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CIPS Scope and Influence of Procurement and Supply Sample Questions (Q32-Q37):

NEW QUESTION # 32

Sarah is thinking of setting up a charity in the UK which will look after animals that have been abandoned. What regulations and governing bodies should Sarah be aware of when setting up her charity? (25 Points)

Answer:

Explanation:

See the solution in Explanation part below.

Explanation:

How to approach this question

- Your essay should mention at least one regulation and one governing body particular to the charity section and I would recommend these be the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities Commission.
- If you don't know a lot about the sector you can bring up more generalised regulations and governing bodies, such as financial conduct and the Equalities Act, but make sure it's relevant to Sarah. Her charity is a small, local one, so things like Modern Slavery

Act will not be appropriate to talk about.

Example Essay

When setting up a charity in the UK, particularly one focused on animal welfare, there are several regulations and governing bodies that Sarah should be aware of. These ensure that the charity operates legally, ethically, and effectively.

A charity's purpose involves raising awareness and helping someone or something, in Sarah's case this will be local animals and potentially their owners. A charity has to satisfy two aspects: The benefit aspect and The public aspect. In the UK, both aspects are regulated by the Charities Act 2011.

To satisfy a benefit aspect, a charity must: have a purpose that must be beneficial to the community it works in

- this must be in a way that is identifiable and capable of being proved by evidence. For Sarah this would be showing that her charity helps animals, potentially by taking them in off the street or removing them from dangerous homes and caring for them.

To satisfy a public aspect, a charity must benefit the public in general, or a sufficient section of the public. In Sarah's case the public benefit may be in removing stray dogs and cats from the streets where they can transport diseases and potentially attack people.

Most charities strive to satisfy both aspects but in some cases this is not possible.

All charities are regulated. Because charities are funded by donations from the public, businesses and sometimes from government, their conduct is regulated closely. Key regulatory bodies that Sarah will have to engage with include:

1. Charity Commission for England and Wales:

As the primary regulator for charities in England and Wales, the Charity Commission oversees the registration and regulation of charities. Sarah's organization must meet the legal definition of a charity and apply for registration if its income is over £5,000 per year.

The Commission ensures compliance with the Charities Act, offering guidance on charity governance, financial management, and reporting.

2. HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC):

Charities can apply to HMRC for recognition as a charity for tax purposes. This status allows for tax reliefs and exemptions, including Gift Aid on donations.

HMRC ensures compliance with tax obligations and scrutinizes the use of charity funds.

3. Data Protection:

Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, any charity handling personal data must ensure its protection and comply with data privacy laws.

4. Health and Safety Executive (HSE):

The HSE provides guidelines for workplace safety, which are important if the charity has employees or volunteers.

In conclusion there are many regulations and bodies that Sarah should be aware of when setting up her charity.

Sarah should consider seeking legal advice or consulting with charity advisory services to ensure full compliance with all relevant laws and regulations. Additionally, staying informed about changes in charity law and animal welfare legislation would be beneficial to the smooth operation of her charity.

Tutor Notes

- With case study questions you're not expected to know anything about the specific topic, in this case Animal Charities. If it happens to be something you know about, you can bring in some of your own knowledge, but this isn't a requirement to get a good score. You're not expected to know, for example about the Animal Welfare Act 2006, but if you happen to do so, it could be a nice little thing to add in. Just don't focus your essay on it. However you can make some sensible guesses on what Sarah will be doing, for example I talked about removing stray animals from the street.

- Charities comes up in LO 4.4 p.232

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NEW QUESTION # 33

Describe the main differences between the three economic sectors: public, private and third. Your answer may make reference to the following: funding, ownership, shares, objectives and administration (25 marks)

Answer:

Explanation:

See the solution in Explanation part below.

Explanation:

How to approach this question

- Sometimes CIPS give you a steer on how to answer the question. My advice is to follow it. The question says you MAY make reference to the following, but I'd use those hints as a guide for content- a paragraph on each and you're done!

- When you've got a 'may make reference to' hint - this means you can completely ignore it and do your own thing and bring in your own ideas. May means it's optional, so you wouldn't be penalised for this. However, you have to consider the examiner's mark scheme- it will detail options of stuff you can write for funding, ownership etc. Then there will be a line at the bottom saying something like 'accept other options such as x and y'. This leaves it up to the examiner to decide whether what you've said is

relevant. I'd personally not leave it up to chance you get a lenient examiner. If you write what's definitely going to be on their mark scheme, you're more likely to get more points.

Example Essay

The modern economy is a complex tapestry of various sectors, each with its own distinct characteristics and functions. The three prominent sectors are the public sector, the private sector, and the third sector. These sectors differ significantly in terms of their funding mechanisms, ownership structures, objectives, the concept of shares, and their administration.

Firstly, the public sector is predominantly funded by the government through taxation, grants, and other forms of public revenue. Its very existence hinges on the provision of essential services and the fulfilment of societal needs. These organizations are owned by the government, be it at the federal, state, or local level. Unlike the private sector, the concept of shares doesn't apply in the public sector. Instead, the government allocates budgets to various departments and agencies for public services and projects. The primary objectives of the public sector revolve around the welfare of the citizens, including the provision of education, healthcare, defence, and infrastructure. It is characterized by bureaucratic administration, with decision-making processes subject to governmental regulations and oversight. A prime example is public schools and healthcare systems, which are funded and operated by the government with the primary objective of ensuring universal access to education and healthcare services.

In contrast, the private sector operates on a starkly different paradigm. It is primarily funded by private capital, investment, and profit-seeking activities. Private individuals and corporations own these entities, with ownership shares often represented by stocks. Shareholders invest capital in exchange for ownership stakes and the potential for dividends. The central objective in the private sector is profit maximization, driven by competition in the market. Companies in the private sector are administered by management teams and boards of directors, with decisions guided by market forces. Apple and ExxonMobil are examples of private sector entities, privately owned and publicly traded, with profit motives at their core. Shareholders invest in these companies with the expectation of financial returns.

Lastly, the third sector, often referred to as the nonprofit or voluntary sector, represents a unique economic sphere. It relies on a combination of funding sources, including donations, grants, and earned income, but not taxation. Third sector organizations are not owned by individuals or shareholders; instead, they are governed by boards of directors or trustees. Unlike the private sectors, shares are not applicable in the third sector. These organizations do not seek to distribute profits to owners. The primary objective of the third sector is to serve a social or community purpose, such as addressing societal issues, promoting social change, and providing services that benefit the public. Administration in this sector is overseen by non-profit boards, and it heavily relies on volunteers, philanthropy, and community engagement. For example, the Red Cross operates with the objective of providing humanitarian aid and disaster relief, relying on donations and volunteers to fulfil its mission. Any profits that are made are reinvested into the organisation to further its mission.

In conclusion, the public, private, and third sectors represent diverse economic domains, each with its own funding mechanisms, ownership structures, objectives, and administrative models. These sectors play essential and complementary roles in society, contributing to economic development, public welfare, and social progress. Together, they form the foundation of a balanced and dynamic economic landscape.

Tutor Notes

- I've structured this essay with a paragraph on each sector, but you could have done a paragraph on each theme, thus having 5 paragraphs instead of 3. Either approach works.
- You've got 5 things and 3 sectors, that equals 15 marks. If you give an example of each and a strong intro and conclusion, that's full marks.
- See LO 4.1 p. 203 - there's a cute table with this information on.

NEW QUESTION # 34

Describe the four main ways that a Public Sector organisation can procure goods or services (25 points)

Answer:

Explanation:

See the solution in Explanation part below.

Explanation:

How to approach this question

- This question is testing to see if you know the 4 procurement procedures allowed in the Public Sector which are: open, restricted, competitive dialogue, competitive dialogue with negotiation. The Public Sector is limited in how it can procure due to the Public Contract Regulations, so things like Early Supplier Involvement isn't an option.

- The question doesn't specifically say it has to be these four, but these are the ones in the book. Because of the vagueness you could say something like running a competition and awarding via a Framework instead.

Talking about Public Private Partnerships could also be appropriate but that is outside of the scope of this module (and Level! It comes up in Level 5). These answers would be accepted.

- Also note that it doesn't say the UK in the question, so if you answered this about your own country, that would be fine.

Example Essay

Each country's government has its own regulations relating to how goods, services and works can be procured.

The UK's procurement rules are currently dictated by the Public Procurement Regulations 2015 which is based off EU Procurement Directives. This piece of legislation will likely be superseded in Autumn 2023 due to the UK leaving the EU. Until this point, the PCR allows UK public sector organisations to procure in the following ways: open, restricted, competitive dialogue, competitive dialogue with negotiation. Open Procedure: This is the most straightforward and transparent method. A local government issues an open tender for office supplies. Any company that provides these supplies can submit a bid. The government then evaluates all bids based on price, quality, and delivery terms to select the supplier. Any interested supplier can submit a tender. The process is open from the outset, and all submissions are evaluated against pre-defined criteria. This procedure is used when you wish to attract a large number of bidders for the opportunity and is often posted online on a platform such as Find A Tender.com so that suppliers can find the opportunity. If it is a large contract it is a requirement for details to be published on OJEU. The disadvantage of using this approach is that you may receive many bids which can be time-consuming.

Restricted Procedure: In this method, the public sector organization invites suppliers to express their interest.

After a preliminary selection process, only those who meet the criteria are invited to submit tenders. This is used when the opportunity is more technical, for example a healthcare authority needs specialized medical equipment. The authority would request expressions of interest from suppliers. After reviewing these, it invites a shortlist of qualified suppliers to submit detailed bids for further evaluation. The benefit of this approach is that unsuitable suppliers are weeded out early, this saving time.

Competitive Dialogue: This is used for complex contracts where the organization cannot define the technical means or legal or financial make-up of a project in advance. A dialogue with selected bidders is conducted to develop one or more suitable solutions, which are then put out to tender. For example, a local council is planning a new public transport system but is unsure of the best solution. It enters into a dialogue with several firms specializing in transport systems to explore various options before requesting final bids based on the developed solutions. Suppliers can be eliminated through the dialogue process based on pre-determined criteria.

Competitive Dialogue with Negotiation: Similar to competitive dialogue, but with an added phase of negotiation. It's used for particularly complex projects where the needs cannot be met without adaptation of readily available solutions. For example: a government department requires a complex IT system that integrates various existing systems. It engages in a competitive dialogue to develop potential solutions and then negotiates with bidders to refine these solutions before finalizing the contract. This procedure allows for negotiations with the winning bidder to readjust requirements if needed.

The approach taken by a public sector organisation will depend on a number of factors, but in particular the complexity of the project and whether there is a pre-determined scope. Other factors to consider include; the time-sensitiveness of the project and how quickly the procurement exercise needs to be completed, the amount of suppliers in the marketplace, and whether suppliers need to be consulted on to create the specification.

Tutor Notes

- These four procedures are outlined on p.212. Post PCR 2015, these procedures may change, or be renamed, depending on what the UK government decide to do. So if you're taking this exam in November 2024 or later, note that the study guide is now out of date and you should conduct a bit of your own research.

- You could also mention that the value of spend is a factor when public sector organisations are deciding on a procurement route. For really low value stuff, like they need a new sofa for the office, most organisation's requirements are to get three quotes and compare them. That isn't in the study guide, it's just real life (I've worked in this sector so know this stuff). Each organisation will have its own thresholds for what procurement route needs to be taken, so I wouldn't comment on that but generally if it's under £10k there's quite a bit of flexibility. Where you reach 'threshold' then things become very serious and there's much more scrutiny.

- Thresholds are not part of the syllabus so don't worry about learning this. But if you're interested have a read here: New public procurement thresholds from 1 January 2024 - BM Insights - Blake Morgan

NEW QUESTION # 35

What is the purpose of a CSR policy? What elements should it contain and how can a buyer evaluate a potential suppliers CSR policy? (25 points)

Answer:

Explanation:

See the solution in Explanation part below.

Explanation:

How to approach this question

- There are three questions within this question. The purpose could be your introduction, and then take two big sections in the main body of your essay for the elements and how to evaluate it.

Example Essay

A Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy serves as a formal commitment by a company to conduct its business in a socially responsible and sustainable manner. The purpose of a CSR policy is to outline the organization's dedication to ethical practices, environmental stewardship, and social contributions. It reflects a company's commitment to going beyond mere profit generation and actively engaging in initiatives that benefit society and the environment.

Elements of a CSR Policy:

1. Ethical Business Practices:

Clearly articulated principles on fair business dealings, anti-corruption measures, and adherence to ethical standards in all operations.

2. Environmental Sustainability:

Commitments to minimize environmental impact through sustainable practices, energy efficiency, waste reduction, and responsible sourcing of materials.

3. Social Responsibility:

Efforts to contribute positively to the community, which may include support for education, healthcare, poverty alleviation, or other social initiatives.

4. Labor Practices:

Fair and ethical treatment of employees, including non-discrimination, fair wages, safe working conditions, and respect for workers' rights.

5. Supply Chain Responsibility:

A commitment to ensuring that suppliers and partners adhere to similar ethical and CSR standards, promoting responsible practices throughout the entire supply chain.

6. Transparency and Accountability:

Open disclosure of CSR initiatives, performance, and impacts, demonstrating a commitment to transparency and being accountable for CSR goals.

7. Stakeholder Engagement:

A pledge to engage with and consider the interests of various stakeholders, including employees, customers, communities, and shareholders, in decision-making processes.

Evaluating a Supplier's CSR Policy:

Assessing a potential supplier's CSR policy involves a comprehensive examination of key factors to ensure alignment with ethical and responsible business practices:

1. Policy Content:

Review the content of the CSR policy to ensure it covers a broad spectrum of social, environmental, and ethical aspects. A comprehensive policy reflects a commitment to holistic CSR practices.

2. Alignment with Industry Standards:

Check if the CSR policy aligns with industry-specific standards and best practices. Adherence to recognized standards, such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) or ISO 26000, indicates a commitment to global CSR norms.

3. Performance Metrics:

Evaluate whether the supplier includes measurable performance metrics in their CSR policy. Clear objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs) demonstrate a commitment to continual improvement and accountability.

4. Stakeholder Engagement:

Assess how the supplier engages with stakeholders. A robust CSR policy should involve stakeholders in decision-making processes and demonstrate an understanding of their concerns.

5. Supply Chain Responsibility:

Check if the supplier extends CSR principles to its supply chain. This involves ensuring that suppliers and partners adhere to ethical, environmental, and social standards, contributing to a responsible and sustainable supply chain.

6. Transparency and Reporting:

Look for transparency in reporting. A supplier that openly communicates about its CSR initiatives, achievements, and challenges indicates a commitment to accountability and transparency.

7. Continuous Improvement:

Evaluate if the supplier emphasizes a commitment to continuous improvement in its CSR policy. This indicates a dynamic approach to addressing emerging challenges and staying ahead of evolving CSR expectations.

By thoroughly examining these aspects, a buyer can gain insights into a potential supplier's commitment to corporate social responsibility and make informed decisions that align with their own CSR objectives and values.

Tutor Notes

- Students often ask if they can use bullet points in their essays. Many tutors say no, but the answer is actually more nuanced than that. I've purposefully written the above in bullet points to show you how it can be done effectively. Bullet points are fine, providing you're using full sentences and it makes sense as a stylistic choice. It's not a good option if you're just going to list things without context. Then it can be hard to follow.

I've personally used bullet points in essays and done really well. There's no rule against it. You've just got to make sure you're doing it 'right'.

- CSR policies are only briefly mentioned in LO 2.4 but it does come up as quite a big topic in other parts of the syllabus so is worth knowing. You could mention some examples of big companies and what their stance on CSR is. A good one to look at is The Body Shop.

- The study guide references Carroll's Pyramid - this would be great to include in your essay Carroll's CSR Pyramid explained:

Theory, Examples and Criticism(toolshero.com) p.112

NEW QUESTION # 36

Explain FIVE ways conflicts of interest could be managed by effective corporate governance. (25 marks)

Answer:

Explanation:

See the solution in Explanation part below.

Explanation:

Five Ways to Manage Conflicts of Interest Through Effective Corporate Governance Conflicts of interest arise when an individual or entity has competing personal and professional interests that could compromise their judgment or decision-making in business transactions. Effective corporate governance ensures that such conflicts are identified, managed, and mitigated to uphold transparency, integrity, and accountability within an organization. Below are five ways corporate governance can help manage conflicts of interest:

1. Establishing Clear Policies and Codes of Conduct

- * Organizations should implement formal policies that outline what constitutes a conflict of interest and how employees and stakeholders should handle such situations.

- * Effectiveness:

- * Provides clear guidelines on ethical behavior.

- * Ensures employees disclose conflicts before engaging in business transactions.

- * Sets disciplinary actions for non-compliance.

2. Mandatory Disclosure of Interests

- * Employees, board members, and executives should be required to declare financial, personal, or business interests that may conflict with their duties.

- * Effectiveness:

- * Enhances transparency in procurement and business dealings.

- * Prevents individuals from unduly influencing decisions for personal gain.

- * Enables proactive identification of potential conflicts before they escalate.

3. Implementing Independent Oversight and Decision-Making Structures

- * Establishing independent committees such as audit, risk, and procurement committees to oversee critical decision-making.

- * Effectiveness:

- * Ensures decisions are made objectively, reducing the risk of favoritism or unethical influence.

- * Promotes accountability by having multiple parties involved in key transactions.

- * Prevents a concentration of power in one individual or department.

4. Whistleblowing Mechanisms and Ethical Reporting Channels

- * Organizations should provide anonymous reporting mechanisms for employees to report unethical behavior or conflicts of interest.

- * Effectiveness:

- * Encourages a culture of transparency and ethical behavior.

- * Protects whistleblowers from retaliation.

- * Allows management to address conflicts before they result in financial or reputational damage.

5. Regular Audits and Compliance Monitoring

- * Conducting periodic internal and external audits to detect and investigate potential conflicts of interest.

- * Effectiveness:

- * Helps identify patterns of unethical behavior.

- * Ensures continuous improvement in governance practices.

- * Reinforces a compliance-driven corporate culture.

Conclusion

By implementing these governance strategies, organizations can effectively manage conflicts of interest, reduce risks associated with unethical practices, and ensure decisions are made in the best interest of stakeholders. Effective corporate governance fosters trust, accountability, and long-term business sustainability.

NEW QUESTION # 37

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