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| --- |
| ***Specification Reference*** |
| FS303017 |
| ***Specification Title*** |
| Small and micro FBO tracking survey (annual) |
| **Contract Duration** |
| 3 years with annual break points |

This specification, which forms part of the Invitation to Tender (ITT), comprises of three individual sections: -

1. **SPECIFICATION:** An outline of the requirement
2. **PROCUREMENT TIMETABLE:** An estimated timetable for the procurement of the proposed requirement
3. **TENDER REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA:** Provides guidance to applicants on the information that should be included within tenders and on the evaluation criteria and weightings used by appraisers when assessing and scoring tenders

Tenders for FSA funded projects must be submitted through the FSA E-sourcing and contract management system, ECMS, using the following link: <https://food.bravosolution.co.uk/web/login.html>. Failure to do so may result in the tender response not being processed by the system or the response being automatically disqualified during the evaluation stage of the tender process*.*

**THE SPECIFICATION, INCLUDING PROJECT TIMETABLE**

**AND EVALUATION OF TENDERS**

# Summary

FSA would like to commission a tracking study with small and micro food businesses (FBOs), to take place on an annual basis in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The aims and objectives of the tracker are:

* To better inform insights on EU exit and engagement with SMEs
* To ‘unpack’ attitudes towards regulation to deepen insights and knowledge of SMEs with regards to the FSA’s Regulating our Future priority
* To measure trust in the FSA and extent to which FSA is considered a modern, accountable regulator
* Any other issues as required.

FSA have already commissioned and completed a phase of development work to identify requirements across the organisation. The outputs from this work include recommendations on approach and methodology, as well as a draft questionnaire which has been cognitively tested (report and draft questionnaire documents included as attached documents).

Proposals are required by 4th July and we intend to appoint a contractor by 26th July, with a view to fieldwork commencing soon thereafter.

# 1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Food Standards Agency is a non-ministerial government department governed by a Board appointed to act in the public interest, with the task of protecting consumers in relation to food. It has a remit across England, Wales and Northern Ireland body with offices in London, Cardiff, Belfast and York.

The Agency is committed to openness, transparency and equality of treatment to all suppliers. As well as these principles, for science projects the final project report will be published on the Food Standards Agency website ([www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk) ). For science projects we will encourage contractors to publish their work in peer reviewed scientific publications wherever possible. Also, in line with the Government’s Transparency Agenda which aims to encourage more open access to data held by government, the Agency is developing a policy on the release of underpinning data from all of its science- and evidence-gathering projects. Underpinning data should also be published in an open, accessible, and re-usable format, such that the data can be made available to future researchers and the maximum benefit is derived from it. The Agency has established the key principles for release of underpinning data that will be applied to all new science- and evidence-gathering projects which we would expect contractors to comply with. These can be found at <http://www.food.gov.uk/about-us/data-and-policies/underpinning-data>

# 2. Background

The FSA has been tracking consumer attitudes towards food related topics and trust in the FSA and food system for several years. With changes as a result of EU Exit and the Regulating our Future programme, there is now a growing need to also track this information amongst SME FBO audiences.

‘Regulating Our Future’ (ROF) is a major transformational programme to modernise and re-shape the way food businesses are inspected. ROF is central to optimising public protection by means of a proportionate and cost-effective system of regulation. It’s an opportunity to take a fresh look at smarter ways to achieve the right results for consumers, anticipate new risks and focus our resources where public health is most threatened. Our work to modernise how we regulate food was started before the decision was made to exit the EU, but both are now closely aligned. Going forward, it will be vital to monitor attitudes among FBO’s both for evaluation purposes and to inform engagement activity.

An initial developmental phase has been carried out, involving the following activities:

* Two x 2-hour workshops to discuss information needs with the following FSA teams invited:
  + - The Regulating Our Future Programme team.
    - The EU Exit team
* Ten one to one interviews with other staff from around the FSA who it was deemed had an interest in the potential shape of the SME FBO Tracker (including representatives from Communications, Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS), FSA in Northern Ireland, Outbreaks & Food Chain Investigations, Efficacy of Recalls project and staff with direct recent Local Authority experience and so on).
* Desk-based activities to examine previous research undertaken with this audience in more details and to look into possible methodological options and likely costs.
* Development of a draft questionnaire for the tracker.
* Cognitive testing of the questionnaire with 11 small food businesses, followed by refinement of the draft questionnaire.

## 2.1 Sample and methodology

For the purposes of collecting statistics BEIS defines SMEs as companies with fewer than 250 employees. For accounting purposes Companies House defines a small business as employing less than 50 people and a turnover under £6.5 million and a medium business as less than 250 employees and a turnover under £25.9 million. Other parts of the UK government use the EU definition of an SME which is as follows:

• Micro Business = less than 10 employees & turnover under £2 million

• Small Business = less than 50 employees & turnover under £10 million

• Medium Business = Less than 250 employees & turnover under £50 million

Food businesses will be predominantly at the micro end of this scale and the greatest information gap is with regard to small and micro businesses (50 staff or fewer) therefore we expect the tracker to focus on micro and small businesses only.

The sample audience should be businesses whose primary function is food related (including consumer facing and non-consumer facing businesses e.g. producers and manufacturers). The primary sample unit should be the business rather than the food business premises. Large scale franchises should not be included.

We expect sample size to be c.525 businesses and to be stratified by type of operation (see further information in section 2.2), size (no. of employees) and region.

Sample size should be boosted in Wales and Northern Ireland to allow for separate analysis (at least n=50 per country).

There are some specific harder to reach sub-samples that will be of particular interest, including:

* Businesses where the owner / manager does not have English as their first language
* Non-compliant businesses (consumer facing – FHRS of less than 3). Note that where a business has more than one consumer facing establishment each will have its own FHRS rating
* Newly established / registered businesses (those established in the last year).

At this stage we do not know how the sub-samples above will ‘fall out’ within the broader sample so minimum quotas will need to be set (c.50 interviews should be targeted to cover these combined sub-samples). We anticipate that some of the fieldwork with the harder to engage audiences listed above may need to be conducted face-to-face.

**2.2 Information about FHRS**

The FHRS is a Food Standards Agency/local authority partnership initiative operating in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It provides information about hygiene standards in food premises at the time of programmed inspections carried out by local authorities to check compliance with legal requirements. There are six hygiene ratings on a simple numerical scale ranging from ‘0’ (urgent improvement necessary) at the bottom to ‘5’ (very good) at the top.

Local Authorities that operate the FHRS, upload data to the national online search facility. This data is available to use as a sampling frame from our consumer facing website (http://ratings.food.gov.uk/). The data held for each establishment covers:

- Local Authority Name

- Establishment name

- Establishment address

- Establishment postcode

- Business type (category)

- Inspection date (N/A to businesses ‘Awaiting Inspection’)

- Rating

Note that the FHRS information is provided at an establishment rather than a business level. Where a business has more than more consumer facing establishment each will have its own entry on FHRS. Also note that FHRS database does not include size of establishment.

Contact details and individual proprietor details will not be available from the FSA database. It will be necessary for you to source the contact information. Full details on how telephone numbers will be identified, and the time and costs for this, should be provided in the proposals.

The following business types, as categorized in the FHRS database, will need to be sampled:

* Hotel/Guest House
* Pub/Club
* Restaurants/café/canteen
* Restaurants and caterers - other
* Small retailer
* Supermarket/hypermarket
* Retailer - other
* Takeaway

Further information can be found on the FHRS web page: <https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/food-hygiene-rating-scheme>

The Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMs) could also be used to inform sample composition, (it could not be used as a sample source as it is anonymous). LAEMs is a web-based application, introduced in 2008, that allows LAs to upload data directly from their own local systems comprising data on the enforcement of food hygiene and food standards legislation by LAs. Unlike FHRS LAEMs includes non-consumer facing establishments and categorises businesses into the following:

* Caring premises
* Distributors/Transporters
* Hotel/Guest house
* Importers/Exporters
* Manufacturers and packers
* Mobile food unit
* Primary producers
* Pub/Club
* Restaurant/Cafe/Canteen
* Restaurants and caterers - other
* Retailer - Other
* School/College
* Small retailer
* Supermarket/Hypermarket
* Take-away

# 3. Research Aims

The overarching aim of setting up a tracker with micro and small FBO’s is to fill a current gap in knowledge and engagement with this audience.

More specifically the aims and objectives of the tracker are:

* To better inform insights on EU exit and future engagement with SMEs
* To ‘unpack’ attitudes towards regulation to deepen insights and knowledge of SMEs with regards to the FSA’s Regulating our Future priority
* To measure trust in the FSA and extent to which FSA is considered a modern, accountable regulator
* Any other issues as required.

# 4. Research Approach

The FSA suggests that this research project should be carried out through the following methodological approach and should consider the evidence sources detailed in the development phase report. However, other approaches and methodologies will be welcomed provided that they are justified with a compelling rationale.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Sample definition** | Small and micro businesses (from 0 to 50 employees) whose primary function is food related. |
| **Sample size** | 525 including   * Boost of n=50 in Wales (including harder to reach sub-groups) * Boost of n=50 in NI (including harder to reach sub-groups) * Minimum quota of 50 harder to reach businesses in total (inc. non-compliant / those where the owner or manager’s first language is not English / newly registered). |
| **Methodology** | 475 interviews conducted by telephone  c.50 conducted face to face in order to ensure engagement of hard to reach sub-samples (non-compliant / those owned or managed by people whose first language is not English.) |
| **Sample source** | Likely to be a combination of FHRS (for consumer facing sample) with telephone look up; and either bought sample (e.g. Dun and Bradstreet) for non-consumer facing businesses, or possibly ONS sample. This is discussed further in Section 6 of the development report. |
| **Interview length** | Should be no longer than 20 minutes. |
| **Regularity** | Annual |

We expect that the questionnaire will go through an initial pilot phase. We also expect there to be a period of review prior to each subsequent wave of fieldwork, to allow for any necessary adjustments to the questionnaire.

The questionnaire should allow for ad hoc modules which could be developed and reviewed between waves.

# 5. Deliverables and timings

The following outputs are required:

* Finalised questionnaire (including development and cognitive testing of an additional question around trust in FSA that was not included in previous drafts)
* Pilot survey (including report and meeting to discuss outcomes)
* Data tables and SPSS files
* Full Word report of detailed findings (to be published)
* Short powerpoint slide pack of key findings, to serve as template to be updated / added to with each wave (to be highly visual)
* Face to face debrief summarising the key research findings
* Period of review between each wave (e.g. questionnaire amendments)
* Documentation of QA checks undertaken

Usually reports require two rounds of substantive comments by FSA officials (and any other parties involved in the project as appropriate) and a final round to finalise minor outstanding comments. Unless otherwise agreed, the project manager will co-ordinate comments and provide them to the contractor and all responses will be recorded. The final report will be subject to peer review, following which further amendments may be required. Contractors should agree the timetable for reporting and publication with the project officer but should note that the FSA normally expect two weeks to provide a co-ordinated response. Please confirm in your proposal how you will meet the FSA’s requirements for reporting.

The final report will be published by the FSA, and will need to meet minimum accessibility requirements.

Bidders are requested to provide a detailed timetable as part of their response. We envisage fieldwork taking place late summer, with reporting following thereafter. Responses should include a full timeline for set up, fieldwork and reporting.

# 6. PROCUREMENT TIMETABLE

Table 1 details an **estimated** project timetable for the project. Tenderers should however be aware that the Agency needs to acquire the evidence outlined in this ITT in a timely manner and you should justify your timings in your work plan.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TABLE 1. ESTIMATED PROJECT TIMETABLE** | |
| **EXPECTED DATE** | **INVITATION TO (ITT) TENDER** |
| 30th May | Invitation to Tender (ITT) issued by the Agency |
| 30th May | ITT Clarification period opens\* |
| 27th June | ITT Clarification period closes\*\* |
| 4th July | Closing date for submission of ITT responses\*\*\* |
| 5th – 16th July | Evaluation of ITT responses |
| 17th – 24th July | Appraisal panel meeting held to consider ITT responses |
| By 26th July | Tenderers notified of outcome of appraisal and preferred Tenderer (or Tenderers) identified |
| By 26th July | Contract awarded, project initiation meeting arranged and project commences |

\* If a Tenderer wishes to raise any points of clarification over the procurement process, the actual project objectives or any other query these must be raised through the ECMS by the date specified.

\*\* Queries will not be answered after this date.

\*\*\* Submissions must be uploaded onto the ECMS before the closing date and time.

§ These stages are optional

# 7. Form of Response

Proposals should include the following information:

1. Demonstration of an understanding of the research background and objectives;
2. A recommended research design and methodology;
3. A named contract manager who will be fully accountable for the delivery of the project against the contract, provide regular verbal updates on progress and issues arising to the nominated FSA project officer, and meet the FSA at the start of the project to discuss the proposed approach;
4. Evidence of relevant experience and expertise on similar projects (please provide 2 or 3 examples);
5. Details of all personnel who will be involved with this project, their grade, daily rate, number of days’ input, relevant skills and experience (including a brief CV). The proposal should also include who would be drafting the report;
6. If relevant, details of sub-contractors appointed by the contract manager should be included along with the experience and services of the company sub contracted to;
7. A quality plan demonstrating internal quality assurance procedures and how they will achieve high quality outputs to time and budget;
8. Summary of how data security and ethical issues will be addressed (see below);
9. A risk management plan;
10. A timetable of key dates;
11. All anticipated costs of conducting the work, providing a breakdown of staff involvements and days dedicated to the project for each staff member, and all other associated overheads and expenses (see below);
12. Summary corporate information e.g. contact details, incorporation/ status, registration (VAT and data protection) numbers, profit and loss statements or at least approximate turnover figures for the last 2 years, a list of internal staff and social responsibility polices underpinning your business practices;
13. Amendments / queries on the FSA standard terms and conditions.

# 8. Personnel

# 9. Ethics

* Tenderers are asked to identify the ethical concerns for this project, especially as regards information provided in confidence by participants and data protection issues, and the safety of interviewers and other project team members and to outline how these issues would be addressed.
* Tenderers are asked to consult the *Government Social Research Guide for Ethical Assurance for Social Research[[1]](#footnote-1)*.

# 10. Risk

* Tenders must include a risk register detailing high, medium, and low risks, tailored to this specification, e.g. including what action will be taken in the event of difficulty accessing interviewees or in the event of undertaking an interview and discovering illegal activity.
* It is desirable but not essential for tenderers to hold ISO 31000 - Risk management.[[2]](#footnote-2)

# 11. Data issues

## 11.1 Data security

Please refer to the Framework Standard Terms and Conditions on data security and outline in your tender any specific data security issues related to this project. The successful tenderer will be asked to complete a Data Security Questionnaire which will be reviewed by the FSA data security team and will form part of the contract. In doing so FSA would like to draw particular attention to the Framework Standard Terms and Conditions on data security and the commissioning authority’s role as the ‘data controller’ and the contractor’s role as the ‘data processor’.

In line with the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998, any information collected, processed and transferred on behalf of the Agency (the data controller), and in particular personal information, must be held and transferred securely. Tenderers must provide assurances of compliance with the DPA and set out in their proposals details of the practices and systems they have in place for handling data securely including transmission between the field and head office and then to the Agency. Contractors will have responsibility for ensuring that processing or handling of information by themselves, and any sub-contractors on behalf of the Agency, are conducted securely.

Tenderers should also note that the EU’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will enter into force in the UK from the 25th of May 2018. Tenderers are therefore asked to consider what additional measures may need to be taken in order to comply with the new regulatory regime for data protection, and to include in their proposals an explanation of how they intend to implement these measures.

In particular, the processor must: -

● process the personal data only on the documented instructions of the Controller;

● comply with security obligations equivalent to those imposed on the Controller

(implementing a level of security for the personal data appropriate to the risk);

● ensure that persons authorised to process the personal data have committed

themselves to confidentiality or are under an appropriate statutory obligation of

confidentiality;

● only appoint Sub-processors with the Controller’s prior specific or general written

authorisation, and impose the same minimum terms imposed on it on the

Sub-processor; and the original Processor will remain liable to the Controller for the

Sub-processor’s compliance. The Sub-processor must provide sufficient guarantees

to implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to demonstrate

compliance. In the case of general written authorisation, Processors must inform

Controllers of intended changes in their Sub-processor arrangements;

● make available to the Controller all information necessary to demonstrate compliance with the obligations laid down in Article 28 GDPR and allow for and contribute to audits, including inspections, conducted by the Controller or another auditor mandated by the Controller - and the Processor shall immediately inform the controller if, in its opinion, an instruction infringes GDPR or other EU or member state data protection provisions;

● assist the Controller in carrying out its obligations with regard to requests by data

subjects to exercise their rights under chapter III of the GDPR , noting different rights

may apply depending on the specific legal basis for the processing activity (and should be clarified by the Controller up-front);

● assist the Controller in ensuring compliance with the obligations to implementing a

level of security for the personal data appropriate to the risk, taking into account the

nature of processing and the information available to the Processor;

● assist the Controller in ensuring compliance with the obligations to carry out Data

Protection Impact Assessments, taking into account the nature of processing and the

information available to the Processor; and

● notify the Controller without undue delay after becoming aware of a personal data

breach.

## 11.2 Data archiving

The Agency is committed to openness and is engaged in work to make the results of the science it funds more accessible. All scientific evidence on which Agency policies are based is made publicly available via our open access repository, Foodbase and/ or another appropriate archive. Tenderers must comment on the suitability of archiving project data and indicate how it will be made suitable for Archiving. Tenderers must also provide a separate cost for archiving project data using the Agency’s open access repository Foodbase and/ or other such as the Essex Data Archive.

## 11.3 Data permissions and referencing

Contractors are responsible for ensuring that all necessary permissions are acquired for the use of data, visuals, or other materials throughout the life of the project that are subject to copyright law, and that the materials are used in accordance with the permissions that have been secured. Contractors are also responsible for ensuring suitable referencing of materials in **all** project outputs including project data.

## 11.4 Re-contacting participants

As the Agency is the data controller, it may wish to use the data for further research at a future date. Re-contact questions and supporting documentation must be phrased in such a way that participants are giving consent for the Agency or its selected agent to re-contact them. The contact data will only be used for research purposes and would only be handled by social research and IT Security staff.

**Dissemination and exploitation**

The FSA will disseminate findings internally and publish the report publicly with associated communication activities

**Quality**

It is desirable but not essential for tenderers to hold ISO 9000 - Quality management.[[3]](#footnote-3)

*Quality management considerations should be given as to whether any particular standards need to be met.*

*Please list all specific requirements and insert any specific links*

*Examples of standards can be found at:*

*If the project includes any mathematical modelling, the quality assurance considerations need to include how the work will meet the standards in the Aqua Book:*

[*https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-aqua-book-guidance-on-producing-quality-analysis-for-government*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-aqua-book-guidance-on-producing-quality-analysis-for-government)

*Will the ‘*[*Joint Code of Practice for Research’*](http://fsahome/how/science/Pages/JCoPR.aspx) *apply to your project?*

*https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-code-of-practice-for-research-jcopr*

**Further Information**

For any technical queries or issues regarding the use of ECMS please contact the eSourcing Helpdesk:

Phone: 0800 368 4850

Email: help@bravosolution.co.uk .

For any points of clarification regarding this specification or the FSA’s procurement procedures please submit through ECMS.

**Closing Date**

Tenders should be submitted on ECMS **by the date specified on ECMS.**

**Tenders received after this time will not be considered or evaluated.** **Please allow sufficient time to upload your tender and all supporting evidence before the closing date.**

**Notification of Submission of Tender**

On successfully submitting your tender you should see a popup box appear on the screen indicating that your tender has been successfully submitted. In addition you will receive an automatic email from ECMS with a reference code.

# EVALUATION OF TENDERS

# The Tenderers Application consists of the:

# Technical envelope (80% of overall value), in which applicants should detail the approach, the work plan and their ability to undertake the work, and

# Financial envelope (20% of overall value), in which applicants should outline all costs to conduct the proposed work, and

# Any other relevant supporting information

# Tenders will be evaluated by FSA internal appraisers and external experts using a numerical system. The table below shows the weightings that have been allocated to each section of the application form and these will be used by the appraisers:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TABLE 2. EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF SUCCESSFUL TENDERER** | |
| **CRITERIA** | **PERCENTAGE WEIGHTINGS** |
| TECHNICAL CRITERIA – **80% overall Value** | Made up of |
| 1. Tender summary and objectives, approach/scope of work, including innovation | 30% |
| 1. The plan and deliverables | 15% |
| 1. Organisational experience, expertise and staff effort | 15% |
| 1. Project management | 10% |
| 1. Risk management | 5% |
| 1. Quality management, ethics, data protection, dissemination and sustainability | 5% |
| FINANCIAL CRITERIA – **20% overall value** | 20% |

## The Technical Envelope

The Technical envelope is split in to 7 sections for evaluation. Guidance on how to complete each section is provided within the actual application form.

A numerical appraisal scoring system will be used to assess the information given in the Technical envelope of the tender. Appraisers will allocate a score of 0, 30, 60, 80 or 100 to each part of the Technical envelope, depending on the quality and relevance of evidence provided. The scores will then be subjected to the weightings given in Table 2.

All technical criteria will be evaluated as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| SCORE | DESCRIPTION FOR SCORE OF EACH CRITERIA |
| 100 | Tender fully meets or exceeds the criteria set |
| 80 | Tender would require minor modification but almost fully meets the criteria with only a few gaps in the evidence remaining |
| 60 | Tender would require some modification but addresses most of the criteria, but may not be detailed enough and/or has several gaps remaining |
| 30 | Tender would require significant modification due to significant gaps |
| 0 | Tender does not meet the specification or policy |

If the applicant does not reach a minimum score of 30 in the technical evaluation they will be automatically eliminated from the process.

## The Financial Envelope

The Financial envelope is split in to 5 sections. Guidance on how to complete each section is provided within the actual application form.

A numerical appraisal scoring system will be used to assess the information given in the financial envelope of the tender. Appraisers will allocate a score of 0, 30, 60, 80 or 100 to the financial envelope, depending on the quality and relevance of evidence provided. The scores will then be subjected to the weighting given in Table 2.

**Requirement for the financial envelope**

Please complete the Finance template provided. Costs should be quoted excluding VAT for the purpose of comparison of tenders. The Agency’s financial year runs from 1 April to 31 March. All costings should be recorded in line with this timescale.

**Evaluation of the financial envelope**

**Financial criteria will be evaluated as follows:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| SCORE | DESCRIPTION FOR SCORE OF THE CRITERIA |
| 100 | There is full justification for the costs and the overall resources are appropriate. The tender is the best value for money for the work proposed to meet the specific evidence requirement advertised |
| 80 | There is some justification for the costs and the overall resources requested. The tender is reasonable value for money for the work proposed to meet the specific evidence requirement advertised. |
| 60 | Limited rational is given for the resources requested and/or the tender does not offer very good value for money, but is not poor value |
| 30 | The tender is relatively poor value for money with little/no justification for costs or resources requested. |
| 0 | The tender costs are not considered value for money and the applicant provided no rationale for costs or resources requested |

1. <http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/ethics_guidance_tcm6-5782.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/iso31000.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/management-standards/iso_9000.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)