

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose

This document is aimed at School Partners and other procurers. Its purpose is to provide guidance on the School's recommended set of PQQ questions and answers, which you can find [here](#).

### 1.2 Sustainable Procurement and Pre-qualification

The role of pre-qualification within the procurement process is to assess the competency of the supplier, contractor or sub-contractor to complete the work and demonstrate a track record on similar projects through the evidence submitted.

Within Sustainable Procurement, the PQQ process falls under the 'Identify suppliers and tender' stage of BS8903:2010, the British Standard for Sustainable Procurement.



If you would like to know more Procurement, please see the 'Procurement Process' section of the [Sustainable Procurement e-learning module](#) or contact [Action Sustainability](#) for more information.

## 2. Why has the School done this work?

Since its launch, the School has received substantial feedback from its members about the need for industry consistency in PQQs. Inconsistency results in an extra cost and time burden, especially for SMEs. This is why this topic has been chosen to be covered in the Performance Measurement Special Interest Group, which has been running between October 2015 and April 2016.

These recommended pre-qualification questions are **advisory only**. They are not mandatory for Partners or members of the School, but are recommendations based on best practice.

The long-term aim is for industry consistency or, at the very least, synergy between Partners as to what the supply chain is being asked at pre-qualification stage. The School has engaged with BSI regarding the amendment and revision of PAS91, a publically available standardised pre-qualification questionnaire. We will continue our work engaging with them. Please see the FAQs section below for more detail.

### 3. How to use the recommended PQQ questions and answer assessment document

#### 3.1 How do these questions relate to the School?

The questions themselves have been aligned to the 10 issues covered in the School:

- Sustainability (general)
- Environmental management
- Biodiversity & ecology
- Carbon
- Water
- Waste
- Materials
- Local business and community
- Employment, Skills and Ethics
- Sustainable Procurement/ Supply Chain Management

This ensures that any gaps in knowledge or capability can be filled through using resources on the School.

#### 3.2 Should I use all of the questions?

Not all questions are intended to be used in each tender. Organisations are encouraged to use a 'heat map' approach which will take into account the type, location and scale of the work. 'Heat mapping' enables companies to identify their significant sustainability risks and opportunities, and understand where efforts need to be placed for maximum impact.

For more information log in to the School and view the e-learning module on [Prioritising your sustainability impacts](#).

Using this approach, the procurer should ask questions based on the results of the heat mapping exercise. For example, when tendering out for work in a biodiversity-rich area, such as a SSSI or Marine Conservation Zone, the procurer would consider including the relevant 'Biodiversity & Ecology' questions.

#### 3.3 Evidence required

The model questions and answer assessments refer to evidence being provided. Evidence may be provided in various forms and this document aims not to be prescriptive. Examples of evidence for consideration may include:

- Previous performance data
- Case studies (internal or externally published)
- Client testimonials

Although policies, strategies and charters may have a role in demonstrating organisational commitment to the sustainability agenda, they do not provide evidence of previous track record.

### 4. FAQs

#### 4.1 What guidance is available for sellers and School members?

There is a 'Guidance document for members and sellers' available through the School's Performance Measurement page. Click [here](#) to access this guidance.

#### 4.2 How does this relate to PAS91?

**This document does not replace or attempt to replicate PAS91.**

At the time of writing (April 2016), PAS 91 is currently being updated to ensure it aligns with current legislation. The amended standard will be published in June.

Following this update, a steering group, on which the School will be represented, will review the standard and determine if it requires further revision.

If the steering group decides on a revision, then this process will take approximately 12 months, so a revised standard is unlikely to be published before late 2017.

Given that the School has the sustainability questions and model answers set ready to go it seems sensible to go ahead and publish them now prior to the full PAS91 review later in 2016.

The School will therefore:

- Publish the current question set and model answers on the School website
- Encourage partners to use the question set in their own PQQ activities.
- Have a School representative join the BSI steering group in order to influence the process directly, rather than indirectly via Build UK.
- Revise the question set and guidance materials if appropriate after the publication of the revised version of PAS 91 so as to ensure a clear and consistent approach.

#### 4.3 What next?

This document has been developed with School Partners represented on the Special Interest Group looking at best practice. The Special Interest Group recommends that this is adopted by all Partners.

#### 5. More information?

For more information on Performance Measurement or to find out about free school workshops on this topic, please contact [alex@actionsustainability.com](mailto:alex@actionsustainability.com) or call 0207 697 1984.