

# Brexit Positioning Statement

## **The UK is leaving the European Union. What does this mean for our customers?**

Currently it is unclear when, or exactly on what terms, the UK's exit from the EU will happen. The EU has agreed to extend the deadline for our departure until 31 January 2020 – however, the UK may leave before that date if agreement on the terms of our withdrawal can be reached. If agreement cannot be reached by that date, or the General Election on 12 December results in a government which seeks a no deal exit, we may still leave the EU without a deal. It is possible, depending on the outcome of the General Election, that we may not leave the EU at all.

If the UK were to leave on a 'no deal' basis, many existing trade agreements, policies and processes that the UK has established with the EU will be affected. Our latest guidance on what this may mean for public procurement can be found at [www.bipsolutions.com/brexit](http://www.bipsolutions.com/brexit)

BiP Solutions has been working to mitigate the impact of a no deal exit on our customers. This includes engaging with the Cabinet Office to ensure that contract notices from the UK public sector which would have been sent to the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) are instead published in its new Find A Tender Service (FTS), in the event of a no deal Brexit. In these circumstances, all notices published by the OJEU and on the FTS website would be published within our business intelligence services.

However, if we leave the EU with an agreement on or before 31 January 2020, a formal period of transition will begin. In effect, the transition period is a standstill which will see the existing trading arrangements between the UK and the EU continue. This would include, for example, the various regulations, directives and remedies that relate to public procurement within the EU. During the transition period, the UK will not be able to influence future EU policy, but instead will focus on what the future trading relationship will look like. The transition period is currently set to end on 31 December 2020, by which time a new trading relationship needs to be in place. If it is not, then

the potential for a no deal Brexit scenario remains. During the transition period, UK public sector contract notices will continue to be published in the OJEU – and within our business intelligence services.

Our business intelligence content is drawn from thousands of sources in the UK and worldwide. While our exit from the European Union will change the nature of our relationship with the remaining 27 Member States, opportunities to participate in projects will remain. Importantly, as a member of the GPA (Agreement on Government Procurement) and the World Trade Organisation, the UK has the opportunity to participate in many other procurement projects across the globe. As part of our preparation for Brexit – whether on a deal or no deal basis – BiP Solutions has invested in additional sources of non-UK contract notices, to ensure our customers have access to the widest array of opportunities possible. We will continue to align our research to where existing and new opportunities exist to work with countries outside the EU. In specialist sectors such as health, defence, IT and infrastructure, we expect that the participation of UK businesses – with their expertise, innovations, quality and governance – will continue to be in high demand.

For the UK, Brexit is a significant event which will present businesses with both challenges and opportunities. Against that backdrop, the UK public sector remains a large, diverse and attractive market for suppliers to engage with. The volume and value of public sector contracts continues to increase and the role of the private sector in providing innovative and effective solutions to the challenges of delivering outstanding public services remains. Spending on public services – not least in areas such as health, defence, security, infrastructure and education – is set to increase markedly over the coming years. BiP Solutions' services will ensure that existing and potential suppliers are first in line to engage with these valuable opportunities. BiP Solutions is further investing into additional sources of data and the technology within its services to give customers the very best insight and competitive advantage.

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In terms of public procurement generally, we anticipate that over time there will be changes in the way that the UK manages its procurement activity as a consequence of Brexit. BiP Solutions has been engaging with government to discuss what form these changes may take. Given the UK's role in establishing principles of best value, fairness, transparency and inclusion within procurement activity, we expect there will be more focus on these areas. Public spend is a significant economic lever and we expect government will want to reduce perceived barriers to accessing this market, especially for micro and small businesses.

BiP Solutions, with its 35 years of experience within public procurement and public sector supply chains, is ready to support all customers in ensuring they can maximise the opportunities - and mitigate the challenges - that this change presents.

