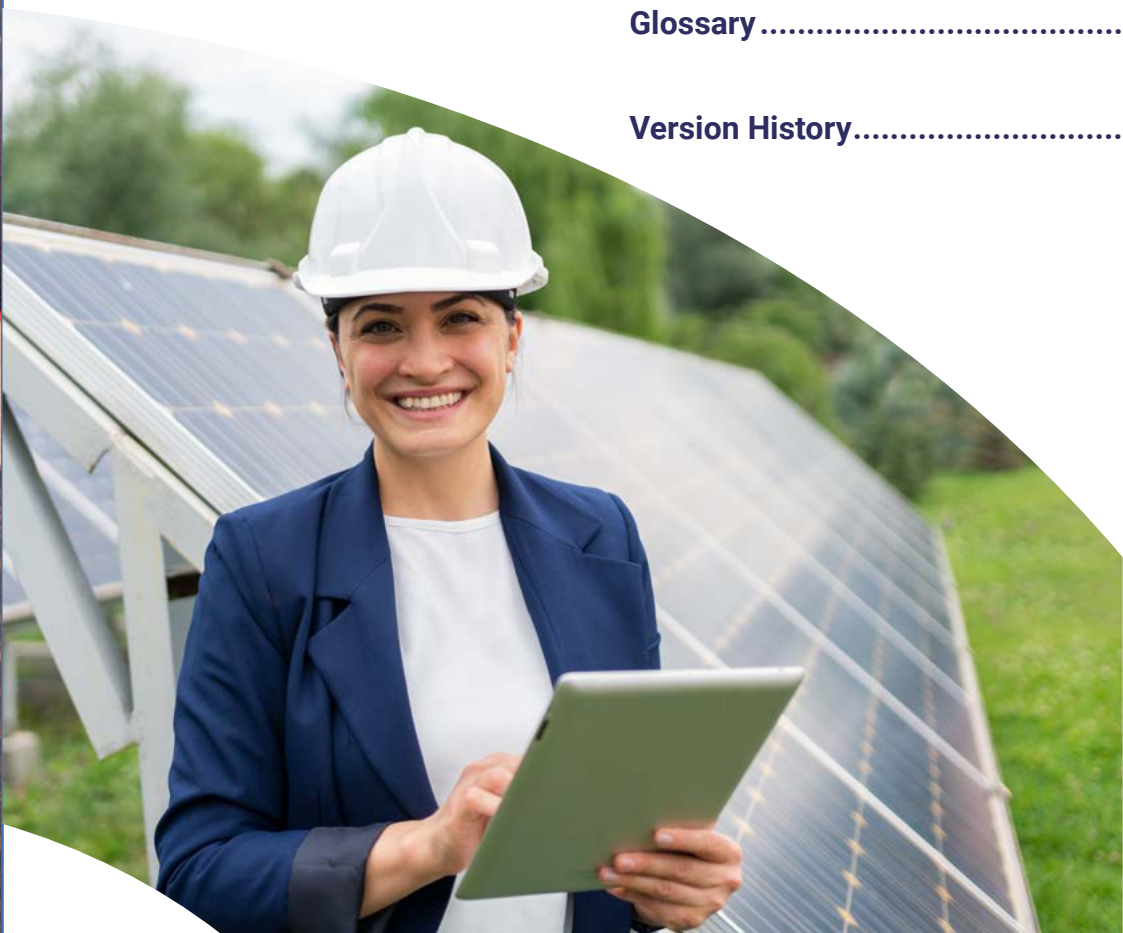
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# Introduction and Purpose

The purpose of this Charter is to capture and communicate UKRI's strategic values, legislative obligations, policy direction and guiding principles across a number of themes which constitute Responsible Procurement. Importantly the Charter articulates how both UKRI and UK government strategy/policy direction align with, and inform UKRI procurement strategies within the scope of Responsible Procurement. The use of the term 'Responsible Procurement' is intended to broaden the scope from using a term such as Sustainable Procurement, to align more with a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) approach, which often is referred to as including the following three elements:

- 1) Ethical Responsibility
- 2) Environmental Responsibility
- 3) Economic Responsibility

The use of the word 'responsible' demonstrates that UKRI takes seriously its obligations, its adherence to standards and commitments, acting as a steward across the following six themes:

- 1) Environmental Sustainability
- 2) Health and Safety in Supply Chains
- 3) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
- 4) Communities
- 5) Supply Chain Resilience
- 6) Business Ethics

UKRI's position as the UK's steward of research and innovation enables the organisation to be at the forefront of driving changes towards being more responsible in how it manages its people, suppliers and resources employed within its supply chains, for example, noting UKRI's commitment to Net Zero by 2040.



The six themes listed above are intentionally generic to ensure that as strategic direction changes, legislation and specific detailed policy changes, either from within UKRI or directed from Government, that this document can sufficiently evolve without deviating materially from its form and structure. This ensures the Charter is a living document for UKRI, its partners and its suppliers.

The following sections set out the strategy and policy context with appropriate links to the relevant documents which should be considered under each of the Responsible Procurement themes, and what it means to UKRI and its suppliers, listing guiding principles to abide by when developing

procurement strategies. 'Lead responsibility' noted within each theme identifies the individual role or team who should be consulted and have input to the development of procurement strategies, specifications, evaluation of tenders and contracting input depending on the Responsible Procurement Impact Assessment ([see RPIA Tool](#)).

UKRI's Responsible Procurement Charter applies to all values of procurement. The extent to which UKRI require suppliers to evidence their commitments will be proportionate to the scale and nature of procurement.

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# Theme 1: Environmental Sustainability

## What it means to UKRI:

Environmental sustainability relates to UKRI's responsibility to make a positive environmental contribution, while minimising environmental harm. It is UKRI's ambition to 'embed sustainability in everything we do'. Our six priorities are:

- decision making and engagement
- carbon reduction
- sustainable procurement
- efficient use of resources
- fostering a healthy living environment
- interacting with the physical environment

## Government Policy to adhere to:

[PPN\\_006\\_Taking\\_account\\_of\\_Carbon\\_Reduction\\_Plans.pdf](#)

[PPN 016: Carbon Reduction Contract Schedule – GOV.UK](#)

[2024–25\\_Sustainability\\_Reporting\\_Guidance.pdf](#)

## UKRI Strategy & Values:

[UKRI environmental sustainability strategy – UKRI](#)

UKRI is a signatory to the concordat for the environmental sustainability of research and innovation practice:

[Environmental sustainability – UKRI](#)

## Guiding Principles (we are committed to):

1. Identifying where through procurement, UKRI can have a positive contribution to the natural environment; including through influencing our supply chain to work towards a net-zero carbon target and wider sustainability ambitions.
2. Undertaking selection and evaluation so that suppliers who can demonstrate an understanding of; and commitment to reducing their operational and supply chain's environmental footprint are recognised. To include but not limited to:
  - a. Conservation of resources
  - b. Waste minimisation
  - c. Reduction in carbon footprint



- d. Pollution prevention to the natural environment
  - e. Encouraging further positive environmental influence down supply chain
3. Drafting contracts to encourage sustainable supplier selection and monitoring, whereby the material environmental impacts of a requisition are considered, evaluated and measured at the outset and reported on during the contract, as appropriate.
  4. Setting contractual arrangements so suppliers are obliged to provide improvement plans to understand and help reduce the carbon footprint and wider environmental impacts of their supply chain.
  5. Partnering with key suppliers, where mutually beneficial, to co-develop and deliver environmental improvements to products, services and works. Such opportunities should align with the ongoing environmental sustainability objectives of UKRI.
  6. Ensuring that 'value for money' assessments look beyond the upfront financial cost of procuring a product or service. Assessments will consider social, economic and environmental benefits and costs of a product or service over its whole life, in line with [The Green Book \(2022\) – GOV.UK](#) guidelines. Assessment will also consider the strategic benefit of the procurement to UKRI, for example, helping UKRI to meet its net zero commitment.
  7. Working towards whole life costing as standard in UKRI for when comparing the costs of buying, renting or leasing a contract for products, services or works in line with [The Green Book \(2022\) – GOV.UK](#) guidelines.

### What this means for suppliers:

1. As a supplier to UKRI you can evidence that you share UKRI's ambitions to work towards a net-zero target, and have in place an environment policy which reflects your material environmental impacts, agreed by senior management.
2. You will be able to evidence your organisation's carbon reduction targets (for your own operations). Including evidence that your targets have been approved by senior management within your organisation to demonstrate a clear commitment to emissions' reduction at the highest level, and there are arrangements in place for target tracking.
3. You will be able to demonstrate that your organisation has a plan to address sustainability of your supply chain, including how and when you include sustainability criteria in the assessment and selection of suppliers.
4. You can demonstrate how you obtain evidence that the products and services you provide to UKRI are responsibly and ethically sourced, and be able to demonstrate continuous improvement in this area.

### Good Practice:

[the Government Buying Standards \(GBS\) – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

### Lead (UKRI Responsibility):

UKRI Environmental Sustainability Team

# Theme 2: Health and Safety in Supply Chains

## What it means to UKRI:

Health and Safety in Supply Chains relates to UKRI's responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of all those who support the delivery of UKRI's activities and outputs, be they contractors, or others to whom we owe a duty of care, and those who may be affected by our activities. We are committed to always conducting our business in a manner that prevents the injury and ill health of our employees and those working in our supply chain.

## Government Policy:

[HSE: Information about health and safety at work](#)

## UKRI Strategy & Values:

[UKRI Health and Safety Policy Statement](#)  
[Health and safety policy – UKRI](#)

## Guiding Principles (we are committed to):

1. So far as reasonably practicable not compromising on health and safety in the procurement of products and services employed by UKRI.
2. Complying with applicable health and safety legislation within the United Kingdom for the procurement of products and services employed by UKRI in the UK.
3. Where procurement relates to overseas operations, as a minimum, UK health and safety standards will be applied where reasonably practicable, or the host nation's standards where they at least meet or exceed those adhered to in the UK.
4. Collaborating with our supply chain to ensure UKRI is provided with products services that support the health and safety of our operations.





5. Making clear through our procurement processes, documentation and contracts, the mandatory requirements with regards to health and safety in procuring products and services.
6. Operating evaluation and selection processes that assess the effective health and safety management systems of suppliers and a commitment to improving the health and safety of products, services and works supplied to UKRI operations.
7. Ensuring relevant UKRI employees engaging in procurement processes have the appropriate competence to ensure products, services and works are provided safely to UKRI.
3. You will ensure that all of your employees and your subcontractors who are involved in the delivery of products, services and works to UKRI are competent to undertake their work safely and that they receive a safety induction to the UKRI sites where they undertake work.
4. You will advise UKRI where products services and works require UKRI to be licensed and/ or authorised prior to their delivery or commencement.

### Minimum Standards:

ISO 9001:2015 Quality management systems – Requirements

### Lead (UKRI Responsibility):

UKRI Health and Safety Team

### Supplier Charter (what this means for suppliers):

1. As a supplier to UKRI, you will comply with applicable safety legislation within the United Kingdom. Where procurement relates to overseas activities, as a minimum, you will adopt UK standards where reasonably practicable or the host nation's standards where they at least meet or exceed those adhered to in the UK.
2. You will provide all health and safety documentation, safety data sheets, risk assessments, method statements, etc. where relevant, to the products, services and works being supplied to UKRI.



# Theme 3: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

## What it means to UKRI:

Equality, diversity and inclusion relates to UKRI's responsibility to ensure equality of opportunity, the diversity of our workforce and that individuals reach their full potential and feel valued.

UKRI's vision is for an outstanding research and innovation system in the UK that gives everyone the opportunity to contribute and to benefit.

The organisations we buy from and work with play a crucial role in achieving this ambition. We want our suppliers to share our commitment to making a positive impact and advancing equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). This meets our legal obligations to ensure equal opportunities, eliminate discrimination, and foster good relations among all individuals, regardless of their protected characteristics under UK law.

## Government Policy:

[Equality Act 2010](#)

[Public Sector Equality Duty](#)

[Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, and related legislation](#)

[R&D People and Culture](#)

## UKRI Strategy & Values:

[EDI strategy and action plans – UKRI](#)

[UKRI workforce equality, diversity and inclusion plan 2022 to 2026 – UKRI](#)

[Equality Diversity Inclusion Policy UKRI strategy 2022 to 2027 – UKRI](#)

[Bullying and Harassment Position Statement Workforce EDI Plan \(DRAFT\)](#)

## Guiding Principles (we are committed to):

1. Treating suppliers (and potential suppliers) fairly, and with respect.
2. Ensuring equality and fairness in our procurement processes and practices.
3. Ensuring our processes and procedures do not allow bullying, harassment or unlawful discrimination of any kind, and encouraged good relations between those with protected characteristics, and those without.
4. Seeking to work with a diverse range of suppliers that can demonstrate a strong commitment to EDI in the way they engage and work with their employees, supply





chains and customers. We aim to increase the participation of small and medium sized organisations and under-represented groups in our supply chain.

### **Supplier Charter (what this means for suppliers):**

1. As a supplier to UKRI, you will provide us with products and services which are inclusive, accessible and meet the needs of our diverse range of employees and customers.
2. Suppliers providing digital services must ensure that their technologies comply with the most recent version of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) AA level and that these are tested for usability.
3. You will demonstrate and provide examples of your commitment to EDI in your respective workplaces, customer bases and supply chains, including participation in schemes such as Disability Confident.

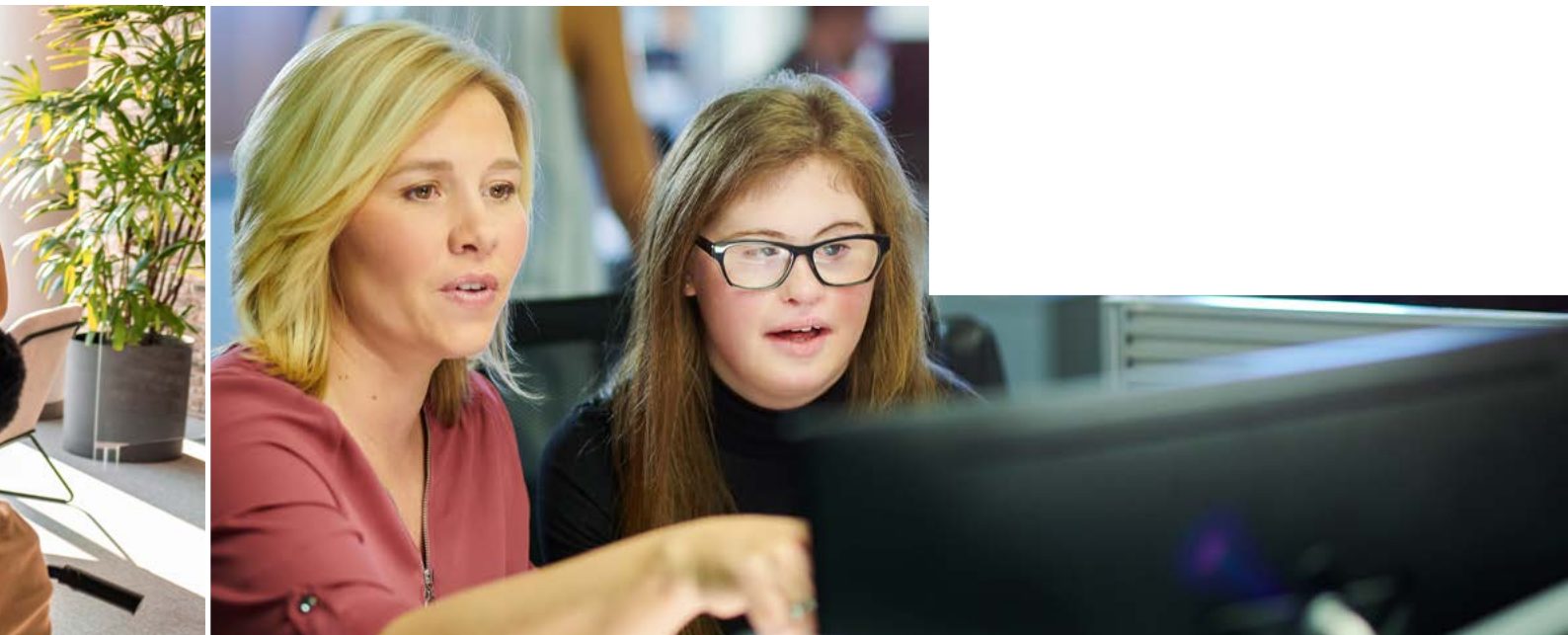
4. Your own procurement activities reflect UKRI's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
5. As a supplier to UKRI, you will ensure and demonstrate that you do not unlawfully discriminate in your employment practices or the provision of goods, services and works against those with protected characteristics under UK law.
6. You will demonstrate commitment to good relations between people with protected characteristics in UK law, and those without.

### **Minimum Standards:**

<https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/helping-people-to-use-your-service>

### **Lead (UKRI Responsibility):**

UKRI Workforce EDI Team



# Theme 4: Communities

## What it means to UKRI:

'Communities' relates to UKRI's responsibility to positively address the challenges the communities we work with face. Our approach correlates to the Social Value Model, where additional social and environmental value is sought within the contracts we place. We prioritise working with our suppliers on (the identified Social Value Missions and Outcomes):

- Kick start economic growth
- Make Britain a clean energy superpower
- Take back our streets
- Break down barriers to opportunity
- Build an NHS fit for the future

## Government Policy:

[Procurement Policy Note 06/20 – taking account of social value in the award of central government contracts – GOV.UK](#)

[PPN 003: The Public Services \(Social Value\) Act 2012 – GOV.UK](#)

## UKRI Strategy & Values:

[UKRI Strategy 2022 to 2027 – UKRI](#)

## Guiding Principles (we are committed to):

1. Promoting training and awareness of Social Value and actively seeking additional environmental and social benefits in the contracts we place.
2. Supporting Micro and Small Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) as well as Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprises (VCSEs) to participate in delivery of our contracts.
3. The prompt payment of our suppliers in line with the government prompt payment code, ensuring full compliance on payment terms for our Micro and SME suppliers.





**Supplier Charter (what this means for suppliers):**

1. As a supplier to UKRI, you will demonstrate additional environmental and social benefits of the goods and services you provide to UKRI.
2. You will ensure that fair and transparent contracts are in place with all members of your supply chain in the delivery of products and services to UKRI.
3. You will comply with the government prompt payment code where the goods and services you provide to UKRI are sub-contracted.

**Minimum Standards:**

Prompt Payment Code.

**Lead (UKRI Responsibility):**

UKRI Commercial Team



# Theme 5: Supply Chain Security and Resilience

## What it means to UKRI:

Supply chain security and resilience relates to UKRI's responsibility to minimise the risk to UKRI and its stakeholders of supply chain disruption, the introduction of new security vulnerabilities, and the loss or compromise of sensitive information.

To achieve supply chain security and resilience UKRI must create an adaptive capability. This capability must protect UKRI activities, assets and information through preparation, prevention, response to and recovery from disruption at any point in the supply chain. This is assured through the effective management of supply chain security and resilience risks.

The process to achieve this effective management of risks includes:

- identifying supply chain elements that: process UKRI's sensitive information; and support or underpin business sensitive and critical activities
- Understanding the evolving threats to critical elements of the supply chain
- Identifying and mitigating vulnerabilities in critical elements of the supply chain
- Developing processes to respond to and recover from supply chain security and resilience incidents
- Engaging with new and existing suppliers to ensure compliant and assured processes

## Government Policy:

[The Integrated review \(2021\)](#)

[The UK Government Resilience Framework \(2022\)](#)

## UKRI Strategy & Values:

[UKRI Strategy 2022 to 202 – UKRI](#)

[UKRI Security and Resilience Strategy 2023 to 2026](#)

[UKRI Business Continuity Management Policy](#)

## Guiding Principles (we are committed to):

1. Mapping out UKRI's critical activities' supply chain requirements and dependencies in a way that takes full account of their impact on UKRI.
2. Identifying and managing the risks associated with UKRI's key contracts in keeping with UKRI's risk appetite.
3. Managing the expectations of suppliers regarding UKRI's service availability requirements and tolerance to disruption from the point of tender invitation through to clear commitments in contractual obligations.
4. Requiring suppliers to demonstrate their capability to meet UKRI's security and resilience requirements and practices,





where relevant, as part of supplier selection, supplier audits and ongoing supplier management.

- 5. Ensuring suppliers are clear on their legal responsibilities in handling and securely protecting UKRI information (send, receive or store) – now and in the future.
- 6. Conducting ongoing assessments, due diligence, and monitoring of key suppliers to ensure resilience in our supply chain.

**Supplier Charter (what this means for suppliers):**

- 1. As a supplier to UKRI you will provide assurance of your security and business continuity management arrangements and their ability to meet UKRI requirements with regards to the goods, services or works provided to UKRI.
- 2. You will ensure that UKRI information is protected at all times and securely handled (send, receive or store) now and in the future.
- 3. You will work with UKRI to provide accurate and up to date information regarding changes to the risk landscape that could affect your ongoing business operations.

- 4. You will work with UKRI to implement controls to reduce risks to within UKRI risk appetite levels.
- 5. You will commit to providing UKRI with the earliest advance warning of any risks and disruptions.
- 6. You will work with UKRI to remain resilient in periods of heightened risk or disruption, in line with the requirements of the specification and contract.

**Minimum Standards:**

Alignment to:

[Supplier assurance framework](#)  
[Government Functional Standard GovS 007: Security](#)

**Best Practice:**

[DBT supply chains resilience framework – GOV.UK](#)  
[Supply Chain Guidance | NPSA](#)  
[Supply chain security guidance – NCSC.GOV.UK](#)  
[ISO 28000:2022\(en\), Security and resilience – Security management systems – Requirements](#)

**Lead (UKRI responsibility):**

UKRI Operations Directorate



# Theme 6: Business Ethics

## What it means to UKRI:

Business ethics relates to UKRI's responsibility to expect the highest standards and ethical conduct in all our work and supply chains. This includes complying with all relevant laws and actively managing the potential for corruption, bribery, conflicts of interest, unfair advantage, anti-competition, modern slavery and child labour to arise anywhere in our supply chain.

## Commercial Arrangements

We The Responsible Procurement Impact Assessment (RPIA) is essentially a series of questions in the context of each theme to ascertain the level of responsibility UKRI will take towards respective procurement strategies. These assessments will be driven by the UKRI Commercial team in the pre-procurement stage (directed to UK SBS for specific Common Goods and Services).

## Relevant Policies

UKRI operates a series of policies to mitigate ethical risks and outline the steps taken across its operations.

UKRI's Whistleblowing Policy encourages all its employees, customers and other business partners to report any concerns related to the direct activities, or the supply chains of, the organisation.

For circumstances that may give rise to an enhanced risk of modern slavery or human trafficking, employees, customers or other concerned parties can also refer to the UK National Helpline at [www.modernslaveryhelpline.org](http://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org) or call 0800 012 1700.

## Government Policy:

[Procurement Policy Note 0421: Applying exclusions in public procurement managing conflicts of interest and whistleblowing](#)

[Procurement Policy Note 0519: Tackling modern slavery in government supply chains](#)





## UKRI Strategy & Values:

[Modern slavery and human trafficking statements – UKRI](#)

[UKRI declaration of interests: policy and guidance – UKRI](#)

[UKRI Gifts and Hospitality Policy – UKRI](#)

[Whistleblowing policy – UKRI](#)

## Guiding Principles (we are committed to):

1. Undertaking fair and transparent procurement processes.
2. Maintaining the highest level of ethical standards in the delivery of our contracts; including but not limited to adhering to our policies for modern slavery, human trafficking, preventing harm, and managing conflicts of interest.
3. Not tolerating bribery, corruption, or anti-competitive activity of any kind.
4. Declaring any gifts in line with our policies. Not accepting gifts, payments or hospitality to encourage or reward a business decision.
5. Identifying and managing situations where there could be potential conflict of interest.
6. Carrying out appropriate audits of our suppliers, as is necessary to verify compliance.

## Supplier Charter (what this means for suppliers):

1. As a supplier to UKRI you will follow relevant procedures and processes when working with UKRI.
2. You will respond to any requests for supporting information, where requested.
3. You will commit to not offering, giving or accepting anything of value that may be viewed as influencing business decisions.
4. You will declare any potential conflicts of interest as soon as they are known.
5. You will comply with all applicable laws relating to the prevention of bribery, corruption, fraud tax evasion or similar or related activities.
6. You will comply with competition (antitrust) laws in the countries where we operate or sell product or services.
7. You will work with UKRI to ensure modern slavery risks are identified and managed effectively within your supply chain.

## Minimum Standards:

Modern Slavery Statement

Conflict of Interest Policy

## Lead (UKRI Responsibility):

UKRI Operational Governance

# Responsible Procurement Impact Assessment (RPIA)

Each of the six themes should be considered for all procurement strategies particularly where there are legal obligations and agreed mandated UKRI Policy. However, the extent to which each of the themes should be considered beyond what is obligated and mandated will depend the outcome of the RPIA This is an internal assessment that is conducted at the offset of procurement activity, comprising a number of questions responded to in relation to the specific procurement.

The Responsible Procurement Impact Assessment (RPIA) is essentially a series of questions in the context of each theme to ascertain the level of responsibility UKRI will take towards respective procurement strategies. These assessments will be driven by the UKRI Commercial team in the pre-procurement stage (directed to UK SBS for specific Common Goods and Services).

A high scoring RPIA assessment for a particular theme will trigger the requirement for more involvement from the identified Lead in development of the procurement strategy, in particular towards the following:

- a. Specification development
- b. Selection and Evaluation criteria
- c. Development of specific tender questions
- d. Key performance indicators
- e. Contract Management Plan
- f. Assisting with evaluation of tenders
- g. Business case contributions to the Commercial Case (and wider).





# UKRI Responsible Procurement Glossary

Reference	Responsible Procurement Charter – page reference	Definition
Anti-competition	17	To prevent or reduce competition in a market
BCI	15	Business Continuity Institute
Business Continuity Management	15	A holistic management process that identifies potential threats to a business/organisation and the impacts to operations those threats, if realised, might cause, and which provides a framework for supporting and building organisational resilience through preparation, prevention, response and recovery measures.
Business Continuity		The capability of a business/organisation to continue its delivery of products or services to acceptable levels following a disruptive incident
Business Continuity Arrangements		Strategies, plans, actions and capabilities that a business or organisation can implement to ensure operational performance is adequately protected and/or can be maintained to appropriate levels in times of crisis or disruptions.
Carbon footprint	6	The amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere as a result of the activities of a particular individual, organisation, or community.
Carbon reduction	6	Carbon reduction is the process where an organisation directly reduces greenhouse gas emissions through efficiencies
Commercial Arrangements	16	A legally binding contract between two parties where they are required to do or refrain from doing something.
Contract Management Plan	18	A document that outlines how a contract will be managed from the start to the finish. It includes roles, responsibilities, and expectations of all parties involved.
CSR	4	Corporate Social Responsibility
Economic Inequality	11	The unequal distribution of wealth and opportunity between different groups in society
EDI	10	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
Environmental harm	6	Any disruption to the natural environment
Environmental Sustainability	6	The responsibility to conserve natural resources and protect global ecosystems to support health and wellbeing, now and in the future
ISO 22301:2019	14	The International Standard on requirements for business continuity management systems

Reference	Responsible Procurement Charter – page reference	Definition
Modern Slavery	16	Modern slavery is defined as the recruitment, movement, harbouring or receiving of children, women or men through the use of force, coercion, abuse of vulnerability, deception or other means for the purpose of exploitation. It is a crime under the <a href="#">Modern Slavery Act 2015</a> and includes holding a person in a position of slavery, servitude forced or compulsory labour, or facilitating their travel with the intention of exploiting them soon after
MSAT		Modern Slavery Assessment Tool <a href="#">Modern Slavery Assessment Tool – Supplier Registration Service</a>
Net Zero	4	A target of completely negating the amount of greenhouse gases produced by human activity, to be achieved by reducing emissions and implementing methods of absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere
Operational Resilience		The ability of an organisation/business to prevent, withstand, adapt or react effectively to the risks that could cause unplanned disruptive events that adversely affect its people, property, operational performance and/or, reputation.
PPN	6	Procurement Policy Note – a UK government policy
Procurement lifecycle		The sequence of steps involved in the procurement process from the start to the end. It involves the steps required from your first interaction with the potential suppliers until the delivery of goods are put to use by the appropriate department within the organisation.
Procurement strategies	16	The act of acquiring or purchasing services or goods on a large scale
Responsible Procurement	4	The act of sourcing services, supplies, and/or works in line with our corporate values – maximising the benefits to society and the environment.
RPIA	5	Responsible Procurement Impact Assessment
SME	12	Small Medium Enterprise
Specification development	18	A phase in which measurable criteria are developed to evaluate design concepts
Supplier Assurance	15	The process of ensuring the quality of the materials and services provided by the suppliers.



Reference	Responsible Procurement Charter – page reference	Definition
Supplier Selection	7	The process of selecting a supplier to meet the specification and needs of an organisation based on the assessment of the supplier's capabilities
Sustainable Procurement	4	The acquisition of goods and services in an environmentally friendly manner
UKRI	4	UK Research and Innovation
UKSBS	5	UK Shared Business Services
Unfair advantage	16	An attempt to acquire an advantage or to impose a disadvantage in a manner which violates a standard of conduct
VCSE	11	Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise
Waste minimisation	6	A waste management approach that focuses on reducing the amount and toxicity of hazardous waste generated.
Whistleblowing Policy	16	The reporting of information regarding wrongdoing
Whole life costing	7	A technique used to assess the total cost of an asset over its whole life, taking account of its initial cost and the costs of its operation, maintenance, repair, upgrade and disposal



# Version History

Version	Date Issued	Author	Changes
1.0	01 May 2024	UKRI Commercial	First Issue
2.0	01 May 2025	UKRI Commercial	<p>Name Change of Theme 5 from Supply Change resilience to Supply Chain security and Resilience</p> <p>Minor amendments and updates to sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Introduction and Purpose</li><li>■ Theme 1: Environmental Sustainability</li><li>■ Theme 2: Health and Safety in Supply Chains</li><li>■ Theme 3: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</li><li>■ Theme 4: Communities</li><li>■ Theme 5: Supply Chain Security and Resilience</li><li>■ Theme 6: Business Ethics</li><li>■ Responsible Procurement Impact Assessment (RPIA)</li></ul>









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