



# Request for Proposal

**Request for Proposal (RFP) on behalf of UK Research & Innovation**

**Subject: Future Research Assessment Programme (FRAP) Cost Evaluation Project**

**Sourcing Reference Number: PS22041**

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## Section 1 – About UK Shared Business Services

### Putting the business into shared services

UK Shared Business Services Ltd (UK SBS) brings a commercial attitude to the public sector; helping Contracting Authorities improve efficiency, generate savings and modernise. It is our vision to become the leading service provider for Contracting Authorities of shared business services in the UK public sector, continuously reducing cost and improving quality of business services for Government and the public sector.

Our broad range of expert services is shared by our Contracting Authorities. This allows our customers the freedom to focus resources on core activities; innovating and transforming their own organisations.

Core services include Procurement, Finance, Grants Admissions, Human Resources, Payroll, ISS, and Property Asset Management all underpinned by our Service Delivery and Contact Centre teams.

UK SBS is a people rather than task focused business. It's what makes us different to the traditional transactional shared services centre. What is more, being a not-for-profit organisation owned by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), UK SBS' goals are aligned with the public sector and delivering best value for the UK taxpayer.

UK Shared Business Services Ltd changed its name from RCUK Shared Services Centre Ltd in March 2013.

### Our Customers

Growing from a foundation of supporting the Research Councils, 2012/13 saw Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) transition their procurement to UK SBS and Crown Commercial Services (CCS – previously Government Procurement Service) agree a Memorandum of Understanding with UK SBS to deliver two major procurement categories (construction and research) across Government.

UK SBS currently manages £700m expenditure for its Contracting Authorities. Our Contracting Authorities who have access to our services and Contracts are detailed [here](#).

### **Privacy Statement**

At UK Shared Business Services (UK SBS) we recognise and understand that your privacy is extremely important, and we want you to know exactly what kind of information we collect about you and how we use it.

This privacy notice link below details what you can expect from UK SBS when we collect your personal information.

- We will keep your data safe and private.
- We will not sell your data to anyone.
- We will only share your data with those you give us permission to share with and only for legitimate service delivery reasons.

<https://www.uksbs.co.uk/use/pages/privacy.aspx>

For details on how the Contracting Authority protect and process your personal data please follow the link below:

<https://www.ukri.org/privacy-notice/>

## Section 2 – About the Contracting Authority

### UK Research and Innovation

Operating across the whole of the UK and with a combined budget of more than £6 billion, UK Research and Innovation represents the largest reform of the research and innovation funding landscape in the last 50 years.

As an independent non-departmental public body UK Research and Innovation brings together the seven Research Councils (AHRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, ESRC, MRC, NERC, STFC) plus Innovate UK and a new organisation, Research England.

UK Research and Innovation ensures the UK maintains its world-leading position in research and innovation. This is done by creating the best environment for research and innovation to flourish.

For more information, please visit: [www.ukri.org](http://www.ukri.org)

### Research England

Research England is a council within UK Research and Innovation, operating from April 2018. As a key component of the research funding system, Research England will oversee UK Research and Innovation's England-only functions in relation to university research and knowledge exchange. This includes providing grant funding to English universities for research and knowledge exchange activities; developing and implementing the Research Excellence Framework in partnership with the UK Higher Education funding bodies; overseeing the sustainability of the Higher Education research base in England; overseeing the £900 million UK Research Partnership Investment Fund; and the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF).

<https://re.ukri.org>

## Section 3 – Working with the Contracting Authority.

Section 3 – Contact details		
3.1.	Contracting Authority Name and address	UK Research & Innovation, Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1FL
3.2.	Buyer	Joe Wightman
3.3.	Buyer contact details	<a href="mailto:professionalservices@uksbs.co.uk">professionalservices@uksbs.co.uk</a>
3.4.	Maximum value of the Opportunity	£150,000.00 excl VAT
3.5.	Process for the submission of clarifications and Bids	<b>All correspondence shall be submitted within the Messaging Centre of the e-sourcing tool. Guidance Notes to support the use of Delta eSourcing are available <a href="#">here</a>. Please note submission of a Bid to any email address including the Buyer <u>will</u> result in the Bid <u>not</u> being considered.</b>

Section 3 - Timescales		
3.6.	Date of posting of Contract advert to Find a Tender.	Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2022
3.7.	Date RFP available to Bidders on Contracts Finder	Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2022
3.8.	Bidder conference (if relevant)	N/A
3.9.	Latest date / time RFP clarification questions shall be received through Delta eSourcing messaging system	Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> April 2022 11:00
3.10.	Latest date / time RFP clarification answers should be sent to all Bidders by the Buyer through Delta eSourcing Portal	Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> April 2022 11:00
3.11.	Closing date and time for Bidder to request RFP documents	Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> April 2022 14:00
3.12.	Closing date and time for Bidder to submit their response (' <b>the deadline</b> ').	Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2022 11:00
3.13.	Clarifications (if required)	w/c Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> May 2022
3.14.	Notification of proposed Contract award to unsuccessful bidders	Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup> May 2022
3.15.	Anticipated Contract Award Date	Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2022
3.16.	Commencement of Contract	Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup> May 2022
3.17.	Completion of Contract	Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> October 2022
3.18.	Bid Validity Period	90 Days

## Section 4 – Specification and about this procurement

### 1. Introduction

The Future Research Assessment Programme has been initiated at the request of UK and devolved government ministers and funding bodies. This significant piece of work is led by the four UK higher education funding bodies (Research England, Scottish Funding Council, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and Department for the Economy, NI) and aims to explore possible approaches to the assessment of UK higher education research performance.

One strand of the programme involves reviewing the costs and benefits of Research Excellence Framework REF 2021 for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and comparing them with those reported for REF 2014 and the RAE 2008 (available from [Technopolis Group » REF Accountability Review: Costs, benefits and burden \(technopolis-group.com\)](https://www.technopolis-group.com/report/ref-accountability-review-costs-benefits-and-burden/)<sup>1</sup>, [Preparing impact submissions for REF 2014: An evaluation: Approach and Evidence | RAND](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR726.html)<sup>2</sup> and [Preparing impact submissions for REF 2014: An evaluation: Findings and observations | RAND](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR727.html))<sup>3</sup> where applicable.

This project should enable funding bodies and HEIs to understand how the balance of costs - against benefits played out in REF 2021 and the impact of changes made between REF 2014 and REF 2021. These insights will contribute towards policy development for future research assessment exercises.

To meet the requirements of this project, the project will involve working with a representative sample of HEIs to identify how REF submission preparation was managed within institutions, deriving suitable and robust methodologies for gathering quantitative and qualitative data, and analysing them. It will also be necessary to compare the findings between the different REF exercises in a consistent and fair manner; accounting for or explaining gaps in the analysis where it was not possible to make comparisons and explaining the reasons for such judgements.

### 2. Aims & Objectives

The primary aim of this project is to review the costs and benefits of REF 2021 for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and compare them with those reported for REF 2014 and RAE 2008.

The objectives for this project are to provide:

- o An estimated total cost of the exercise to the sector as a baseline for assessing the impacts of changes to future assessment exercises and as a comparison with previous exercises.
- o An assessment of direct costs of participating in the REF, presented against underlying quality assurance and quality management processes for research.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.technopolis-group.com/report/ref-accountability-review-costs-benefits-and-burden/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR726.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR726.html)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR727.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR727.html)

- o An identification of what staff and other resources institutions have devoted to their REF returns-. This should include staff who have been specifically appointed for REF purposes.
- o A test of the perceived benefits to institutions of the changes made to REF 2021; please note that perceived benefits to individuals will have been covered in the [Real-Time REF Review report<sup>4</sup>](#) and will be supplemented by the [REF 2021 reflections survey<sup>5</sup>](#) directed at individuals in the UK research system.
- o A light-touch review of the key benefits HEIs seek from participation in REF 2021, compared with those identified in REF 2014 and RAE 2008.
- o A review of any significant changes in this information for REF 2021 as compared with REF 2014 and RAE 2008 as specified in 'Analysis' below.

#### Suggested Methodology:

We suggest using a mixed methodology combining interviews, survey and economic analysis to achieve the project's aims and objectives. However, we would welcome bidders' alternative suggestions if they meet the project aims and objectives. While designing an appropriate and robust methodology, tenderers should give consideration to ensuring the minimum burden necessary on the sector.

#### Sampling:

157 HEIs from across the UK submitted to REF 2021. This work should seek to include a representative sample of HEIs in the study. Factors to include in the sampling methodology are:

- o UK nation and geographical spread within England
- o Type of HEI (e.g. research intensive, small and specialist, new entrant to the exercise, etc.)
- o Size of HEI
- o Number and size of REF 2021 submissions; including spread across UoAs, REF main panels or disciplines.

Research England will be able to provide some submissions data to assist with sampling. The tenderer should suggest a suitable sampling approach. The final sample will be agreed by the project steering group.

#### Contacts in HEIs:

The way that REF submission preparation was managed within institutions varied from significant central organisation to a much more locally-organised model. The key contacts from HEIs to include in the study will therefore vary; however, we suggest it will be helpful to include the following as a starting point:

- o Research office/REF manager (Research England can provide REF contacts for institutions)
- o Human Resources staff
- o Senior staff in research management (for example, pro vice-chancellor for research)

#### Analysis:

<sup>4</sup> <https://repository.jisc.ac.uk/8542/1/understanding-perceptions-of-the-research-excellence-framework-among-uk-researchers.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/future-research-assessment-programme/individual-feedback-survey-on-the-ref-2021>



In addition to the information explored in the REF Accountability Review report, the project should consider the impact of changes introduced between REF 2014 and REF 2021. These include:

- o Decoupling of outputs from individuals. Initial findings from stakeholder engagement so far indicate that processes aimed at decoupling outputs from individuals required additional resource despite being seen as a positive step in terms of improving REF's inclusiveness and impact on individuals (e.g career choices, progression and morale). This analysis should seek to understand the costs linked to the selection and attribution of outputs, especially for submission of outputs for staff who had left the institution during the assessment period. It should quantify the impact of such a change as well as comparing and contrasting in a measurable manner where possible what was gained and what was lost, in order for the Funding Bodies to understand what future changes might be beneficial.
- o Identification of staff with significant responsibility for research Stakeholder engagement carried out so far indicates that institutions have not found it straightforward to identify staff with significant responsibility for research and this process may have had some unintended consequences. This analysis should seek to understand the processes/approaches used and difficulties encountered in order to quantify the associated costs of this process. Similarly to point (i) above, the Funding Bodies would like to understand what or where changes might be beneficial in this area.
- o Introduction of measures to support equality, diversity and inclusion. The REF's Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) produced a Code of Practice (CoP) [report<sup>6</sup>](#) in 2019 which details findings from EDAP on their review of CoPs submitted by HEIs in June that year. EDAP will be doing further analysis work of a similar nature. The analysis to be performed in this project should seek to understand HEIs' costs of developing and documenting their codes to meet REF's requirements in particular. The report also notes that the proportion of codes adhering to the guidance was notably higher than in 2014. The Funding Bodies would like to understand the costs incurred by HEIs in improving their codes It would also be desirable to understand the costs relating to changes made to CoPs resulting from revisions to the REF following COVID-19. Lastly, the project should provide an estimate of the proportion of the total costs that is attributable to activity on individual staff circumstances for REF 2021.
- o Introduction of open access (OA) requirements. It should be noted that the tenderer will focus only on assessing the cost of implementing REF 2021 OA policy requirements in this project. As an example, we do not expect article processing charges (APC costs) or routine costs associated with the maintenance of an institutional repository to be included. However, costs directly related to the infrastructure to support OA, monitoring of OA exceptions or staffing<sup>7</sup> needed to comply with REF's open access policy should be examined. Similarly to the analysis in point (i), comparing and contrasting in a measurable manner (where possible) what was gained and lost by the sector through delivery of the REF 2021 OA policy would be desirable. For example, the introduction of OA may have improved HEIs' meta-data but generated some costs. The wider impact of introducing open access requirement will be examined in greater detail in a separate piece of work.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/edap-codes-of-practice-in-ref-2021-report/>

<sup>7</sup> The successful contractor should refer to Research England's 'Monitoring sector progress towards compliance with funder open access policies' for findings from the analysis carried in 2017 on OA-related staffing costs. 'The institutional cost of staffing open access' section of this report will be of particular interest and give useful pointers for the kinds of analyses that would be feasible and useful.

- o Introduction of measures to support the submission of interdisciplinary research. In particular, the successful contractor will be expected to probe processes used to identify and flag interdisciplinary research and cost these where they are directly related to REF submissions.
- o Broadening the definition of impact. The guidelines for REF 2021 have made clearer the definition of impact as both broad and deep, for example by emphasising the wide definition of research that can underpin impact, including a body of research produced over a number of years and the types of impacts that can be submitted. Continued case studies were also submitted in REF 2021. It will be useful to analyse the costs and benefits of these changes to the REF 2021 guidelines. The analysis might also include understanding whether for example more effort went into preparing this element of the return and any effects this may have had on other elements.
- o Introduction of institutional-level environment statements. This was a pilot exercise but the analysis should aim to understand the costs of producing such statements as part of evaluating its utility in future exercises.

The analysis should aim to understand which process changes are needed to meet the REF requirements, which processes are developed by HEIs to maximise performance in REF, and business-as-usual activities that would take place in the absence of the REF. The successful contractor should work with the FRAP team and the project's Steering Group in identifying criteria that will enable disentangling of direct and indirect REF costs or 'business as usual' costs. The successful contractor will be expected to be clear on and justify the choice of REF-related activities chosen to calculate costs and benefits.

Quantitative data:

The tenderer should suggest a suitable and robust methodology for meeting the project objectives in relation to costs and benchmarking information. We recommend referencing the REF Accountability Review as a starting point to enable meaningful comparison with the REF 2014 outcomes, but would not limit tenderers to the methodology used therein.

Qualitative data:

The tenderer should suggest a suitable and robust methodology for gathering qualitative information to meet the project objectives in relation to burden and benefit. Tenderers should reference the REF Accountability Review to enable consistency and comparability in the findings, but should not feel limited by the methodology and question sets used therein. Any interview or survey questions developed should be piloted and agreed with the FRAP team. The team will provide available data from previous, related FRAP evaluation activities, such as the institutional feedback provided by HEIs and the evidence submitted to the BEIS bureaucracy review to avoid duplication of effort.

Output:

The final report should integrate the quantitative and qualitative information to provide robust, comprehensive and generalisable findings on the costs and benefit of REF 2021.

### 3. Background to the Requirement

Future Research Assessment Programme (FRAP)

The piece of work detailed here forms part of the Future Research Assessment Programme, initiated at the request of UK and devolved government ministers and led by the four UK higher education funding bodies and aims to explore possible approaches to the assessment of UK higher education research performance.

Through dialogue with the higher education sector, the programme seeks to understand what a healthy, thriving research system looks like and how an assessment model can best form its foundation. The work strands include evaluation of the current Research Excellence Framework, understanding international research assessment practice, as well as investigating possible evaluation models and approaches, looking to identify those that can encourage and strengthen the emphasis on delivering excellent research and impact, and support a positive research culture, while simplifying and reducing the administrative burden on the HE sector.

### Research Excellence Framework

The REF is the UK's system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions. The REF was first carried out in 2014, replacing the previous Research Assessment Exercise. The REF is undertaken by the four UK higher education funding bodies: Research England, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), and the Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland (DfE).

The funding bodies' shared policy aim for research assessment is to secure the continuation of a world-class, dynamic and responsive research base across the full academic spectrum within UK higher education. They expect that this will be achieved through the threefold purpose of the REF:

- o To provide accountability for public investment in research and produce evidence of the benefits of this investment.
- o To provide benchmarking information and establish reputational yardsticks, for use within the HE sector and for public information.
- o To inform the selective allocation of funding for research.

The REF is a process of expert review, carried out by expert panels for each of the 34 subject-based units of assessment (UOAs), under the guidance of four main panels. Expert panels are made up of senior academics, international members, and research users.

For each submission, three distinct elements are assessed: the quality of outputs (e.g. publications, performances, and exhibitions), their impact beyond academia, and the environment that supports research.

The cost and burden of the REF should be the minimum possible to deliver a robust and defensible process. Previous exercises have been highly cost effective given the value of public funds distributed through their outcomes (including the estimated cost to HEIs). For example, the costs of the REF 2014 was estimated to be some 2.4 per cent of the value of public research funding that was subsequently allocated with reference to its results (compared with up to 6% for research council grants) as indicated in the REF Accountability Review report .

The submissions for REF 2021 closed on 31 March 2021. 157 universities are participating in REF 2021. Over 185,000 research outputs have been submitted for assessment by expert panels. The assessment will take place in 2021/22. Results will be published in May 2022.

### Real Time REF Review

As part of our wider evaluation work on REF 2021, a review of perceptions of the REF was commissioned. This review offered valuable insight into the ways REF affects or is perceived to affect the UK's research and researchers. It is to be noted that the [Real Time REF Review](#) examined perceptions, while in this work we are looking for an analysis of the evidence-able impact REF 2021 has had on HEIs.

REF 2021 Feedback gathering and sector consultation and other REF evaluation activities A number of REF evaluation activities are currently being carried out as part of FRAP. We are also gathering feedback from a strategic perspective from HEIs as well as seeking wider sector views on REF 2021. The findings of this project and the ensuing report will be read in the context of all these activities to achieve a joined-up approach. The FRAP team/Steering Group will use the evidence and data gathered through the various FRAP activities to provide input into the final report for this project..

#### 4. Scope

In order to meet these objectives, the contracting organisation will need to be aware of and review the following documents and files.

- o [REF2021 Guidance on Submission](#)<sup>8</sup> – particularly the 'Key changes since REF 2014 Section.
- o Stern review: [Research Excellence Framework review - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)<sup>9</sup>
- o [REF Accountability Review: Costs, benefits and burden \(technopolis-group.com\)](#)<sup>1</sup>
- o [Preparing impact submissions for REF 2014: An evaluation: Approach and Evidence | RAND](#)<sup>2</sup>
- o [Preparing impact submissions for REF 2014: An evaluation: Findings and observations | RAND](#)<sup>3</sup>

The successful tenderer will also be expected to seek out and review other useful sources of information that would inform an evaluation of this nature.

#### Ethics and governance

The bidder is invited to explain how the evaluation process will be conducted in accordance with high ethical standards.

#### Coronavirus

This evaluation may well take place within restrictions related to controlling the Covid pandemic. The proposed methodology will need to account for this and have contingency plans for any further restrictions where needed.

#### 5. Requirement

The primary output will be a written report to Research England, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, the Scottish Funding Council and the Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland. The report will contain clearly presented, detailed analysis of data. The report will be published as part of a wider suite of REF 2021 evaluation studies. Additional methods of disseminating the outcomes of the report (to complement the publication of the written report) may be considered.

The successful bidder will be expected to deliver, as a minimum, the following mandatory deliverables according to the timetable outlined in section 6:

- o Statement of work at commencement of the project outlining the work activities they will undertake, deliverables and timetable. This will be discussed and refined at the inception meeting, which will be held virtually within 2 -3 weeks of the contract being awarded. It is a requirement that project work must begin within a week of the contract being awarded in May 2022. The overall project timeline will run until August 2022.
- o Project plan complete with milestones and risk assessment, including levels of risk with owners identified and mitigating actions to address
- o A sample of HEIs, agreed with the project steering group
- o Agreed survey/interview questions (where applicable)
- o Regular progress reports during the evidence collection period.
- o A mid-term report presentation to the FRAP team/project steering group.
- o A full draft of the written report for comment and sign-off by the funding bodies.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/guidance-on-submissions-201901/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-excellence-framework-review>

- o A final, quality-assured and accessible written report. This should meet UKRI's standards for publications. (Guidance on these standards will be provided to the successful tenderer.) Alongside the final report, the successful bidder should include a presentational slide deck which provides a high-level overview of the report content.
- o The successful contractors should ensure that any potential issues or risks are identified, monitored and managed appropriately by maintaining an updated risk register.

Target / Milestone	Deadline
Inception meeting	26 <sup>th</sup> May 2022
Project plan & methodology	Beginning of June 2022
Sample HEIs and Survey/Interview questions agreed	June 2022
Mid-term Progress report for FRAP/ Project steering group	End of July 2022
Mid-term Presentation to report on progress	Beginning of August 2022
1st draft of report	End of August 2022
Final draft evaluation report	End of September 2022
Quality assured, accessible and publishable report & slide deck	End of October 2022*

\*Please note that while the final publishable version of this report should be ready by the end of September, the funding bodies will not want to make it publicly available until November 2022, as they need to coordinate their comms activities carefully around the FRAP report due to be published in late Autumn 2022.

Terms and Conditions

Bidders are to note that any requested modifications to the Contracting Authority Terms and Conditions on the grounds of statutory and legal matters only, shall be raised as a formal clarification during the permitted clarification period.

## Section 5 – Evaluation model

### 5.1. Introduction

- 5.1.1. The evaluation process will be conducted to ensure that Bids are evaluated fairly to ascertain the bidders who can demonstrate the required skills qualities, technical ability and capacity, commercial stability and experience to ensure successful performance of the Contract.
- 5.1.2. The evaluation team may comprise staff from UK SBS and the Contracting Authority, and any specific external stakeholders the Contracting Authority deem required

### 5.2. Evaluation of Bids

- 5.2.1. Evaluation of Bids shall be based on a Selection questionnaire and Award criteria as clearly defined in the e-sourcing tool.

### 5.3. SELECTION questionnaire

- 5.3.1. The Selection questionnaire shall be marked against the following Selection pass / fail and scoring criteria.
- 5.3.2. The selection questionnaire shall be marked against the following Mandatory or discretionary pass / fail criteria.

Selection Pass/fail criteria		
Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject
<b>Selection Questionnaire Part 1: Potential Supplier Information</b>		
Section 1	1.3	Contact details and declaration
<b>Part 2: Exclusion Grounds</b>		
Section 2	2.1 (a)(i)	Participation in a criminal organisation
Section 2	2.1(a)(ii)	Corruption

Section 2	2.1(a)(iii)	Fraud
Section 2	2.1(a)(iv)	Terrorist Offences or offences link to terrorist activities
Section 2	2.1(a)(v)	Money laundering or Terrorist financing
Section 2	2.1(a)(vi)	Child Labour and other forms of trafficking in human beings
Section 2	2.2	Self cleaning
Section 2	2.3(a)	Payment of tax or social security
Section 3	3.1 (a)	Breach of environmental obligations
Section 3	3.1 (b)	Breach of social obligations
Section 3	3.1 (c)	Breach of labour law obligations
Section 3	3.1(d)	Bankruptcy
Section 3	3.1(e)	Guilty of grave professional misconduct
Section 3	3.1(f)	Distorting competition
Section 3	3.1(g)	Conflict of Interest
Section 3	3.1(h)	Prior involvement in procurement process
Section 3	3.1(i)	Prior performance of contract
Section 3	3.1(j)(i)	Serious Misrepresentation
Section 3	3.1(j)(ii)	Withholding information
Section 3	3.1(j)(iii)	Unable to provide supporting documentation for ESPD
Section 3	3.1(j)(iv)	Influenced the decision-making process
<b>Part 3: Selection Questions</b>		
Section 4	4.1	Audited accounts
Section 4	4.2	Minimum financial threshold
Section 5	5.1	Wider group
Section 5	5.2	Parent Company Guarantee
Section 5	5.3	Other Guarantee
Section 6	6.1	Relevant experience and contract examples
Section 7	7.1	Compliance under Modern Slavery Act 2015
Section 8	8.1(a)	Insurance
Section 9	SEL5.5	Health and Safety Policy
Section 9	SEL5.6	Enforcement/remedial orders in relation to the Health and Safety Executive
Section 9	SEL5.7	Breaching environmental legislation
Section 9	SEL5.8	Checking sub-contractors for infringement of environmental legislation
Section 9	SEL5.9	Unlawful discrimination
Section 9	SEL5.10	Checking sub-contractors for unlawful discrimination
Section 9	SEL2.12	General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Act and Data Protection Act 2018
Section 9	FOI1.1	Freedom of information
	In the event of a Bidder failing to meet the requirements of a Mandatory pass / fail criteria, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to disqualify the Bidder and not consider evaluation of the any of the selection stage scoring methodology, nor the Award stage scoring methodology or Mandatory pass / fail criteria.	

5.3.3. Each Mandatory pass / fail question includes a clear definition of the requirements of a successful response to the question.

- 5.3.4. The evaluation model below shall be used for this RFP which will be determined to two decimal places.
- 5.3.5. Questions marked 'for information only' do not contribute to the scoring model.
- 5.3.6. During the evaluation stage, the intention is that only Bidders who achieve a Pass of all the Mandatory and Discretionary requirements of the RFP will be considered for award stage evaluation.

#### 5.4. **AWARD questionnaire**

- 5.4.1. The award questionnaire shall be marked against the following Mandatory or discretionary pass / fail criteria. Each Mandatory pass / fail question includes a clear definition of the requirements of a successful response to the question.

Award Pass/fail criteria		
Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject
Commercial	AW1.1	Form of Bid
Commercial	AW1.2	Bid validity period
Commercial	AW1.3	Certificate of bona fide Bid
Commercial	AW4.1	Compliance to the Contract Terms
Commercial	AW4.2	Changes to the Contract Terms
Price	AW5.1	Firm and fixed price
Price	AW5.3	Maximum Budget
Quality	AW6.1	Compliance to the Specification
Quality	AW6.2	Variable Bids
	In the event of a Bidder failing to meet the requirements of a Mandatory pass / fail criteria, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to disqualify the Bidder and not consider evaluation of the any of the selection stage scoring methodology, nor the Award stage scoring methodology or Mandatory pass / fail criteria.	

- 5.4.2. The Award stage of due process shall be marked against the following Award scoring criteria.
- 5.4.3. The evaluation model below shall be used for this RFP which will be determined to two decimal places.
- 5.4.4. Questions marked 'for information only' do not contribute to the scoring model.

#### **Award Scoring criteria**

#### **Evaluation Justification Statement**



In consideration of this particular requirement the Contracting Authority has decided to evaluate Potential Providers by adopting the weightings/scoring mechanism detailed within this RFP. The Contracting Authority considers these weightings to be in line with existing best practice for a requirement of this type.

Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject	Maximum Marks
Price	AW5.2	Price	10.00%
Quality	PROJ1.1	Approach	30.00%
Quality	PROJ1.2	Staff to Deliver	20.00%
Quality	PROJ1.3	Understanding the Project Environment	20.00%
Quality	PROJ1.4	Project Plan and Timescales	10.00%
Quality	PROJ1.5	Risk Management	10.00%

### Award Evaluation of criteria

#### Non-Price elements

Each question will be evaluated on a score from 0 to 100, which shall be subjected to a multiplier to reflect the percentage of the evaluation criteria allocated to that question.

Where an evaluation criterion is worth 20% then the 0-100 score achieved will be multiplied by 20%.

Example if a Bidder scores 60 from the available 100 points this will equate to 12% by using the following calculation:

$$\text{Score} = \{\text{weighting percentage}\} \times \{\text{bidder's score}\} = 20\% \times 60 = 12$$

The same logic will be applied to groups of questions which equate to a single evaluation criterion.

The 0-100 score shall be based on (unless otherwise stated within the question):

0	The Question is not answered, or the response is completely unacceptable.
10	Extremely poor response – they have completely missed the point of the question.
20	Very poor response and not wholly acceptable. Requires major revision to the response to make it acceptable. Only partially answers the requirement, with major deficiencies and little relevant detail proposed.
40	Poor response only partially satisfying the question requirements with deficiencies apparent. Some useful evidence provided but response falls well short of expectations. Low probability of being a capable supplier.
60	Response is acceptable but remains basic and could have been expanded upon. Response is sufficient but does not inspire.
80	Good response which describes their capabilities in detail which provides high levels of assurance consistent with a quality provider. The response includes a full description of techniques and measurements currently employed.
100	Response is exceptional and clearly demonstrates they are capable of meeting the requirement. No significant weaknesses noted. The response is compelling in its description of techniques and measurements currently employed, providing full assurance consistent with a quality provider.

All questions will be scored based on the above mechanism. Please be aware that there may be multiple evaluators. If so, their individual scores will be averaged (mean) to determine your final score as follows:

**Example**

Evaluator 1 scored your bid as 60

Evaluator 2 scored your bid as 40

Evaluator 3 scored your bid as 80

Evaluator 4 scored your bid as 60

Your final score will  $(60+40+80+60) \div 4 = 60$

Once the above evaluation process has been undertaken and the scores are apportioned by evaluator(s) this will then be subject to an independent commercial review and moderation meeting, if required by the commercial lead, any and all changes will be formally recorded relative to the regulatory obligations associated with this procurement, so as to ensure that the procurement has been undertaken in a robust and transparent way.

**Price elements** will be evaluated on the following criteria.

The lowest price for a response which meets the pass criteria shall score 100.

All other bids shall be scored on a pro rata basis in relation to the lowest price. The score is then subject to a multiplier to reflect the percentage value of the price criterion.

For example - Bid 1 £100,000 scores 100.

Bid 2 £120,000 differential of £20,000 or 20% remove 20% from price scores 80

Bid 3 £150,000 differential £50,000 remove 50% from price scores 50.

Bid 4 £175,000 differential £75,000 remove 75% from price scores 25.

Bid 5 £200,000 differential £100,000 remove 100% from price scores 0.

Bid 6 £300,000 differential £200,000 remove 100% from price scores 0.

Where the scoring criterion is worth 50% then the 0-100 score achieved will be multiplied by 50

In the example if a supplier scores 80 from the available 100 points this will equate to 40% by using the following calculation: Score/Total Points multiplied by 50  $(80/100 \times 50 = 40)$

The lowest score possible is 0 even if the price submitted is more than 100% greater than the lowest price.

This evaluation criteria will therefore not be subject to any averaging, as this is a mathematical scoring criteria, but will still be subject to a commercial review.

## 5.5. Evaluation process

5.5.1. The evaluation process will feature some, if not all, the following phases

Stage	Summary of activity
Receipt and Opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RFP logged upon opening in alignment with UK SBS's procurement procedures.</li> <li>Any RFP Bid received after the closing date will be rejected unless circumstances attributed to the Contracting Authority or</li> </ul>

	the e-sourcing tool beyond the bidder control are responsible for late submission.
Compliance check	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check all Mandatory requirements are acceptable to the Contracting Authority.</li> <li>• Unacceptable Bids maybe subject to clarification by the Contracting Authority or rejection of the Bid.</li> </ul>
Scoring of the Bid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation team will independently score the Bid and provide a commentary of their scoring justification against the criteria.</li> </ul>
Clarifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Evaluation team may require written clarification to Bids</li> </ul>
Re - scoring of the Bid and Clarifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following Clarification responses, the Evaluation team reserve the right to independently re-score the Bid and Clarifications and provide a commentary of their re-scoring justification against the Selection criteria.</li> </ul>
Moderation meeting (if required to reach an award decision)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To review the outcomes of the Commercial review</li> <li>• To agree final scoring for each Bid, relative rankings of the Bids</li> <li>• To confirm contents of the Standstill letters to provide details of scoring and relative feedback on the unsuccessful Bidders response in comparison with the successful Bidders response</li> </ul>
Due diligence of the Bid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Contracting Authority may request the following requirements at any stage of the Procurement.</li> <li>• Submission of insurance documents from the Bidder</li> <li>• Request for evidence of documents / accreditations referenced in the / Request for Proposal response / Bid and / or Clarifications from the Bidder</li> <li>• Taking up of Bidder references from the Bidders Customers.</li> <li>• Financial Credit check for the Bidder</li> </ul>
Validation of unsuccessful Bidders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To confirm contents of the letters to provide details of scoring and meaningful feedback on the unsuccessful Bidders Bid in comparison with the successful Bidders Bid.</li> </ul>

## Section 6 – Selection and award questionnaires

### Section 6 – Selection questionnaire

#### 6.1. Introduction

The Selection questionnaires are located in the within the e-sourcing tool.

Guidance on **how to register and use the e-sourcing portal** are is available at <http://www.ukpbs.co.uk/services/procure/Pages/supplier.aspx>

**PLEASE NOTE THE QUESTIONS ARE NOT NUMBERED SEQUENTIALLY**

## Section 6 – Award questionnaire

6.2. The Award questionnaires are located within the e-sourcing tool.

6.3. Guidance on completion of the questions is available at  
<http://www.uksbs.co.uk/services/procure/Pages/supplier.aspx>

**PLEASE NOTE THE QUESTIONS ARE NOT NUMBERED SEQUENTIALLY**

## Section 7 – General information

### 7.1. Introduction

- 7.1.1. The Contracting Authority wishes to establish a Contract for the provision of Future Research Assessment Programme (FRAP) Cost evaluation project. The Contracting Authority is managing this procurement process in accordance with Public Procurement (as may be amended from time to time) (the “Regulations”). This is a services Contract being procured under the Open Procedure

The Contracting Authority is procuring the Contract for add for its exclusive use.

- 7.1.2. Find a Tender or [Contracts Finder](#) Notice supported if relevant by the statement on the UK SBS website currently located [here](#). (OPB)
- 7.1.3. UK SBS and the Contracting Authority logo, trademarks and other identifying marks are proprietary and may not be incorporated in the Companies response without or the Contracting Authority’s written permission.
- 7.1.4. The Bidder shall indemnify and keep indemnified UK SBS and the Contracting Authority against all actions, claims, demands, proceedings, damages, costs, losses, charges and expenses whatsoever in respect of any breach by the Bidder of this document.
- 7.1.5. If there is any doubt with regard to the ambiguity of any question or content contained in this questionnaire then PLEASE ASK a clarification question, but please ensure that your question is via the formal clarification process in writing to the UK SBS representative nominated. No approach of any kind in connection with this opportunity should be made to any other person within or associated with UK SBS or the Contracting Authority. All information secured outside of this named contact shall have no legal standing or worth and should not be relied upon.
- 7.1.6. It remains the responsibility of the Bidder to keep UK SBS and the Contracting Authority informed of any matter that may affect continued qualification
- 7.1.7. Prior to commencing formal evaluation, Submitted Responses will be checked to ensure they are fully compliant with the Pass / Fail criteria within the Evaluation model. Non-compliant Submitted Responses may be rejected by the Contracting Authority. Submitted Responses which are deemed by the Contracting Authority to be fully compliant will proceed to evaluation. These will be evaluated using the criteria and scores detailed in the matrix set out in [Section 5](#).
- 7.1.8. Whilst it is the Contracting Authority’s [and any relevant Other Public Bodies] intention to purchase the majority of its services under this Contract Arrangement from the Supplier(s) appointed this does not confer any exclusivity on the appointed Suppliers. The Contracting Authority and any relevant Other Public Bodies reserve the right to purchase any services and services (including those similar to the services covered by this procurement) from any Supplier outside of this Contract.
- 7.1.9. The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to conclude a Contract as a result of the current procurement process. Bidders should review the contents of Section 7 paragraph 7.8.1 when considering submitting their Response.

- 7.1.10. The services covered by this procurement exercise have NOT been sub-divided into Lots.
- 7.1.11. The Contracting Authority shall utilise the Delta eSourcing Procurement Tool available at <https://uksbs.delta-esourcing.com/> to conduct this procurement. There will be no electronic auction following the conclusion of the evaluation of the Request for Proposal (RFP) responses. Bidders will be specifically advised where attachments are permissible to support a question response within the e-sourcing tool. All enquiries with respect to problems or functionality within the tool may be submitted to Delta eSourcing on 0845 270 7050
- 7.1.12. Please utilise the messaging system within the e-sourcing tool located at <https://uksbs.delta-esourcing.com/> within the timescales detailed in [Section 3](#). if you have any doubt as to what is required or will have difficulty in providing the information requested. Bidders should note that any requests for clarifications may not be considered by the Contracting Authority if they are not articulated by the Bidder within the discussion forum within the e-sourcing tool.
- 7.1.13. Bidders should read this document, Stage One: Overview Section. messages and the evaluation questionnaires carefully before completing the Response submission. Failure to comply with any of these instructions for completion and submission of the Submitted Response may result in the rejection of the Response. Bidders are advised therefore to acquaint themselves fully with the extent and nature of the services and contractual obligations. These instructions constitute the Conditions of Response. Participation in the RFP process automatically signals that the Bidder accepts these Conditions.
- 7.1.14. All material issued in connection with this RFP shall remain the property of the Contracting Authority and/or as applicable relevant OPB and shall be used only for the purpose of this procurement. All Due Diligence Information shall be either returned to the Contracting Authority or securely destroyed by the Bidder (at the Contracting Authority's option) at the conclusion of the procurement
- 7.1.15. The Bidder shall ensure that each and every sub-contractor, consortium member and adviser abide by the terms of these instructions and the Conditions of Response.
- 7.1.16. The Bidder shall not make contact with any other employee, agent or consultant of UK SBS or the Contracting Authority or any relevant OPB or Customer who are in any way connected with this procurement during the period of this procurement, unless instructed otherwise by the Contracting Authority.
- 7.1.17. The Contracting Authority shall not be committed to any course of action as a result of:
- 7.1.17.1. issuing this RFP or any invitation to participate in this procurement ;
  - 7.1.17.2. an invitation to submit any Response in respect of this procurement;
  - 7.1.17.3. communicating with a Bidder or a Bidder's representatives or agents in respect of this procurement; or
  - 7.1.17.4. any other communication between UK SBS, the Contracting Authority and/or any relevant OPB (whether directly or by its agents or representatives) and any other party.
- 7.1.18. Bidders shall accept and acknowledge that by issuing this RFP the Contracting Authority shall not be bound to accept any Response and reserves the right not to conclude a Contract for some or all of the services for which Responses are invited.

- 7.1.19. The Contracting Authority reserves the right to amend, add to or withdraw all or any part of this RFP at any time during the procurement.
- 7.1.20. Bidders should not include in the Response any extraneous information which has not been specifically requested in the RFP including, for example, any sales literature, standard terms of trading etc. Any such information not requested but provided by the Bidder shall not be considered by the Contracting Authority.
- 7.1.21. If the Bidder is a consortium, the following information must be provided: full details of the consortium; and the information sought in this RFP in respect of each of the consortium's constituent members as part of a single composite response. Potential Providers should provide details of the actual or proposed percentage shareholding of the constituent members within the consortium as indicated in the relevant section of the selection questionnaire SEL1.9 specifically refers. If a consortium is not proposing to form a corporate entity, full details of alternative proposed arrangements should be provided as indicated in the relevant section of the RFP. However, please note the Contracting Authority reserves the right to require a successful consortium to form a single legal entity in accordance with regulation 19(6) of the Regulations. The Contracting Authority recognises that arrangements in relation to consortia may (within limits) be subject to future change. Potential Providers should therefore respond in the light of the arrangements as currently envisaged. Potential Providers are reminded that any future proposed change in relation to consortia must be notified to the Contracting Authority so that it can make a further assessment by applying the selection criteria to the new information provided and consider rejection of the Response if the Contracting Authority reasonably consider the change to have a material impact of the delivery of the viability of the Response.

## **7.2. Bidder conference**

- 7.2.1. A Bidders' Conference will not be held in conjunction with this procurement.

## **7.3. Confidentiality**

- 7.3.1. Subject to the exceptions referred to in paragraph 7.3.2, the contents of this RFP are being made available by the Contracting Authority on condition that:
- 7.3.1.1. Bidders shall at all times treat the contents of the RFP and any related documents (together called the 'Information') as confidential, save in so far as they are already in the public domain;
  - 7.3.1.2. Bidders shall not disclose, copy, reproduce, distribute or pass any of the Information to any other person at any time or allow any of these things to happen;
  - 7.3.1.3. Bidders shall not use any of the Information for any purpose other than for the purposes of submitting (or deciding whether to submit) a Response; and
  - 7.3.1.4. Bidders shall not undertake any publicity activity within any section of the media in relation to this procurement
- 7.3.2. Bidders may disclose, distribute or pass any of the Information to the Bidder's advisers, sub-contractors or to another person provided that either:
- 7.3.2.1. This is done for the sole purpose of enabling a Response to be submitted and the person receiving the Information undertakes in writing to keep the Information confidential on the same terms as if that person were the Bidder; or



- 7.3.2.2. The disclosure is made for the sole purpose of obtaining legal advice from external lawyers in relation to the procurement or to any Contract arising from it; or
  - 7.3.2.3. The Bidder is legally required to make such a disclosure
- 7.3.3. In paragraphs 7.3.1 and 7.3.2 above the term 'person' includes but is not limited to any person, firm, body or association, corporate or incorporate.
- 7.3.4. UK SBS and the Contracting Authority may disclose detailed information relating to Responses to its employees, agents or advisers and they may make any of the Contract documents available for private inspection by its officers, employees, agents or advisers. UK SBS and the Contracting Authority also reserve the right to disseminate information that is materially relevant to the procurement to all Bidders, even if the information has only been requested by one Bidder, subject to the duty to protect each Bidder's commercial confidentiality in relation to its Response (unless there is a requirement for disclosure as explained in paragraphs 7.4.1 to 7.4.3 below).
- 7.3.5. All Central Government Departments and their Executive Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies are subject to control and reporting within Government. In particular, they report to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury for all expenditure. Further, the Cabinet Office has a cross-Government role delivering overall Government policy on public procurement - including ensuring value for money and related aspects of good procurement practice.  
  
For these purposes, the Contracting Authority may disclose within Government any of the Bidders documentation/information (including any that the Bidder considers to be confidential and/or commercially sensitive such as specific bid information) submitted by the Bidder to the Contracting Authority during this Procurement. Subject to section 7.4 below, the information will not be disclosed outside Government. Bidders taking part in this RFP consent to these terms as part of the competition process.
- 7.3.6. The Government introduced its new Government Security Classifications ("GSC") classification scheme to replace the current Government Protective Marking System ("GPMS"). A key aspect of this is the reduction in the number of security classifications used. All Bidders are encouraged to make themselves aware of the changes and identify any potential impacts in their Bid, as the protective marking and applicable protection of any material passed to, or generated by, you during the procurement process or pursuant to any Contract awarded to you as a result of this tender process will be subject to the new GSC from 2nd April 2014. The link below to the Gov.uk website provides information on the new GSC:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-security-classifications>
- 7.3.7. The Contracting Authority reserves the right to amend any security related term or condition of the draft contract accompanying this RFP to reflect any changes introduced by the GSC. In particular where this RFP is accompanied by any instructions on safeguarding classified information (e.g. a Security Aspects Letter) as a result of any changes stemming from the new GSC, whether in respect of the applicable protective marking scheme, specific protective markings given, the aspects to which any protective marking applies or otherwise. This may relate to the instructions on safeguarding classified information (e.g. a Security Aspects Letter) as they apply to the procurement as they apply to the procurement process and/or any contracts awarded to you as a result of the procurement process.

## USEFUL INFORMATION LINKS

- [Contracts Finder](#)
- [Find a Tender](#)
  
- [Equalities Act introduction](#)
- [Bribery Act introduction](#)
- [Freedom of information Act](#)

### 7.4. Freedom of information

- 7.4.1. In accordance with the obligations and duties placed upon public authorities by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the 'FoIA') and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (the 'EIR') (each as amended from time to time), UK SBS and the Contracting Authority may be required to disclose information submitted by the Bidder to the to the Contracting Authority.
- 7.4.2. In respect of any information submitted by a Bidder that it considers to be commercially sensitive the Bidder should complete the Freedom of Information declaration question defined in the Question FOI1.2.
- 7.4.3. Where a Bidder identifies information as commercially sensitive, the Contracting Authority will endeavour to maintain confidentiality. Bidders should note, however, that, even where information is identified as commercially sensitive, the Contracting Authority may be required to disclose such information in accordance with the FoIA or the Environmental Information Regulations. In particular, the Contracting Authority is required to form an independent judgment concerning whether the information is exempt from disclosure under the FoIA or the EIR and whether the public interest favours disclosure or not. Accordingly, the Contracting Authority cannot guarantee that any information marked 'confidential' or "commercially sensitive" will not be disclosed.
- 7.4.4. Where a Bidder receives a request for information under the FoIA or the EIR during the procurement, this should be immediately passed on to the Contracting Authority and the Bidder should not attempt to answer the request without first consulting with the Contracting Authority.
- 7.4.5. Bidders are reminded that the Government's transparency agenda requires that sourcing documents, including RFP templates such as this, are published on a designated, publicly searchable web site, and, that the same applies to other sourcing documents issued by the Contracting Authority, and any contract entered into by the Contracting Authority with its preferred supplier once the procurement is complete. By submitting a response to this RFP Bidders are agreeing that their participation and contents of their Response may be made public.

### 7.5. Response Validity

- 7.5.1. Your Response should remain open for consideration for a period of 90 days. A Response valid for a shorter period may be rejected.

### 7.6. Timescales

- 7.6.1. [Section 3](#) of the RFP sets out the proposed procurement timetable. The Contracting Authority reserves the right to extend the dates and will advise potential Bidders of any change to the dates.

## **7.7. The Contracting Authority's Contact Details**

- 7.7.1. Unless stated otherwise in these Instructions or in writing from UK SBS or the Contracting Authority, all communications from Bidders (including their sub-contractors, consortium members, consultants and advisers) during the period of this procurement must be directed through the e-sourcing tool to the designated UK SBS contact.
- 7.7.2. All enquiries with respect to access to the e-sourcing tool may be submitted to Delta eSourcing on 0845 270 7050 please note this is a free self-registration website and this can be done by completing the online questionnaire at <https://uksbs.delta-esourcing.com/>
- 7.7.3. Bidders should be mindful that the designated Contact should not under any circumstances be sent a copy of their Response outside of the e-sourcing tool. Failure to follow this requirement will result in disqualification of the Response.

## **7.8. Preparation of a Response**

- 7.8.1. Bidders must obtain for themselves at their own responsibility and expense all information necessary for the preparation of Responses. Bidders are solely responsible for all costs, expenses and other liabilities arising in connection with the preparation and submission of their Response and all other stages of the selection and evaluation process. Under no circumstances will UK SBS or the Contracting Authority, or any of their advisers, be liable for any such costs, expenses or liabilities borne by Bidders or their sub-contractors, suppliers or advisers in this process.
- 7.8.2. Bidders are required to complete and provide all information required by the Contracting Authority in accordance with the Conditions of Response and the Request for Proposal. Failure to comply with the Conditions and the Request for Proposal may lead the Contracting Authority to reject a Response.
- 7.8.3. The Contracting Authority relies on Bidders' own analysis and review of information provided. Consequently, Bidders are solely responsible for obtaining the information which they consider is necessary in order to make decisions regarding the content of their Responses and to undertake any investigations they consider necessary in order to verify any information provided to them during the procurement.
- 7.8.4. Bidders must form their own opinions, making such investigations and taking such advice (including professional advice) as is appropriate, regarding their Responses, without reliance upon any opinion or other information provided by the Contracting Authority or their advisers and representatives. Bidders should notify the Contracting Authority promptly of any perceived ambiguity, inconsistency or omission in this RFP, any of its associated documents and/or any other information issued to them during the procurement.
- 7.8.5. Bidders must ensure that each response to a question is within any specified word count. Any responses with words in excess of the word count will only be considered up to the point where they meet the word count, any additional words beyond the volume defined in the word count will not be considered by the evaluation panel.

- 7.8.6. Bidders must ensure that each response to a question is not cross referenced to a response to another question. In the event of a Bidder adding a cross reference it will not be considered in evaluation.

## 7.9. Submission of Responses

- 7.9.1. The Response must be submitted as instructed in this document through the e-sourcing tool. Failure to follow the instruction within each Section of this document, to omit responses to any of the questions or to present your response in alignment with any guidance notes provided may render the Response non-compliant and it may be rejected.
- 7.9.2. The Contracting Authority may at its own absolute discretion extend the closing date and the time for receipt of Responses specified [Section 3](#).
- 7.9.3. Any extension to the RFP response period will apply to all Bidders.
- 7.9.4. Any financial data provided must be submitted in or converted into pounds sterling. Where official documents include financial data in a foreign currency, a sterling equivalent must be provided. Failure to adhere to this requirement will result in the Response not being considered.
- 7.9.5. The Contracting Authority do not accept responsibility for the premature opening or mishandling of Responses that are not submitted in accordance with the instructions of this document.
- 7.9.6. The Response and any documents accompanying it must be in the English language
- 7.9.7. Bidders must submit their response through the e-sourcing tool, unless explicitly requested by the Contracting Authority either in the procurement documents or via a formal clarification from the Contracting Authority. Responses received by any other method than requested will not be considered for the opportunity.
- 7.9.8. Responses will be submitted any time up to the date indicated in [Section 3](#). Responses received before this deadline will be retained in a secure environment, unopened until this deadline has passed.
- 7.9.9. Responses received after the date indicated in [Section 3](#) shall not be considered by the Contracting Authority, unless the Bidder can justify that the reason for the delay is solely attributable to the Contracting Authority
- 7.9.9.1. The Bidder must demonstrate irrefutable evidence in writing they have made best endeavours to ensure the Response was received on time and that the issue was beyond their control.
  - 7.9.9.2. Any request for a late Response to be considered must be emailed to the Buyer in [Section 3](#) in advance of 'the deadline' if a bidder believes their Response will be received late.
  - 7.9.9.3. The Contracting Authority reserves the right to accept or reject any late Response without justification to the affected Bidder and make no guarantee it will consider any request for a late Response to be considered.
- 7.9.10. Do not seek changes to the Bid after responses have been submitted and the deadline (date and time) for receipt of responses has passed.

## 7.10. Canvassing

- 7.10.1. Any Bidder who directly or indirectly canvasses any employee, or agent of UK SBS, the Contracting Authority or its members or any relevant OPB or any of its employees concerning the establishment of the Contract or who directly or indirectly obtains or attempts to obtain information from any such officer, member, employee or agent or concerning any other Bidder, Response or proposed Response will be disqualified.

## 7.11. Disclaimers

- 7.11.1. Whilst the information in this RFP, Due Diligence Information and supporting documents has been prepared in good faith, it does not purport to be comprehensive nor has it been independently verified.
- 7.11.2. Neither UK SBS, the Contracting Authority, nor any relevant OPB's nor their advisors, nor their respective directors, officers, members, partners, employees, other staff or agents:
- 7.11.2.1. makes any representation or warranty (express or implied) as to the accuracy, reasonableness or completeness of the RFP; or
  - 7.11.2.2. accepts any responsibility for the information contained in the RFP or for their fairness, accuracy or completeness of that information nor shall any of them be liable for any loss or damage (other than in respect of fraudulent misrepresentation) arising as a result of reliance on such information or any subsequent communication.
- 7.11.3. Any persons considering making a decision to enter into contractual relationships with the Contracting Authority and/or, as applicable, relevant OPB following receipt of the RFP should make their own investigations and their own independent assessment of the Contracting Authority and/or, as applicable, relevant OPB and its requirements for the services and should seek their own professional financial and legal advice. For the avoidance of doubt the provision of clarification or further information in relation to the RFP or any other associated documents (including the Schedules) is only authorised to be provided following a query made in accordance with Paragraph 7.15 of this RFP.

## 7.12. Collusive behaviour

- 7.12.1. Any Bidder who:
- 7.12.1.1. fixes or adjusts the amount of its Response by or in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other party; or
  - 7.12.1.2. communicates to any party other than UK SBS, the Contracting Authority or, as applicable, relevant OPB the amount or approximate amount of its proposed Response or information which would enable the amount or approximate amount to be calculated (except where such disclosure is made in confidence in order to obtain quotations necessary for the preparation of the Response or insurance or any necessary security); or
  - 7.12.1.3. enters into any agreement or arrangement with any other party that such other party shall refrain from submitting a Response; or
  - 7.12.1.4. enters into any agreement or arrangement with any other party as to the amount of any Response submitted; or
  - 7.12.1.5. offers or agrees to pay or give or does pay or give any sum or sums of money, inducement or valuable consideration directly or indirectly to

any party for doing or having done or causing or having caused to be done in relation to any other Response or proposed Response, any act or omission, shall (without prejudice to any other civil remedies available to the Contracting Authority and without prejudice to any criminal liability which such conduct by a Bidder may attract) be disqualified.

### **7.13. No inducement or incentive**

- 7.13.1. The RFP is issued on the basis that nothing contained in it shall constitute an inducement or incentive nor shall have in any other way persuaded a Bidder to submit a Response or enter into the Contract or any other contractual agreement.

### **7.14. Acceptance of the Contract**

- 7.14.1. The Bidder in submitting the Response undertakes that in the event of the Response being accepted by the Contracting Authority and the Contracting Authority confirming in writing such acceptance to the Bidder, the Bidder will within of being called upon to do so by the Contracting Authority execute the Contract in the form set out in the Contract Terms or in such amended form as may subsequently be agreed.
- 7.14.2. The Contracting Authority shall be under no obligation to accept the lowest priced or any Response.

### **7.15. Queries relating to the Response**

- 7.15.1. All requests for clarification about the requirements or the process of this procurement shall be made in through the e-sourcing tool unless where the e-sourcing tool is unavailable due to Delta eSourcing system maintenance or failure, in this instance all clarifications shall be by email to the contact defined in [Section 3](#).
- 7.15.2. The Contracting Authority will endeavour to answer all questions as quickly as possible but cannot guarantee a minimum response time.
- 7.15.3. In the event of a Bidder requiring assistance uploading a clarification to the e-sourcing portal they should use the contact details defined in [Section 3](#).
- 7.15.4. No further requests for clarifications will be accepted after 7 days prior to the date for submission of Responses.
- 7.15.5. In order to ensure equality of treatment of Bidders, the Contracting Authority intends to publish the questions and clarifications raised by Bidders together with the Contracting Authority's responses (but not the source of the questions) to all participants on a regular basis.
- 7.15.6. Bidders should indicate if a query is of a commercially sensitive nature – where disclosure of such query and the answer would or would be likely to prejudice its commercial interests. However, if the Contracting Authority at its sole discretion does not either; consider the query to be of a commercially confidential nature or one which all Bidders would potentially benefit from seeing both the query and the Contracting Authority's response, the Contracting Authority will:
- 7.15.6.1. invite the Bidder submitting the query to either declassify the query and allow the query along with the Contracting Authority's response to be circulated to all Bidders; or

- 7.15.6.2. request the Bidder, if it still considers the query to be of a commercially confidential nature, to withdraw the query prior to the end of the closing date and time for Bidder clarifications.

- 7.15.7. The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to respond to a request for clarification or to circulate such a request where it considers that the answer to that request would or would be likely to prejudice its commercial interests.

## **7.16. Amendments to Response Documents**

- 7.16.1. At any time prior to the deadline for the receipt of Responses, the Contracting Authority may modify the RFP by amendment. Any such amendment will be numbered and dated and issued by the Contracting Authority to all prospective Bidders. In order to give prospective Bidders reasonable time in which to take the amendment into account in preparing their Responses, the Contracting Authority may, at its discretion, extend the time and/or date for receipt of Responses.

## **7.17. Modification and withdrawal**

- 7.17.1. Bidders may modify their Response where allowable within the e-sourcing tool. No Response may be modified after the deadline for submission of Responses.
- 7.17.2. Bidders may withdraw their Response at any time prior the deadline for submission of Responses [or any other time prior to accepting the offer of a Contract]. The notice to withdraw the Response must be in writing and sent to the Contracting Authority by recorded delivery or equivalent service and delivered to the Head of Policy UK SBS at UK Shared Business Services Ltd, Procurement, Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN2 1ET

## **7.18. Right to disqualify or reject**

- 7.18.1. The Contracting Authority reserves the right to reject or disqualify a Bidder where
  - 7.18.1.1. the Bidder fails to comply fully with the requirements of this Request for Proposal or presents the response in a format contrary to the requirements of this document; and/or
  - 7.18.1.2. the Bidder is guilty of serious misrepresentation in relation to its Response; expression of interest; or the Response process; and/or
  - 7.18.1.3. there is a change in identity, control, financial standing or other factor impacting on the selection and/or evaluation process affecting the Bidder.

## **7.19. Right to cancel, clarify or vary the process**

- 7.19.1. The Contracting Authority reserves the right to:
  - 7.19.1.1. cancel the evaluation process at any stage; and/or
  - 7.19.1.2. require the Bidder to clarify its Response in writing and/or provide additional information. (Failure to respond adequately may result in the Bidder not being selected),

## **7.20. Notification of award**

- 7.20.1. The Contracting Authority will notify the successful Bidder of the Contract award in writing and will publish an Award Notice in Find a Tender in accordance with the Regulations within 30 days of the award of the contract.



7.20.2. As required by the Regulations all successful and unsuccessful Bidders will be provided with an email advising the outcome of the submission of their RFP response.

## Section 7 – General Information

### What makes a good bid – some simple do's ☺

#### DO:

Do comply with Procurement document instructions. Failure to do so may lead to disqualification.

Do provide the Bid on time, and in the required format. Remember that the date/time given for a response is the last date that it can be accepted; we are legally bound to disqualify late submissions. Responses received after the date indicated in the RFP shall not be considered by the Contracting Authority, unless the Bidder can justify that the reason for the delay, is solely attributable to the Contracting Authority

Do ensure you have read all the training materials to utilise e-sourcing tool prior to responding to this Bid. If you send your Bid by email or post it will be rejected.

Do use Microsoft Word, PowerPoint Excel 97-03 or compatible formats, or PDF unless agreed in writing by the Buyer. If you use another file format without our written permission, we may reject your Bid.

Do ensure you utilise the Delta eSourcing messaging system to raise any clarifications to our RFP. You should note that we will release the answer to the question to all Bidders and where we suspect the question contains confidential information, we may modify the content of the question to protect the anonymity of the Bidder or their proposed solution

Do answer the question, it is not enough simply to cross-reference to a 'policy', web page or another part of your Bid, the evaluation team have limited time to assess bids and if they can't find the answer, they can't score it.

Do consider who the Contracting Authority is and what they want – a generic answer does not necessarily meet every Contracting Authority's needs.

Do reference your documents correctly, specifically where supporting documentation is requested e.g. referencing the question/s they apply to.

Do provide clear, concise and ideally generic contact details; telephone numbers, e-mails and fax details.

Do complete all questions in the questionnaire or we may reject your Bid.

Do ensure that the Response and any documents accompanying it are in the English Language, the Contracting Authority reserve the right to disqualify any full or part responses that are not in English.

Do check and recheck your Bid before dispatch.



## What makes a good bid – some simple do not's 🚫

### DO NOT

Do not cut and paste from a previous document and forget to change the previous details such as the previous buyer's name.

Do not attach 'glossy' brochures that have not been requested, they will not be read unless we have asked for them. Only send what has been requested and only send supplementary information if we have offered the opportunity so to do.

Do not share the Procurement documents, they may be confidential and should not be shared with anyone without the Buyers written permission.

Do not seek to influence the procurement process by requesting meetings or contacting UK SBS or the Contracting Authority to discuss your Bid. If your Bid requires clarification the Buyer will contact you. All information secured outside of formal Buyer communications shall have no Legal standing or worth and should not be relied upon.

Do not contact any UK SBS staff or the Contracting Authority staff without the Buyers written permission or we may reject your Bid.

Do not collude to fix or adjust the price or withdraw your Bid with another Party as we will reject your Bid.

Do not offer UK SBS or the Contracting Authority staff any inducement or we will reject your Bid.

Do not seek changes to the Bid after responses have been submitted and the deadline for Bids to be submitted has passed.

Do not cross reference answers to external websites or other parts of your Bid, the cross references and website links will not be considered.

Do not exceed word counts, the additional words will not be considered.

Do not make your Bid conditional on acceptance of your own Terms of Contract, as your Bid will be rejected.

Do not unless explicitly requested by the Contracting Authority either in the procurement documents or via a formal clarification from the Contracting Authority send your response by any way other than via e-sourcing tool. Responses received by any other method than requested will not be considered for the opportunity.

## Appendix ‘A’ Glossary of Terms

TERM	MEANING
“UK SBS”	means UK Shared Business Services Ltd herein after referred to as UK SBS.
“Bid”, “Response”, “Submitted Bid”, or “RFP Response”	means the Bidders formal offer in response to this Request for Proposal
“Bidder(s)”	means the organisations being invited to respond to this Request for Proposal
“Central Purchasing Body”	means a duly constituted public sector organisation which procures supplies/services/works for and on behalf of contracting authorities
“Conditions of Bid”	means the terms and conditions set out in this RFP relating to the submission of a Bid
“Contract”	means the agreement to be entered by the Contracting Authority and the Supplier following any award under the procurement
“Contracting Bodies”	means the Contracting Authority and any other contracting authorities described in the Find a Tender Contract Notice
“Contracting Authority”	A public body regulated under the Public Procurement Regulations on whose behalf the procurement is being run
“Customer”	means the legal entity (or entities) for which any Contract agreed will be made accessible to.
“Due Diligence Information”	means the background and supporting documents and information provided by the Contracting Authority for the purpose of better informing the Bidders responses to this Request for Proposal
"EIR"	mean the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 together with any guidance and/or codes of practice issued by the Information Commissioner or relevant Government department in relation to such regulations
“Find a Tender”	Means the UK Government Portal that superseded the OJEU as from 1/1/2021 <a href="https://www.find-tender.service.gov.uk/Search">https://www.find-tender.service.gov.uk/Search</a>
“FoIA”	means the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and any subordinate legislation made under such Act from time to time together with any guidance and/or codes of practice issued by the Information Commissioner or relevant Government department in relation to such legislation
“Further Competition”	means re-opening competition under a framework if applicable to this procurement
“Mandatory”	Means a pass / fail criteria which must be met in order for a Bid to be considered, unless otherwise specified.
“Named Procurement person ”	means the single point of contact for the Contracting Authority based in UK SBS that will be dealing with the procurement
“Order”	means an order for served by any Contracting Body on the Supplier
“Other Public Bodies”	means all Contracting Bodies except the Contracting Authority
“Request for Proposal” or “RFP”	means this Request for Proposal documentation and all related documents published by the Contracting Authority and made available to Bidders and includes the Due Diligence

	Information. <b>NOTE:</b> This document is often referred to as an Invitation to Tender within other organisations
<b>“Supplier(s)”</b>	means the organisation(s) awarded the Contract
<b>“Supplies / Services / Works”</b>	means any supplies/services and supplies or works set out at within <a href="#">Section 4</a> <a href="#">Specification</a>