

HS2 launches race for £523m high voltage power supply systems contract

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HS2 Ltd has started the search for specialist contractors to deliver the high voltage power supply systems that will transfer electricity to the UK's new high speed rail link and enable millions of people to enjoy low carbon journeys between London, Birmingham and the north of England.

Following on from the government's green light for the start of construction, this rail systems contract – worth an estimated £523m – will provide valuable opportunities for companies across the UK emerging from the coronavirus lockdown.

The winner of the contract will be responsible for the design as well as manufacture, supply, installation, testing, commissioning and maintenance of the HV power supply systems.

Approximately 50 traction sub-stations will be built alongside the line between London and Crewe in order to deliver power from the National Grid to the trains. The contractor will also deliver a dedicated HV non-traction power network that will provide power to stations, shafts, portals, depots and railway systems along the route.

Once operational, HS2 will be one of the lowest carbon ways to travel, with just 8g of carbon emitted per passenger kilometre – in comparison to 67g by car and 170g by air. Electricity will come from the national grid, so as the UK's power supply transitions to entirely renewable sources, journeys on HS2 will become carbon neutral.

HS2 Ltd's Procurement and Commercial Director, David Poole said: "The high voltage power supply is a vital part of the HS2 project and the successful bidder will play a crucial role in keeping our network running safely and reliably. I look forward to the HS2 team working with the suppliers who come forward and together ensuring that we deliver best quality and value for the project."

The HV Power Systems contract will be a single stage procurement, with the successful bidder delivering two separate contracts covering Design & Build and Maintenance services within Phase One and Phase 2a – from London to Crewe, where HS2 services will join the existing west coast main line.

The traction power sub-stations are located at multidisciplinary Railway Systems Compounds which are situated in the open route section of the line. The contractor will assume the role of Principal Contractor within these compounds. The successful bidder will be expected to work closely with HS2's other rail systems suppliers to ensure integration of its design and throughout construction, testing and commissioning.

A shortlist is expected to be announced next year, with contract award in 2022.

Photo credit: HS2 Ltd

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