**Requirements Specification**

**For**

**AI Multi Agency Advice Service Evaluation**

**Contract Details**

 Contract: Evaluation services

 Contract Duration: 22 months

 Contract Commences: 03/05/2021

 Procedure: Open Procedure

 Contract value: £138,000 excluding VAT

# Specification of Requirements

## Background to the requirements

The AI Multi-Agency Advice Service (MAAS) project is a 2.75 year project, funded by the NHSx AI Lab. The aim of the project is to collaboratively research, test and develop a multi-agency advice service that will offer support, information and advice on the regulation and health technology assessment pathways for artificial intelligence (AI) in health and care, and potentially other data-driven technologies. The project will facilitate collaboration between the partner agencies to identify challenges and barriers in the regulatory pathway and to resolve these.

The service will provide easy access to comprehensive information and support so that innovators (‘developers’) can meet robust measures of assurance in safety and quality, and health and care providers (‘adopters’) have the knowledge and tools to help them adopt and deploy the best AI technologies. The ambition is that the MAAS, along with other AI lab priorities, will support the UK to become a world-leading, thriving ecosystem for development and deployment of AI technologies.

The project is a collaboration between four regulatory bodies:

* the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE; with project oversight) provides national guidance and advice to improve health and social care,
* the Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator of health and social care in England,
* the Health Research Authority (HRA) provides a unified national system for the governance of health research, and;
* the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) ensures that medicines and medical devices work and are acceptably safe.

The project will be focused on the needs of people involved in the development (‘developers’) or deployment (‘adopters’) of AI and data-driven technologies in health and social care, whilst ensuring these technologies are deployed in a way that supports delivery of high quality care. Developers could be from industry, academic researchers or professionals within the health and social care system. Adopters could be people working within care and health provider organisations, such as primary care, care homes, NHS trusts, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and local authorities to name a few.

The project will undertake the following activities:

* test the need for an online advice service that will provide support, information and guidance on regulation, evaluation, adoption and deployment for artificial intelligence (AI) and (possibly) other similar data-driven technologies in health and care. An external developer will likely be procured to lead delivery of this aspect of the project;
* assess the current state of AI regulatory and health technology assessment (HTA), including regulatory gaps, overlaps between and opportunities for better collaboration among regulators, in order to make recommendations and develop new ways of working and to develop guidance that meets needs of key users.

The project will run from July 2020 through to March 2023, by which time the service should have been developed, tested and running in public beta. For further details of timelines, see appendix 1: delivery plan.

The project partners are looking to bring in an independent evaluation partner to undertake formative evaluation of the project and set up a robust impact evaluation strategy to hand over to partners for delivery by March 2023. The partners hope for learning to be shared iteratively throughout the project to allow ongoing reflection and learning.

The project will likely need to undergo Government Digital Services (GDS) assessment in order for funding to be released, which may have an impact on project timelines; however it is not anticipated that this would have a meaningful impact on the work of the evaluation partner.

## Scope of the Procurement

### Aims & Objectives

#### We are looking for an evaluation partner with experience evaluating national programmes of a similar scale and complexity, and where the scope could potentially evolve, to deliver a formative evaluation and hand-over a robust summative evaluation strategy (including proposed metrics and data sources) by March 2023. They should also have the capability to deliver emerging learning throughout the project.

#### It is anticipated that a mixed-methods approach (i.e., quantitative and qualitative methods) will be required to understand both scale of impact and to effectively attribute causality and identify counterfactual impact. Due to the nature of this programme and its potential impact in shaping national policy, it is suggested for the evaluation to use elements of the four main evaluation designs:

#### Impact (what difference did the programme or intervention make?);

#### Process (how was the programme delivered?);

#### Economic (did the benefits justify the costs?); and

#### Theory-based (what contributed to change?)

#### The evaluation partner must be comfortable working with multiple parties in a collaborative and constructive way, including all MAAS collaborators, NHSx (the commissioner) and the developer (TBC).

#### The purpose of the formative evaluation is to support the MAAS to be as effective in implementation as possible. This will be done through activities such as analysing baseline data in order to make recommendations on focus of the service, and undertaking process evaluation, particularly with regard to the project’s interdependencies within the wider innovation ecosystem. As this is a complex intervention which will necessarily evolve, we expect the evaluation partner to be comfortable in an ambiguous environment, and providing us with emergent messages on what they see is working and not working and why.

#### The summative evaluation strategy, once implemented, will be used by MAAS collaborators and commissioners in order to make future decisions about funding for this and other similar initiatives. It will also allow NHSX to report back to HM Treasury on the impact and benefits realised by the MAAS. It must be co-developed with the developer and the MAAS collaborators. It should focus on a range of outputs, outcomes and benefits including near-term (e.g. satisfaction of developers / adopters using the service) to long-term impacts (e.g. patients and citizens benefitting from AI and data-driven technologies). It should be underpinned by a logical and plausible theory of change or logic model. It should also have clearly defined metrics which are prioritised and have recommendations for gathering data.

#### Some outputs from the evaluation may be used for external purposes such as communications; however, this is not the primary purpose.

#### These activities will require contact with the MAAS partners at predetermined time points, and potentially with wider stakeholders involved in the project (TBD), which the AI MAAS secretariat will support.

#### The impact of not evaluating the MAAS is that:

#### we will not have a clear view of either the key barriers and areas for improvement in the AI regulatory pathway that the MAAS should focus on, or baseline data to measure this improvement against;

#### the MAAS will lack iterative, external feedback which could help better mitigate risks as well as enable strategic decision making programme delivery;

#### we will not have a thorough understanding of the mechanisms within the MAAS which drive value to patients, the NHS and social care, and the AI industry;

#### it will not be feasible to draw well-evidenced conclusions about the impact of the MAAS, which could otherwise inform future policy on AI as well as provision of NHS innovation advice services.

#### It should be noted that the developer will be a critical partnership for the evaluator. The evaluation partner and developer should work collaboratively; particularly as the developer will be gathering data to inform iterative design, delivery and then sustainable running of the service, which the evaluation partner should also benefit from. **The role of the evaluation partner is not to evaluate the work of the developer**; responsibility for this lies with the MAAS secretariat.

#### There are additional projects being funded as part of the NHS AI Lab and so the Supplier may be required to link in with the evaluation work being done on other projects for consistency and to minimise duplication of effort.

#### The deliverables for this contract are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Deliverable | Due date |
| **Produce a robust evaluation protocol**, that meets the quality standards expected by the MAAS collaborative and their evaluation consultants | Q1 of FY202122 |
| **Gather baseline data and recommend areas of focus for the MAAS**. MAAS collaborative and commissioners will endeavour to provide the evaluation partner with quantitative and qualitative data to undertake this step, but may be required to collect primary data through means such as surveys or interviews. MAAS collaborators will guide the evaluation partner on research questions and areas to focus on, such as: e.g. identifying current barriers for adopters to help establish counterfactual impact from the MAAS; or estimating the length of time taken from development to deployment of an AI technology. | Q2 of FY202122 |
| **Produce a logic model or theory of change** in collaboration with key stakeholders, including metrics to measure outputs / outcomes / benefits / impacts. This should complement the service design work of the developer.  | Q2 of FY202122 |
| **Iterative, brief process evaluation reports and / or feedback sessions, which focus on key blockers to the programme’s success**. We expect these will most likely be dependencies with other programmes or regulatory workstreams. | Iterative, on a bi-monthly or quarterly basis once the logic model is developed (Q2 of FY202122) until the service has stabilised (likely Q3 of FY202223). |
| **Produce an evaluation strategy, including appropriate metrics and proposed measurement plan**, linked to the logic model / theory of change to handover to the MAAS collaborative. There will likely be requests for draft strategies 6-12 months before the final due date, which will be an opportunity for the evaluation partner to ensure they are producing a suitable strategy; details on this can be arranged once the contract is awarded. | Q4 of FY202223 |

### Constraints and Dependencies

#### The MAAS working group currently meet on a bi-weekly basis and use Zoom and Microsoft Teams to meet and share documentation and so IT equipment that will allow the use of these platforms would be required.

#### The work is not based in a specific location. There may be requirements to travel to various locations for some meetings at set points in the process. Whilst all meetings are currently being done virtually via Zoom, the working group hope to be able to conduct certain key meetings in person in future.

#### It is anticipated that a lot of the work could be conducted remotely, in line with current Government guidance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, but there will be a need to attend certain meetings / workshops / focus groups in person and so some travel will be required. Appropriate risk assessment will be conducted in order to accommodate any parties with specific health or work needs as best as practical.

### Roles and Responsibilities

#### The supplier will have meetings with the primary contacts to report on progress against key deliverables/milestones and discuss next steps at appropriate intervals during different stages of the project (TBD).

### Monitoring contract delivery

### As a means to measure progress in the delivery of this evaluation, a range of outputs and outcomes may be monitored. The list below is indicative, and will be confirmed once the contract has commenced:

### Draft evaluation protocol

### Draft baseline data collection plan

### Evaluation instruments (e.g., surveys, interview guides, etc)

### Plans / facilitation notes for workshops (in particular for the logic model)

### Communication materials

### Interim progress reports

### Contract term

#### The contract will commence on 01/05/2021 and conclude on 31 March 2023. The contract may be extended beyond this date if there are significant evaluation requirements and if further funding is secured.

### Budget

#### The maximum budget for the evaluation work done within the lifespan of the project is fixed at £138,000 ex VAT.

## Requirements

### To submit a proposal that will be assessed, suppliers must include the following information within their proposals on the enclosed bidder response template:

#### A proposed evaluation protocol, which outlines key aspects of the four other deliverables (see table in section 2.1.7), including:

#### Quality of the proposed methodology, which should cover:

#### Methodologies, activities and activity measurement for achieving each deliverable; including resources, systems or processes needed to achieve these deliverables as relevant.

#### Details of any assumptions you have made in developing your proposal and any risks with mitigation for those risks that you identify.

#### A proposed delivery plan for all aspects of the evaluation, which includes milestones, dependencies and indicates resources required

* + - 1. Project assurance, which should cover:
				1. Please state the project governance that you would use in order to ensure project delivery including Data management controls for providing the work (not those required for the performance of the evaluation as those will be a project deliverable)
				2. Please state how your proposal complies with relevant legislation, regulations or industry standards that would be applicable to this work

#### Experience, skills and expertise, which should cover:

#### Personnel who will be involved in delivery in the project, including their expertise (i.e. methodologies and subject-matter) they bring and examples of work previously undertaken. This should include two examples of their contributions to and achievements on past projects; especially any projects of similar complexity, and potential for scope evolution, as the MAAS project. We expect for the leads of the project to be named and their experience outlined at a minimum.

#### Costs, which should include:

#### Clear costings for each element of the plan.

* + - * 1. This section of the application should be completed in the table below within the Response and Costing template.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Deliverable | Cost  |
| **Produce a robust evaluation protocol**, that meets the quality standards expected by the MAAS collaborative and their evaluation consultants |  |
| **Gather baseline data and recommend areas of focus for the MAAS**. MAAS collaborative and commissioners will endeavour to provide the evaluation partner with quantitative and qualitative data to undertake this step, but may be required to collect primary data through means such as surveys or interviews. MAAS collaborators will guide the evaluation partner on research questions and areas to focus on, such as: e.g. identifying current barriers for adopters to help establish counterfactual impact from the MAAS; or estimating the length of time taken from development to deployment of an AI technology. |  |
| **Produce a logic model or theory of change** in collaboration with key stakeholders, including metrics to measure outputs / outcomes / benefits / impacts. This should complement the service design work of the developer.  |  |
| **Iterative, brief process evaluation reports and / or feedback sessions, which focus on key blockers to the programme’s success**. We expect these will most likely be dependencies with other programmes or regulatory workstreams. |  |
| **Produce an evaluation strategy, including appropriate metrics and proposed measurement plan**, linked to the logic model / theory of change to handover to the MAAS collaborative. There will likely be requests for draft strategies 6-12 months before the final due date, which will be an opportunity for the evaluation partner to ensure they are producing a suitable strategy; details on this can be arranged once the contract is awarded. |  |

#### Please provide hourly rates for team members you consider necessary for delivering the work.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Rate** |
|  |  |
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### Additional documents, sent as attachments, required by the organisation awarding the contract are as follows:

### Please provide one copy of each of the following policies and financial statements for your organisation:

* Health and Safety.
* Environmental.
* Equal Opportunities.

### NICE recognises that some SMEs (less than 50 people for a Small Enterprise and less than 250 for a Medium Enterprise) may not have formal policies available but still operate their businesses in a manner that is conducive to the above. If you are a SME and do not have formal policies in place, please submit with your response, a written statement on how your company operates in light of the above three areas of legislation and best practice.

### If your organisation (whole organisation including parent, group or subsidiary) has a turnover of £36 million pounds or greater then please provide a Modern Slavery Act Transparency Statement: this should set out the steps you have taken to ensure there is no modern slavery in your own organisation/business and that of your supply chain. If your organisation has taken no steps to ensure there is no modern slavery in your own organisation, then your statement should say so. [Please note: a parent organisation/ group statement is acceptable; this is compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.]

### Please provide the last three years of audited accounts for your organisation and a current Balance Sheet. If your organisation is a Small, Medium Enterprise (SME) and you do not have audited accounts, please provide 3 years of balance sheets.

## Tender Evaluation and Selection Criteria

* 1. Evaluation
		1. NICE will review all tenders to ensure they are fully compliant with these instructions. Any non-compliant bid may be rejected
		2. The Evaluation Methodology set out in this section will be used to evaluate the Suppliers’ submission/offer to this Invitation to Tender (ITT).
	2. Cost Evaluation
		1. The cost will be evaluated using the following formula:

Lowest Price / Suppliers Price X 40 (the weighting)

* 1. Criteria and Scoring Guide
		1. Each evaluator will independently evaluate each tender submitted and use the following guide to score each criterion. The scores of all evaluators per criterion will then be averaged and weighting applied to give an adjusted score. All clarifications required by NICE will be incorporated into the final evaluation.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Score | Guide |
| -5  | The point is omitted |
| 0  | The point is mentioned but not explained |
| 1 |  Not acceptable |
| 2 | The point is possibly acceptable |
| 3  | The point is acceptable |
| 4  | The point is well made and acceptable |
| 5  | Exceeds Expectations / Best |

* 1. Selection Criteria
		1. The selection criteria that will be applied to this tender are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Weighting** |
| **Cost**  | **40%** |
| **Quality** | **35%** |
| **Experience**  | **15%** |
| **Project assurance** | **10%** |
| **Total** | **100%** |

* 1. Short Listed Suppliers for Interview and Evaluation
		1. NICE may choose to shortlist a bidder or Suppliers to present to the evaluation panel and clarify any outstanding areas or their proposal where NICE may have concerns or further questions. However, if no further concerns or questions are raised, NICE reserves the right to proceed to Contract Award.
		2. Each bidder interviewed will be re-scored independently of the tender response, based on their responses in the interview alone and re-ranked against each of the others bidders that were shortlisted for interview. This evaluation will have no bearing on the evaluation that resulted in the bidder being shortlisted to interview or not. Suppliers not invited to interview will be notified at the same time as shortlisted Suppliers.
		3. The scoring guide and criteria in 12.5 above will be used to score the interviewed bidder, however the weightings will not be applied, the composite score of the interview panel will form the basis of award. The interview will be in direct relation to the outstanding areas of the Suppliers proposal.
		4. Shortlisted Suppliers will be notified of the evaluation process on invitation to interview. It is critical that the Project Lead and at least one other prospective team member working on the project are in attendance and take a lead on the interview.
1. **Instructions and Guidance**
	1. Supplier Invitation to Tender
		1. Submission of final offers to this ITT shall be in accordance with Section 3 and 6.
		2. On receipt of final offers from Suppliers in response to this ITT, NICE and / or other MAAS collaborators will evaluate each response using the Evaluation Methodology set out in section 4.5.
		3. The evaluation will form the basis of NICE’s decision to proceed to interview or Contract Award. Should NICE deem that interviews are required prior to finalising its decision to proceed to awarding the contract, the following procedure will be followed (see 6.2 below).
	2. Short-listed Suppliers for Interview
		1. NICE envisages that a number of Suppliers could be selected to attend a further interview post the tender evaluation. The shortlist for interview will be determined by the evaluation procedure, applying the criteria as described in section 4.5 of this document. Suppliers must ensure they are available to attend the interviews on the dates stated below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| DAY | DATE | LOCATION |
| Tuesday  | 6th April | Zoom Video Conference |
|  |  |  |

* 1. Procurement Timetable
		1. The estimated timetable for the remainder of this procurement is as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  **Stage** | **Date** |
| Issue final ITT documentation | 23/02/21 |
| Expression of Interests  | 16/03/21 |
| Deadline for bidder questions | 16/03/21 |
| NICE final response to questions deadline | 19/03/21 |
| Tender Responses submission deadline | **4.00pm 24/03/21** |
| Tender Evaluation | 25/3/21-2/4/21 |
| Notify shortlisted Suppliers of Interview (if required) | 5/4/21 |
| Interviews | 6/4/21 |
| Preferred Bidder Notice and Unsuccessful Suppliers Debriefed | 12/4/21 |
| Alcatel Period (10 days) | 12/4/21-22/4/21 |
| Contract Award | 23/4/21 |
| Contract Commences | 03/05/21 |

1. **Suppliers Instructions**
	1. This section sets out the general instructions for the submission of the tender / final offer from the Suppliers in response to this ITT. These instructions must be followed and adhered to. Any deviation from these instructions may result in your tender being rejected.
	2. Bidders must provide an Expression of Interest (EOI) to this tender. Bidders must email barney.wilkinson@nice.org.uk with a statement of interest in this tender no later than 17:00 UK time on the 16th March 2021. Failure to EOI may result in your tender being rejected.
	3. The tender submission offer must be returned no later than 16:00 (5.00pm) UK time on 24h March 2021
	4. All tender submission and final offers must be written in English and to be submitted electronically by email in a Microsoft word format to: contract.bids@nice.org.uk
	5. The following appendices only must be completed, signed and provided as part of your bid submission no later **16.00 (4.00pm) UK** time on 24th March 2021:
* Bidders Response and Costing Document

**Forms requiring original signatures:**

* Form of Offer including Terms and Conditions queries form
* Competing Interest form
* Redaction Requests form
	1. All responses must be referenced as detailed in the final ITT for ease of evaluation.
	2. All offers must be submitted in GBP sterling and must be exclusive of Value Added Tax (VAT).
	3. Suppliers should answer all questions in section 3 as accurately and concisely as possible in the same order as the questions are presented. Where a question is not relevant to the Supplier, this should be indicated, with an explanation.
	4. Suppliers must be explicit and comprehensive in their responses to this ITT as this will be the single source of information on which responses will be scored and ranked. Suppliers are advised neither to make any assumptions about their past or current supplier relationships with NICE, nor to assume that such prior business relationships will be taken into account in the evaluation procedure.
	5. NICE reserves the right at any time:
		1. to issue amendments or modifications to the documents contained in the Invitation to Tender pack during the tender;
		2. to not bind itself to accept the lowest or any offer and reserves the right to accept an offer either in whole or in part, each item being for this purpose treated as offered separately;
		3. to purchase the most cost effective and economically advantageous offer from this tender and does not bind itself to the cheapest price or the overall winner of the scoring evaluation that may result from this procurement;
		4. to terminate this procurement at any time;
		5. to require Suppliers to provide additional information supplementing or clarifying any of the information provided in response to the requests set out in this ITT. NICE may seek independent financial and market advice to validate information declared, or to assist in the evaluation.
	6. NICE will not be liable for any cost incurred in relation to any part of this procurement activity throughout its lifecycle to close, including any costs or expenses incurred by any Supplier or the Supplier's Team or any other person in resource time, preparation of responses, attendance of meeting, or any other cost that the Supplier may incur.
	7. Costs shall be fixed for the duration of the contract and not subject to change, unless agreed in writing by both NICE and the Contractor.
	8. The costing spreadsheet of your offer must be transparent to NICE and not be password protected or have any part of the model hidden. All costs breakdowns must be shown within your response and provided in GBP sterling.
	9. Non Compliance and/or disqualification
		1. NICE expressly reserves the right to reject any proposal that:
* does not meet any minimum requirement in the tender;
* does not follow the instruction to tender guidance;
* is incomplete, or does not provide either an answer to any question or a reasonable explanation of why an answer to any question has been omitted;
* refuses to adhere to the Terms and Conditions of Contract.
	+ 1. NICE reserves the right to reject or disqualify a Supplier and/or the members of the Supplier’s Team where:
* the Supplier and/or the members of the Supplier’s Team contravene any of the terms and conditions of this ITT and/or any Associated Documents.
1. **Queries about the Procurement**
	1. All requests for clarification or further information in respect of this procurement should be addressed to NICE’s named contact point (section 9) or discussed during the relevant dialogue meeting with the representatives of NICE. No approach of any kind in connection with this procurement should be made to any other person within, or associated with, NICE.
	2. NICE will ensure that all applicants receive equal treatment during this procurement and we will share all information requests and responses with all applicants.
	3. Any questions and answers will be collated and distributed by email to all the Suppliers throughout the tender period. The final clarification responses will be issued no less than 5 days prior to the tender submission deadline.
	4. Please note that that there will be no telephone or any informal or other kind of discussion between Suppliers and officers or directors of NICE after this document is dispatched other than the representative of NICE named in section 9.
	5. If NICE considers any question or request for clarification to be of material significance, both the question and the response will be communicated, in a suitably anonymous form to all Suppliers.
	6. All responses received and any communication from Suppliers will be treated in confidence but will be subject to paragraph 12.
2. **NICE’s Named Point of Contact**
	1. NICE’s named point of contact for this procurement is:

Barney Wilkinson

Procurement Manager
National Institute for Health and Care Excellence
2 Redman Place

London E20 1JQ

Email: barney.wilkinson@nice.org.uk

1. **Suppliers Named Point of Contact**
	1. Suppliers are asked to include a single point of contact in their organisation. NICE will not be responsible for contacting the Supplier through any route other than the nominated contact. The Supplier must therefore undertake to notify any changes relating to the contact promptly.
2. **Additional Information**
	1. NICE expressly reserves the right to require a Supplier to provide additional information supplementing or clarifying any of the information provided in response to the requests set out in the final ITT. NICE may seek independent financial and market advice to validate information declared, or to assist in the evaluation.
3. **Freedom of Information**
	1. In accordance with the obligations and duties placed upon public authorities by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the FoIA”), all information submitted to NICE may be disclosed in response to a request made pursuant to the FoIA.
	2. In respect of any information submitted by a Potential Supplier that it considers to be commercially sensitive the Potential Supplier should:
* clearly identify such information as commercially sensitive;
* explain the potential implications of disclosure of such information; and
* provide an estimate of the period of time during which the Potential Supplier believes that such information will remain commercially sensitive.
	1. Please submit responses to Barney Wilkinson in the redaction request form with the completed tender offer.
	2. Where a Potential Supplier identifies information as commercially sensitive, NICE will endeavour to maintain confidentiality. Suppliers should note, however, that, even where information is identified as commercially sensitive, NICE might be required to disclose such information in accordance with the FoIA. Accordingly, NICE cannot guarantee that any information marked ‘commercially sensitive’ will not be disclosed.
1. **Procurement Transparency**
	1. In light of the Coalition Government’s need for greater transparency, Suppliers and those organisations looking to bid for public sector contracts should be aware that if they are awarded a contract for this work, the resulting contract between the supplier and NICE will be published in its entirety.
	2. In some circumstances, limited redactions will be made to some contracts before they are published in order to comply with existing law and for the protection of national security. Suppliers are asked to make any sections of their tender that they regard as Commercial in Confidence or subject to the non disclosure clauses of the FOIA or DPA clear within the submission documents. Please note that the total value (bottom line) of the agreement is required to be published under current EU regulations and the UK governments Transparency Agenda. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require clarity upon this point.
	3. Please complete Annex 4 - Redaction Requests of the ITT, to notify NICE of any sections of the tender you regard as Commercial in Confidence.

**Appendices**

Please see other uploaded documents on Contracts Finder

1. Delivery plan in Gannt chart format; up to date as of February 18 2021