



**SCOTLAND
EXCEL**



Domestic Furniture and Furnishings Framework

Keywords: circular furniture framework, social value, micro/SME/third sector organisations, prolonging product lifecycle, improve design, close the loop, creation of new jobs, award winning framework

Commissioned by: Scotland Excel

Contact: Barry Phillips, Barry.Phillips@scotland-excel.org.uk

More information: [Domestic furniture and furnishings | Scotland Excel \(scotland-excel.org.uk\)](#)

Introduction

Scotland Excel manage a £2bn portfolio of over 70 collaborative contracts on behalf of the Scottish Government. Frameworks are two stage procurement approaches that initially select suppliers of commonly procured goods, services or works who have signed up to pre-agreed terms and conditions. Frameworks ensure that members achieve best value from procurement through their combined spending power.

At the launch of the new framework, Scotland Excel stated:

The third generation Domestic Furniture and Furnishings Framework¹ which helps Scottish councils and housing associations quickly source furniture and furnishings for tenants facing crisis, went live on 1st March 2021.

Seven Scottish bidders — all micro, SME or third

sector organisations — were awarded a place on the framework that's expected to be worth around £105 million over four years.

It enables councils to quickly and efficiently provide furniture and furnishings, through the Social Welfare Fund, to people facing crisis or who need support to set up a home, by sourcing from framework suppliers which have been through the tender process and are ready to do business.

The framework offers the choice of brand-new goods (Lot 1), provided by businesses, or quality reused goods (Lot 2), provided through Circular Communities Scotland², a network of charities and social enterprises that supports Scotland's circular economy³. The second iteration of the framework saw £1m spent on reused goods.

Julie Welsh, Chief Executive of Scotland Excel,

¹ <https://home.scotland-excel.org.uk/newsroom/case-studies/one-stop-shop-for-domestic-furniture-and-furnishings-is-helping-scotland-s-communities/>

² <https://www.circularcommunities.scot/>

³ <https://labmonline.co.uk/news/framework-goes-live-to-help-scottish-social-landlords-provide-support-to-tenants/>



said: *“I welcome the launch of this framework which is good for business while having social value and sustainability at its core. It helps councils and other social landlords purchase essential furniture and furnishings for residents in need of support. It also gives the option to source re-use items — a move that underpins Scotland’s circular economy drive to keep quality goods and materials in use instead of sending to landfill.”*

“We anticipate it will see a spend of more than £100m over its term and the successful bidders who are all Scottish micro, small, or medium sizes organisations, now have the opportunity to secure a share of the business.”

Procurement process

The aim of the new generation of this framework is to encourage, where possible, take up of reused goods by a wider range of local authorities, while also requiring and encouraging suppliers of new goods to deliver continual improvement in sustainable and circular outcomes, in support of progress towards net zero and a circular economy.

Lot 1 (new goods)

Below is an extract from the method statement for Lot 1 demonstrating how circularity was incorporated into the Lot to supply new goods. This sought to raise the bar for sustainable outcomes.

Lot 1 comprises a mixture of micro and SMEs.

The main scope for circularity is prolonging product lifetime through refurbishment and reuse and also closing material loops through specification of recycled content, use of take-back schemes for reuse of components and greater recycling at end of life.

Specification for the Lot focused on provision of new furniture, improved design of products to reflect the following:

- repairable, disassembly etc.
- recycled content
- low impact manufacturing – sustainable and low embodied carbon
- recyclable
- take back of products for remanufacturing
- Environmental standards (Furniture Standards refers to UK Government Buying Standards/EU GPP criteria)
- End of life management/waste – reuse (within other Local Authorities’ housing for vulnerable people, if fit for reuse or repairable), reuse elsewhere (donation to third sector), recycling
- This is dependent on encouraging greater

take-back through the framework.

Method statement Invitation to Tender (ITT) question extract

Scotland Excel and framework users are committed to delivering the Scottish Government’s ‘net zero’ emissions target, the transition to a circular economy, prevention of pollution and the sustainable use of resources, while enabling relevant opportunities for SMEs, third sector and supported businesses to be involved in supply chains.

Awarded suppliers are expected to:

- a) Apply these objectives within services offered, in partnership with its supply chain partners/ sub-contractors;*
- b) Proactively offer sustainable solutions to the Council, regarding products supplied, their ‘end of life’ management and related services;*
- c) Demonstrate how it will support these objectives in framework delivery;*
- d) Report compliance and continual improvement.*

Please therefore detail how you will meet the following requirements, including through collaboration and partnering with other organisations, including SMEs, third sector organisations and supported businesses:

- *Products that meet sustainability standards as set out in relevant mandatory UK Government Buying Standards, EU Green Public Procurement criteria, Eco-labels for furniture, textiles and domestic appliances and how you may go beyond these mandatory requirements to demonstrate best practice, including, where relevant: Fitness for use, durability, no animal testing, formaldehyde limits, design for disassembly and repair, the availability of spare parts and appropriate warranty, recyclable materials and marking of plastics to enable ease of recycling and detail of how you will provide verification of ongoing compliance with this requirement.*
- *Products that use sustainable materials, limit environmental impacts in their manufacturing (embodied carbon), recycled content is used to the maximum degree that is feasible, including details of % recycled content and how you will provide ongoing evidence of this.*
- *Packaging which is the minimum amount necessary so as not to damage products, which complies with the Packaging*



(Essential Requirements) Regulations and which is reusable, recyclable and avoids where possible the use of single use plastics. Return transit packaging is used throughout the supply chain wherever feasible, sustainable materials, recycled content is specified and used to the maximum degree that is feasible in plastic and cardboard packaging materials and detail how you would report levels and method of verification including % recycled content.

- *Extend the useful life of materials, components, products, packaging through relevant take back for reuse, repair, refurbishment, remanufacturing, in conjunction with supply chain partners including SMEs, third sector organisations and supported businesses and details of relevant warranties provided. Otherwise manage waste arising in accordance with the waste hierarchy and waste regulations.*
- *Reduce emissions that contribute to climate change and poor local air quality from the use of vehicles in service delivery.*
- *Report delivery of progress against the above objectives, relevant KPIs and evidence of continually improving in conjunction with supply chain partners.*
- *Our emission and diversion from landfill activities are reported monthly to the Board. We also report our activity per customer at review meetings.*

Suppliers of new goods, under Lot 1, have demonstrated systems and processes to reduce the environmental impact of products and services supplied. This includes the following, with outcomes varying from specific suppliers:

- Management of supply chains to require and encourage environmental management and improvement.
- Minimum packaging required, with all packaging taken back and recycled.
- A furniture and appliance removal and disposal service that ensures that all customers' unwanted furniture is either recycled or disposed of responsibly. This initiative has allowed them to divert 1,452 tonnes from landfill, from 2013 to 2020.
- Work with reuse charities, including supported businesses, to pass unwanted items for reuse.
- Recycling 100% of residual waste.
- Furniture products containing between 12% and 80% recycled content.

Lot 2 (reused goods)

Recent spend figures on reused goods: £507,846.04 worth of items supplied between 1st February 2021 and 3rd February 2022, on 5,127 items sold.

Results

The framework is award winning, and a number of local authorities have successfully used Lot 2 (reused goods), while suppliers under Lot 1 have been required to demonstrate effective environmental management to support the circular economy.

Scotland Excel are pleased that the framework has supported the transition to a circular economy while enabling opportunities for Scottish SMEs and third sector organisations.

The expenditure on reused goods in the third generation of the framework has resulted in weight diverted from landfill of 222,149 kg, equivalent to 589 tonnes of CO₂ emissions saved.

Previous generations of the award-winning framework have also delivered innovative community benefits and the new framework will build on that with a range of benefits pledged by suppliers, including:

- Creation of 18 full-time jobs from target groups such as long-term unemployed and young people.
- Employment of 10 Modern Apprentices, including two with additional support needs.
- Delivery of 4,000 hours of work experience across the various target groups, for each year of the contract.
- A range of development opportunities for school pupils, such as work experience with suppliers.

Scotland Excel also worked closely with British Association of Supported Employment (BASE) to scope supply chain opportunities for supported businesses — organisations that provide employment to disabled and disadvantaged people.

As a result, three awarded suppliers have established supply chains with supported businesses, meaning councils and housing associations have the option to source items indirectly from a supported business through the framework.



Lessons learned

Successes and challenges experienced when engaging with the market and local authorities:

- While the framework is award winning, Scotland Excel seeks to encourage and enable improved sustainability and circularity within its delivery.
- For example, while there has been a limit to the number of local authorities who have procured reused goods in the past, reasons for this can be complex and not all of this can be addressed within framework wording – they may include existing successful relationships with local third sector providers, some uncertainty regarding the perception of quality of reused goods, while suppliers sometimes had limited capacity to deliver goods, especially with cookers.
- Scotland Excel has undertaken and continues to undertake significant engagement with Local Authorities and Circular Communities Scotland to encourage and enable further take up of Lot 2.

Setting appropriate KPIs:

- Outcomes that support the circular economy under the framework are dependent on the use of Lot 2 (Reused goods) by Local Authorities as well as the application of relevant circular approaches by Lot 1 suppliers.
- Monitoring and reporting of relevant outcomes includes information collated and provided by Lot 2 consortium (such as that highlighted above) and a good level of information is available.
- Building on established processes and experience of collating community benefits, reporting from suppliers of circular and other environmental outcomes under Lot 1 will focus on key KPIs and be enhanced as the framework progresses. This means a balance of quantitative reporting, where data is available, and qualitative reporting on environmental improvement measures.
- This also means understanding the links, and occasional conflicts, between operational aspects and some environmental KPIs – for example the link from process efficiency KPIs to carbon reduction and a sometime reality clash between delivery related KPIs and the timescales involved to prepare goods for reuse.
- Scotland Excel see this as an important aspect of framework delivery, while ensuring that reporting requirements are relevant and proportionate according to the nature of the market.