

**FIRE SAFETY RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT
SUPPORTING THE BUILDING REGULATIONS RESEARCH PROGRAMME**

REQUEST FOR A FRAMEWORK RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Title

Support for the Revision of Approved Document B and the Procedural Guide

Background

The current requirements of Part B of Schedule 1 of the Building Regulations 2000 and the current edition of Approved Document B (AD B) (Fire safety) have largely been in effect since 1 July 2000. However, in December 2002 the document 'Amendments 2002 to Approved Document B (Fire safety)' was published and subsequently came into effect on 1 March 2003. At the same time a slightly amended version of requirement B2 (Internal fire spread (linings)) took effect. The purpose of the amendments was to provide visible recognition to the new European technical specifications and supporting fire test methods, which have been produced in support of the Construction Products Directive.

The amendments did not however affect any of the specific technical guidance in the existing AD B 2000 edition and it is therefore felt that the wider technical aspects of the Part B requirements and AD B are now due for revision. In addition other issues are expected to be identified by the ongoing 'Review of the Operation and Impact of the amendments brought about by the introduction of Approved Document B (Fire safety) 2000 Edition' currently being undertaken on our behalf by Arup Fire. The full conclusions of this project are due in February / March 2004 although an interim report will be available in early January. Work to review the current AD B is to commence in January 2004.

Clearly much has happened within the fire safety arena generally since the 2000 edition of the AD B was published. A key development was the Government's White Paper, entitled 'Our Fire and Rescue Service'. Within the White Paper it sets out the Government's desire to reduce the number of fires that currently occur by moving much more towards a fire prevention strategy. Building Regulations is seen as one of the main "main strands" for delivery of this strategy, alongside Community Fire Safety and the Reform of Fire Law. This is therefore a key factor that will need to be considered throughout the whole Part B revision process.

In addition to the revision of Part B of the Building Regulations there will also be a need to review the current 'Building Regulations and Fire Safety Procedural Guidance' document ("Procedural Guide"), a revised version of which was published in 2001. This is not needed because of the proposed revision of Part B but rather as a result of the reform of fire law. The timing of this review will very much be related to the speed at which the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (RR(FS)O) moves through Parliamentary procedure.

Aim and Objectives

Task 1

As a part of the revision of AD B, ODPM initially wish to undertake a survey of the relevant stakeholders to identify further issues that they consider may be important to include in the revision of AD B. We therefore see a need to undertake a 'forward look' exercise in which we consult our stakeholders to see what they would like to see in an amended AD B, and why. We envisage that the best way forward would be by means of the undertaking of a targeted stakeholder questionnaire and a short series of 'open' stakeholder workshops whereby feedback could be gained as to what people would like to see in a revised AD B. We would also welcome the use of supplementary innovative approaches to gain such stakeholder information, utilising perhaps the Internet. We would therefore like to hear your specific proposals as part of your bid. The specific objectives of task 1 will be:

- To conduct a 'forward look' exercise with stakeholders, by means of a targeted questionnaire, face to face workshops and other innovative techniques such as the setting up of an Internet focal point to obtain information on the issues they identify to be important and requiring revision.
- To collate all the responses into a report setting out the issues identified and the reasons why, e.g. guidance misleading or open to interpretation, and your view on merits of suggested changes.

Task 2

Alongside Task 1 we require a small piece of work to be carried out to build on the work of the BRAC Local Acts Working Party. The Working Party has recommended a number of repeals and modifications of Local Acts (including the London Building Acts). To this end a short piece of analysis work is needed whereby we will consider and compare fire losses, in terms of death, injury and property losses, experienced in those areas that have Local Acts in place and those that do not. The specific objectives of task 2 will be:

- Undertake an analysis of the relevant fire safety aspects of the Local Acts in England and Wales - Consider and compare fire losses, in terms of death, injury and property losses, experienced in those areas that have Local Act fire safety provisions in place and those that do not.
- On the basis of the analysis provide recommendations on possible provisions that may need to be placed within a revised Approved Document B and those that could be repealed with minimal impact.

Task 3

Task 3 of the contract would be to provide technical support to officials in the drafting, issuing for consultation, collation of responses and further drafting of the new AD B, including associated diagrams. Other documents that require drafting are a draft Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) to accompany the AD B consultation, a full RIA to accompany the revised AD. In addition the support would include the provision of technical secretariat to cover all the various BRAC Part B

Working Party meetings (including the preparation of the technical papers and minutes of meetings) required to facilitate the effective revision of AD B. The specific objectives of task 3 will be:

- To provide technical support to ODPM, including the preparation of technical Working Party papers, in the drafting of a revised AD B ready for issuing for public consultation.
- To provide technical support to draft a preliminary / draft RIA to accompany the AD B consultation document.
- To provide technical support to collate and analyse the comments following public consultation.
- To provide technical support for the re-drafting of a revised AD B.
- To provide technical support to draft a final RIA to accompany the revised AD B.
- To provide a technical secretariat to facilitate all the meetings required in support of the revision of AD B (approximately 12 BRAC Part B Working Party meetings).

Task 4

Task 4 of the contract will run alongside at least the first part of Task 3. Once again the contract would be to provide technical support to officials in the drafting, issuing for consultation, collation of responses and further drafting of the new Procedural Guide. In addition the support would include the provision of secretariat to cover all the various associated meetings (including the preparation of the technical papers), a small number of which will be with the BRAC Part B Working Party, required to facilitate the efficient revision of the Procedural Guide.

- To provide technical support to ODPM in the drafting of a revised Procedural Guide ready for issuing for targeted consultation.
- To provide a technical secretariat to facilitate all the meetings required in support of the revision of the Procedural Guide (approximately 5 meetings in total, 1 or 2 of which will utilise the BRAC Part B Working Party meetings as set out in Task 3).
- To provide technical support for the re-drafting of a revised Procedural Guide following consultation.

Programme of Work

It is expected that Tasks 1 & 2 would start as soon as the contract is let and should take approximately 2-4 months to complete. From the start of the contract Task 3 would have a 26 month duration and Task 4, while very much dependant on the speed at which the RRO moves through Parliamentary procedure should take around 14 months to complete from the start date of the contract. Please see Annex 1 of this research proposal paper that sets out the expected dates for the associated Tasks.

Issues to be addressed

The proposal should specifically state how the following would be addressed:

The approach to be adopted in carrying out the 'Forward Look' survey will need careful thought. The list of bodies to be surveyed needs to sufficiently represent all those stakeholders who use or are affected by the AD B and will require the agreement of ODPM. The exact form of the survey will also need to be agreed with ODPM but it is expected that some form of questionnaire and 'open' meetings would be used. We would also welcome the use of supplementary innovative approaches to gain such stakeholder information, utilising perhaps the Internet. We would therefore like to hear your specific proposals as part of your bid.

Proposals should also cover any other issues identified and how these will be dealt with.

Deliverables

The following specific deliverables must be produced:

1. Report at end of each Task
2. Questionnaire / survey for agreement to support Task 2
3. Draft AD B
4. Draft RIA
5. Draft Procedural Guide
6. Tabulated analysis of Part B Consultation
7. Tabulated analysis of Procedural Guidance Consultation
8. Final draft Procedural Guide
9. Final draft AD B
10. Final draft RIA

Please note that all documents which are likely to go forward for future publication should be supplied in acceptable electronic formats. Details of the formats which are acceptable can be found in Annex 2.

Additional deliverables with target dates may be suggested to enable the overall outcome to be strengthened or to have greater take-up, impact and application.

Point of Contact

Enquiries on this specification should be made to the Project Officer, Mike Payne of AEA Technology, telephone [REDACTED] or email mike.payne@aeat.co.uk.

ANNEX 1

Proposed timetable for review and publication of Part B, Approved Document B and the Procedural Guide

Late January 2004	Support Contract Commences	
	Jan to 31 May	The undertaking of two preparatory pieces of support work (Task 1 and Task 2). The 'Forward Look' and Local Act investigation survey should be completed and the feedback reported to ODPM BD by 31 May 2004.
Mid to Late February 2004	Hold 1 st BRAC Part B Working Party	in which a general discussion will take place whereby ODPM will set out issues that will need to be considered in the review of Part B and BRAC Members can suggest additional items that they wish us to consider. Also the issue of the Procedural Guide will need to be addressed in this same meeting.
	Feb- Jul	Task 3 - The drafting of the amendments to Approved Document B in close liaison with ODPM officials and taking into account BRE/FRS deliverables as and when they become available. Supporting RIA to be developed alongside
		Task 4 - The drafting of the amendments to the Procedural Guide in close liaison with ODPM officials (BD & FSLP) and other interested parties (e.g. HSE). Main body of work will be to merely accommodate RRO. The timing of all of this will be dependent upon the movement of the RRO through the scrutiny committee.
30 June 2004	Delivery of fire Framework research projects	
July 2004	Go to BRAC (and if necessary to PF and BCSF) to seek permission to go to a limited three-month consultation with the draft revised Procedural Guide.	
Late Summer 2004	Aug	2 nd Meeting of BRAC Part B WP
	Sep	3 rd Meeting of BRAC Part B WP
	Sep	4 th Meeting of BRAC Part B WP
	Sep	Obtain CORIU & SBS approvals
October 2004	Preparation of Part B draft consultation package	
October 2004	Complete assimilation of comments received on draft PG	
December 2004	Agreement of BRAC to proceed with Part B consultation	

Acceptable electronic formats for documents for subsequent publication

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