



# Invitation to Quote

**Invitation to Quote (ITQ) on behalf of UK Research and Innovation**

**Subject: Expert Advisory Services for ESRC's Education –  
Improving Outcomes Research Priority**

**Sourcing Reference Number: CS19429**

**UK Shared Business Services Ltd (UK SBS)**  
[www.uksbs.co.uk](http://www.uksbs.co.uk)

Registered in England and Wales as a limited company. Company Number 6330639.  
Registered Office Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 1FF  
VAT registration GB618 3673 25  
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Version 3.0

**UKSBS**  
*Shared Business Services*

## Table of Contents

Section	Content
1	<a href="#"><u>About UK Shared Business Services Ltd.</u></a>
2	<a href="#"><u>About the Contracting Authority</u></a>
3	<a href="#"><u>Working with the Contracting Authority.</u></a>
4	<a href="#"><u>Specification</u></a>
5	<a href="#"><u>Evaluation model</u></a>
6	<a href="#"><u>Evaluation questionnaire</u></a>
7	<a href="#"><u>General Information</u></a>
Appendix A	<a href="#"><u>UKRI Travel and Subsistence Policy</u></a>

# 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 our Contracting Authorities improve efficiency, generate savings and modernise.

It is our vision to become the leading service provider for the 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 Contracting Authorities 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.

Growing from a foundation of supporting the Research Councils, 2012/13 saw Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) 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)

### **Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)**

ESRC is the UK's largest funder of research on the social and economic questions facing us today. Their research shapes public policy and contributes to making the economy more competitive, as well as giving people a better understanding of 21st century society.

<https://esrc.ukri.org/>

## Section 3 - Working with the Contracting Authority

In this section you will find details of your Procurement contact point and the timescales relating to this opportunity.

Section 3 – Contact details		
3.1.	Contracting Authority Name and address	United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI) of Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1UJ
3.2.	Buyer name	Sophie Mumford
3.3.	Buyer contact details	<a href="mailto:ProfessionalServices@uksbs.co.uk">ProfessionalServices@uksbs.co.uk</a>
3.4.	Maximum value of the Opportunity	The total contract value shall not exceed £83,300.00 excluding 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. Guidance Notes to support the use of Delta eSourcing is 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 Issue of Contract Advert on Contracts Finder	Monday, 06 July 2020 Contracts Finder
3.7.	Latest date / time ITQ clarification questions shall be received through Delta eSourcing messaging system	Wednesday, 29 July 2020 14:00
3.8.	Latest date / time ITQ clarification answers should be sent to all Bidders by the Buyer through Delta eSourcing Portal	Friday, 31 July 2020
3.9.	Latest date and time ITQ Bid shall be submitted through Delta eSourcing	Monday, 10 August 2020 14:00
3.10.	Date/time Bidders should be available if Video Conferencing clarifications are required	Wednesday, 26 August 2020
3.11.	Anticipated notification date of successful and unsuccessful Bids	Monday, 14 September 2020
3.12.	Anticipated Contract Award date	Friday, 18 September 2020
3.13.	Anticipated Contract Start date	Thursday, 01 October 2020
3.14.	Anticipated Contract End date	Thursday, 30 September 2021
3.15.	Bid Validity Period	60 Days

## Section 4 – Specification

### 1. Introduction and Background to the Requirement

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) is part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), which brings together the UK's seven research councils, Innovate UK and Research England to create the best environment for research and innovation to flourish. Its vision is to ensure that the UK maintains its world-leading position in research and innovation.

ESRC is the UK's largest funder of research on economic and social issues, supporting world-class research advancing the frontiers of social science and contributing to a more prosperous economy, more effective public services and a more sustainable, healthy and secure society.

There is a specific commitment to research focused on Education – ESRC's Delivery Plan 2019<sup>1</sup> sets out a number of research and innovation priority areas where it will be investing in the short and longer term, with one of the themes being research that contributes to designing and delivering the next generation of public services. As stated in the Delivery Plan:

*Future investments in education will build new, interdisciplinary research capacity within two interrelated strands:*

- *Teaching and learning, focusing on: teacher training, supply and retention; what constitutes effective training in the science of learning, for whom and in what contexts; initial teacher education and ongoing professional education; the impact of different routes into teaching; and how to build research literacy and engagement with teachers.*
- *Technology for teaching and learning, focusing on how students, teachers and carers can improve learning with technology and how teachers' professional development can support this.*

The education research landscape is complex, incorporating a wide range of theoretical and methodological approaches and a range of stakeholders with different interests. Against this backdrop ESRC is seeking to commission expert advice and intellectual leadership to deliver an evidence base to inform and support ESRC's future commissioning activity in the priority area of Education: Improving Outcomes.

The contract deliverables will be achieved through scoping work, as well as other activities including stakeholder engagement, resulting in a report to the ESRC.

The aim of this contract will be to help the ESRC identify specific gaps and opportunities in its portfolio, and to design and implement funding schemes in this priority area. Key challenges that need to be engaged with as part of this activity include considering how best to build capacity, pursue interdisciplinarity, exploit large data innovations, engage with practitioners and policy makers in education, and achieve impact.

We envisage that this expert advice will be provided by a senior specialist with an internationally recognised publication record in education research, strong relevant policy and practice expertise and an understanding, and appreciation of the need for an interdisciplinary approach, and with existing networks with key stakeholders in academia, public sector, and civil society.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ukri.org/files/about/dps/esrc-dp-2019/>

## 2. Aims and Objectives

The overarching aim of the project is to provide the ESRC with the intellectual leadership, evidence, advice and support towards the successful delivery of the 'Education: Improving Outcomes' Priority, set out in ESRC's 2019 Delivery Plan.

The key objectives are to:

- To fully scope the 'Education: Improving Outcomes' Priority set out in the ESRC's 2019 Delivery Plan with a view to make evidence-based recommendations for a funding opportunity to be announced by the ESRC in 2021/22. Ultimately, the funding opportunity should be for an innovative, cross-disciplinary, policy and practice relevant programme of academic research. The scoping exercise should consider this bigger picture and should, therefore, seek to:
  - Review the relevant academic and non-academic research and policy literature (e.g. government reports, research by independent research organisations), with a focus on the areas described in the delivery plan, to identify opportunities and gaps. The review should consider the various theoretical, methodological and relevant policy approaches possible; the data landscape; and the existing ESRC portfolio of investments in education research and knowledge mobilisation activities (information about all UKRI investments including ESRC's can be accessed via UKRI's portal of publicly funded research (<https://qtr.ukri.org>))
  - Gather and analyse the views, experiences and recommendations of a range of key stakeholders in academia, government and practice, in the public, private and not for profit sector focussing on the areas of education research identified by the priority, to understand challenges and opportunities ahead regarding innovation, capacity building, cross-disciplinarity and impact.
- Following the outcomes and recommendations of the scoping exercises and in close collaboration with the ESRC, to provide intellectual leadership regarding two key activities:
  - the development of commissioning opportunities to utilise ESRC's allocated funding for this priority in 2021/22.
  - the leverage of additional funding from other funding sources, via engagement with other funders and in collaboration with the ESRC.

## 3. Scope

The sectors in scope for this exercise are:

- Academia with a focus on those departments or schools that deliver research and teaching on education in the UK
- Central and local government with a focus on those that develop or deliver education research and policy
- Organisations that represent the interests of teachers and other practitioners within the UK educational system
- Other funders and learned societies that are active in education research, policy and practice
- Private sector organisations where their contributions affect the delivery of education practice (e.g. technological advances)



#### 4. Requirement

**We invite prospective bidders to outline their proposed methodology** for the project.

**Bidders should assume that they will undertake all of the scoping activities via virtual means in light of travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.**

ESRC envisage the project including:

- Undertaking reviews of the relevant (i) research, (ii) policy, (iii) data landscapes and (iv) ESRC/UKRI portfolio of investments in specific areas as agreed with ESRC to identify research, policy, and practice gaps and opportunities.
- Designing and delivering stakeholder engagement via expert interviews and/or workshops with academic and user communities, including policy makers and practitioners, to identify user needs and to ensure that these inform the scope and any implementation activities for the 'Education: Improving Outcomes' priority. It will be the successful supplier's responsibility to identify and engage with the key stakeholders, working closely with the ESRC Office throughout this process.
- Identifying opportunities for additional funding to be leveraged for ESRC to expand and maximise the potential scale and impact of the priority.
- Supporting the development and design of commissioning options and the establishment of peer review and expert panels to commission the 'Education: Improving Outcomes' priority;
- Providing ad hoc advice and other relevant activities as requested by ESRC in relation to the 'Education: Improving Outcomes' priority.

This role may also:

- Drive the development of proposals for UKRI collective funds to enhance the funding for the priority area already allocated from the ESRC budget.

The successful bidder will be expected to work closely and collaboratively with relevant teams in ESRC, primarily with the Work, Education and Skills (WES) team responsible for the delivery of this priority area, as well as with other teams as needed (e.g., Data and Infrastructure and Skills and Methods). This will require regular meetings and on-going liaison with ESRC's Strategic Lead for Work, Education and Skills, the portfolio lead for education as well as other senior ESRC staff. These more informal and regular interactions will be of fundamental importance: catalysing activities, sharing information and mutual 'professional knowledge' and delivering the key objectives outlined above.

**Due to COVID-19 restrictions, ESRC envisage that all interactions with ESRC staff will initially take place via videoconferencing, moving to face-to-face meetings should changes to Government guidelines allow this.**

The successful applicant will commit a significant proportion of time to this role. If it is feasible given COVID-19 restrictions, the applicant will spend at least one day every two weeks in ESRC's Swindon office (Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1UJ). All travel related expenses will be charged in alignment with the UKRI Travel and Subsistence policy (Appendix A). They will be expected to have at least quarterly formal meetings with the Director of Research and the relevant Strategic Lead to review progress and to provide ESRC with input and advice in a timely manner when requested.

The project deliverables are as follows:

- A stakeholder engagement strategy and plan identifying key aims as per the objectives and including key stakeholders from funders, academic, policy and practice communities – to be agreed with the ESRC.

- Delivering appropriate activities required for scoping the priority (e.g. expert interviews, workshops, etc. via virtual means given COVID-19 restrictions to travel and work arrangements). An initial meeting will take place between ESRC and the successful supplier to finalise methods and plans.
- A concise report to disseminate the findings from the literature review, portfolio analysis and evidence gathering from stakeholders. The format of the report can be agreed during the course of the contract but must include the methodological approach used to collect and analyse data, the findings and actionable recommendations to inform ESRC's future funding for the 'Education: Improving Outcomes' priority. The report will be submitted to the Director of Research for approval and sign-off.
- A written description of the priority area which is a culmination of all scoping and stakeholder engagement activity and can form the basis of future funding call(s).
- Regular (minimum of once per month) update reports to ESRC required in line with agreed plans to include:
  - Updates on engagement activities
  - Progress on exploration, prioritisation and development of new partnerships for ESRC (other funders, policy and practice organisations)
  - Progress on scoping activities for the priority
- A day spent at the ESRC Office (Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1UJ or virtually as appropriate) once every two weeks to discuss progress and next steps and to provide advice as needed, allowing for COVID-19 restrictions to travel and work arrangements
- Participating or leading in meetings, agreed with the ESRC, to secure co-funding for the priority from partner funder organisations
- As deemed appropriate in discussion with ESRC, deliver co-developed funding bids (e.g. UKRI cross cutting funds or other partners)

It is expected that the work will take place between October 2020 and September 2021 with deadlines for outputs as follows:

- Report with findings, recommendations for commissioning and a two-pages written description of the priority area which is a culmination of all scoping and stakeholder engagement activity and can form the basis of future funding call(s), by 30 March 2021;
- Participating or leading in meetings, agreed with ESRC, to secure additional funding for the priority during the duration of the contract.

Please note that should successful applicants wish to be involved in future research calls under the Education priority, ESRC will ensure that their advisory role is carefully managed so that a level playing field is maintained among applicants to future research calls.

### **Oversight of the project**

The project will be overseen by a small internal group including ESRC's Director of Research and the Deputy Director of Research with responsibility for ESRC's investments in education research. The successful bidder is expected to meet with the group, report progress and discuss next steps during the fortnightly meetings (to take place at the UKRI-

ESRC Swindon office or virtually as appropriate, given COVID-19 restrictions). Meetings will be planned around the site visits of the supplier.

### **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

The evaluation model below shall be used for this ITQ, which will be determined to two decimal places.

Where a question is 'for information only' it will not be scored.

The evaluation team may comprise staff from UK SBS and the Contracting Authority and any specific external stakeholders the Contracting Authority deems required.

The evaluation and if required team may comprise staff from UK SBS and the Contracting Authority and any specific external stakeholders the Contracting Authority deems required. After evaluation and if required moderation scores will be finalised by performing a calculation to identify (at question level) the mean average of all evaluators (Example – a question is scored by three evaluators and judged as scoring 5, 5 and 6. These scores will be added together and divided by the number of evaluators to produce the final score of 5.33 ( $5+5+6=16 \div 3 = 5.33$ ))

Pass / Fail criteria		
Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject
Commercial	SEL1.2	Employment breaches/ Equality
Commercial	SEL1.3	Compliance to Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act
Commercial	SEL2.10	Cyber Essentials
Commercial	SEL2.12	General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Act and the Data Protection Act 2018
Commercial	FOI1.1	Freedom of Information
Commercial	AW1.1	Form of Bid
Commercial	AW1.3	Certificate of Bona Fide Bid
Commercial	AW3.1	Validation check
Commercial	AW4.1	Compliance to the Contract Terms
Commercial	AW4.2	Changes to the Contract Terms
Price	AW5.1	Maximum Budget
Quality	AW6.1	Compliance to the Specification
Quality	AW6.2	Variable Bids
-	-	Invitation to Quote – received on time within e-sourcing tool
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 any of the Award stage scoring methodology or Mandatory pass / fail criteria.		

## 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 ITQ. 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%
Quality	PROJ1.1	Approach and Methodology	35%
Quality	PROJ1.2	Understanding and Expertise	30%
Quality	PROJ1.3	Project Plan and Timetable	25%

## Evaluation of criteria

### Non-Price elements

Each question will be judged 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 selection 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.
<p>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:</p> <p><b>Example</b>  Evaluator 1 scored your bid as 60  Evaluator 2 scored your bid as 60  Evaluator 3 scored your bid as 40  Evaluator 4 scored your bid as 40  Your final score will <math>(60+60+40+40) \div 4 = 50</math></p>	
<b>Price elements</b> will be judged on the following criteria.	
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 <math>(80/100 \times 50 = 40)</math></p> <p>The lowest score possible is 0 even if the price submitted is more than 100% greater than the lowest price.</p>	

## Evaluation process

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>ITQ logged upon opening in alignment with UK SBS's procurement procedures.</li> <li>Any ITQ Bid received after the closing date will be rejected unless circumstances attributed to the Contracting Authority or the e-sourcing tool beyond the bidder control are responsible for late submission.</li> </ul>
Compliance check	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check all Mandatory requirements are acceptable to the Contracting Authority.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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 Selection 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There shall be moderation meeting(s) between the evaluators to agree clarification questions</li> <li>To agree final scoring for each Bid and relative rankings of the Bids.</li> </ul>
Validation of unsuccessful Bidders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To confirm contents of the letters to provide details of scoring</li> </ul>

## **Section 6 – Evaluation questionnaire**

Bidders should note that the evaluation questionnaire is located within the **e-sourcing questionnaire**.

Guidance on completion of the questionnaire 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

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

#### DO:

- 7.1 Do comply with Procurement document instructions. Failure to do so may lead to disqualification.
- 7.2 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 ITQ 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
- 7.3 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.
- 7.4 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.
- 7.5 Do ensure you utilise the Delta eSourcing messaging system to raise any clarifications to our ITQ. 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
- 7.6 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.
- 7.7 Do consider who the Contracting Authority is and what they want – a generic answer does not necessarily meet every Contracting Authority's needs.
- 7.8 Do reference your documents correctly, specifically where supporting documentation is requested e.g. referencing the question/s they apply to.
- 7.9 Do provide clear, concise and ideally generic contact details; telephone numbers, e-mails and fax details.
- 7.10 Do complete all questions in the questionnaire or we may reject your Bid.
- 7.11 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.
- 7.12 Do check and recheck your Bid before dispatch.

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

### DO NOT

- 7.13 Do not cut and paste from a previous document and forget to change the previous details such as the previous buyer's name.
- 7.14 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.
- 7.15 Do not share the Procurement documents, they are confidential and should not be shared with anyone without the Buyers written permission.
- 7.16 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.
- 7.17 Do not contact any UK SBS staff or the Contracting Authority staff without the Buyers written permission or we may reject your Bid.
- 7.18 Do not collude to fix or adjust the price or withdraw your Bid with another Party as we will reject your Bid.
- 7.19 Do not offer UK SBS or the Contracting Authority staff any inducement or we will reject your Bid.
- 7.20 Do not seek changes to the Bid after responses have been submitted and the deadline for Bids to be submitted has passed.
- 7.21 Do not cross reference answers to external websites or other parts of your Bid, the cross references and website links will not be considered.
- 7.22 Do not exceed word counts, the additional words will not be considered.
- 7.23 Do not make your Bid conditional on acceptance of your own Terms of Contract, as your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.24 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.

## Some additional guidance notes

- 7.25 All enquiries with respect to access to the e-sourcing tool and problems with functionality within the tool must be submitted to Delta eSourcing, Telephone 0845 270 7050
- 7.26 Bidders will be specifically advised where attachments are permissible to support a question response within the e-sourcing tool. Where they are not permissible any attachments submitted will not be considered as part of the evaluation process.
- 7.27 Question numbering is not sequential and all questions which require submission are included in the Section 6 Evaluation Questionnaire.
- 7.28 Any Contract offered may not guarantee any volume of work or any exclusivity of supply.
- 7.29 We do not guarantee to award any Contract as a result of this procurement
- 7.30 All documents issued or received in relation to this procurement shall be the property of the Contracting Authority / UKSBS.
- 7.31 We can amend any part of the procurement documents at any time prior to the latest date / time Bids shall be submitted through the Delta eSourcing Portal.
- 7.32 If you are a Consortium you must provide details of the Consortiums structure.
- 7.33 Bidders will be expected to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, or your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.34 Bidders should note the Government's transparency agenda requires your Bid and any Contract entered into to be published on a designated, publicly searchable web site. By submitting a response to this ITQ Bidders are agreeing that their Bid and Contract may be made public
- 7.35 Your bid will be valid for 60 days or your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.36 Bidders may only amend the contract terms during the clarification period only, only if you can demonstrate there is a legal or statutory reason why you cannot accept them. If you request changes to the Contract terms without such grounds and the Contracting Authority fail to accept your legal or statutory reason is reasonably justified, we may reject your Bid.
- 7.37 We will let you know the outcome of your Bid evaluation and where requested will provide a written debrief of the relative strengths and weaknesses of your Bid.
- 7.38 If you fail mandatory pass / fail criteria we will reject your Bid.
- 7.39 Bidders are required to use IE8, IE9, Chrome or Firefox in order to access the functionality of the Delta eSourcing Portal.
- 7.40 Bidders should note that if they are successful with their proposal the Contracting Authority reserves the right to ask additional compliancy checks prior to the award of

any Contract. In the event of a Bidder failing to meet one of the compliancy checks the Contracting Authority may decline to proceed with the award of the Contract to the successful Bidder.

- 7.41 All timescales are set using a 24-hour clock and are based on British Summer Time or Greenwich Mean Time, depending on which applies at the point when Date and Time Bids shall be submitted through the Delta eSourcing Portal.
- 7.42 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. The information will not be disclosed outside Government. Bidders taking part in this ITQ consent to these terms as part of the competition process.

- 7.43 The Government introduced its new Government Security Classifications (GSC) classification scheme on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014 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. The link below to the Gov.uk website provides information on the new GSC:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-security-classifications>

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to amend any security related term or condition of the draft contract accompanying this ITQ to reflect any changes introduced by the GSC. In particular where this ITQ 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](#)
- [Equalities Act introduction](#)
- [Bribery Act introduction](#)
- [Freedom of information Act](#)

## Appendix A – UKRI Travel and Subsistence Policy



### Contents:

- Policy Statement
  - Management Statement
  - References
  - Version control
1. [Summary](#)
  2. [Principles](#)
  3. [Delegation](#)
  4. [Claims procedures](#)
  5. [How to claim reimbursement](#)
  6. [Travel claims](#)
  7. [Accommodation claims](#)
  8. [Claimants with disabilities](#)
  9. [Disclosure of information in relation to expenses claimed](#)
  10. [Reimbursement of expenses by other organisations](#)

### Appendices:

- A. [Transport claims](#)
- B. [Overseas travel](#)
- C. [Accommodation](#)
- D. [Subsistence](#)