

## PS22196 Fake reviews research

### - S1 PRECEDENT CONTRACT FOR THE PURCHASE OF SUPPLIES

#### SECTION A

**This Contract** is dated      Wednesday 17th August 2022.

#### Parties

- (1) **The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0EF (The Contracting Authority).**
- (2) **ALMA Economics Limited, 43 Tanner Street, London, SE1 3PL**, a company incorporated and registered in the United Kingdom with company number 09391354 and registered VAT number GB 208923405 whose registered office is at 43 Tanner Street, London, SE1 3PL (**the Supplier**).

#### Background

The Contracting Authority wishes the Supplier to supply, and the Supplier wishes to supply, the Supplies (as defined below) in accordance with the terms of the Contract (as defined below).

#### Agreed terms

##### A1 Interpretation

A1-1 **Definitions.** In the Contract (as defined below), the following definitions apply:

**Agent:** Where UK Shared Business Services is not the named Contracting Authority is Parties (1), UK SBS has been nominated as agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority and therefore all communications both written and verbal will be received as issued by the Contracting Authority.

**Associated Bodies and Authorised Entities:** Associated Bodies and Authorised Entities include but are not limited to The Science and Technology Facilities Council, The Medical Research Council, The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, The Economic and Social Research Council, The Natural Environment Research Council, The Arts and Humanities Research Council, The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, UK SBS Ltd, Central Government Departments and their Agencies, Non Departmental Public Bodies, NHS bodies, Local Authorities, Voluntary Sector Charities, and/or other private organisations acting as managing agents or procuring on behalf of these UK bodies. Further details of these organisations can be found at:

<http://www.uksbs.co.uk/services/procure/contracts/Pages/default.aspx>

**Business Day:** a day (other than a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday) when banks in London are open for business.

**Charges:** the charges payable by the Contracting Authority for the supply of the Services in accordance with clause B4.

**Commencement:** the date and any specified time that the Contract starts

**Conditions:** the terms and conditions set out in this document as amended from time to time in accordance with clause C7-11.

**Confidential Information:** any confidential information, know-how and data (in any form or medium) which relates to UK SBS, the Contracting Authority or the Supplier, including information relating to the businesses of UK SBS, the Contracting Authority or the Supplier and information relating to their staff, finances, policies and procedures. This includes information identified as confidential in the Order or the Special Conditions (if any).

**Contract:** the contract between the Contracting Authority and the Supplier for the sale and purchase of the Supplies, in accordance with these Conditions, any Special

Conditions and the Order only.

**Contracting Authority:** The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy as specified at Section A (1) and any replacement or successor organisation.

**Deliverables:** all Documents, products and materials developed by the Supplier or its agents, contractors and employees as part of or in relation to the Services in any form, including computer programs, data, reports and specifications (including drafts).

**Delivery Date:** the date or dates for delivery of the Supplies specified in the Order or, if no such date is specified, within 28 days of the date of the Order.

**Delivery Location:** has the meaning set out in clause B2-2-3.

**Delivery Note:** has the meaning set out in clause B2-1-2.

**EIR:** 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.

**FOIA:** The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and any subordinate legislation made under the 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.

**GDPR:** The General Data Protection Regulations as amended from time to time

**Information:** has the meaning given under section 84 of FOIA.

**Order:** the Contracting Authorities order for the Supplies and/or associated Services necessary as part of the provision of the Supplies, as set out in the Contracting Authorities completed purchase order form (including any Specification) which is in the format of the pro forma order form attached at 0. For the avoidance of doubt, if the Contracting Authorities purchase order form is not in the format of the pro forma order form at 0, it will not constitute an Order.

**Public Body:** any part of the government of the United Kingdom including but not limited to the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive Committee, the Scottish Executive and the National Assembly for Wales, local authorities, government ministers and government departments and government agencies.

**Request for Information:** a request for Information or an apparent request under FOIA or EIR.

**Services:** The Services, including without limitation any Deliverables required to deliver the Supplies, provided by the Supplier under the Contract as set out in the Order

**Scheme Effective Date:** the date on which the United Kingdom Research and Innovation become a legal entity.

**Special Conditions:** the special conditions (if any) set out in Schedule 1.

**Specification:** any specification for the Supplies, including any related plans and drawings that is supplied to the Supplier by the Contracting Authority, or produced by the Supplier and agreed in writing by the Contracting Authority.

**Supplier or Suppliers:** the parties to the contract as named in Section A (2)

**Supplies:** any such thing that the Supplier is required to Deliver, that is not Services or Deliverables.

**Supplier's Associate:** any individual or entity associated with the Supplier including, without limitation, the Supplier's subsidiary, affiliated or holding companies and any employees, agents or contractors of the Supplier and / or its subsidiary, affiliated or holding companies or any entity that provides Services or associated Supplies

necessary as part of the provision of the Services, for or on behalf of the Supplier.

**UKRI:** UK Research and Innovation, established as a body corporate in accordance with the Higher Education and Research Act 2017.

**UK SBS:** UK Shared Business Services Limited (a limited company registered in England and Wales with company number 06330639). Where UK SBS is not named as the Contracting Authority within section A (1), UK SBS will be acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority.

**Working Day:** any Business Day excluding 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31 December in any year.

- A1-2 **Construction.** In the Contract, unless the context requires otherwise, the following rules apply:
- A1-2-1 A **person** includes a natural person, corporate or unincorporated body (whether or not having separate legal personality).
- A1-2-2 A reference to a party includes its personal representatives, successors or permitted assigns.
- A1-2-3 A reference to a statute or statutory provision is a reference to such statute or provision as amended or re-enacted. A reference to a statute or statutory provision includes any subordinate legislation made under that statute or statutory provision, as amended or re-enacted.
- A1-2-4 Any phrase introduced by the terms **including, include, in particular** or any similar expression shall be construed as illustrative and shall not limit the sense of the words preceding those terms.
- A1-2-5 The headings in these Conditions are for ease of reference only and do not affect the interpretation or construction of the Contract.
- A1-2-6 A reference to **writing** or **written** includes faxes and e-mails.

## **A2 Termination**

- A2-1 The Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority may terminate, the Contract in whole or in part at any time before delivery with immediate effect by giving the Supplier written notice, whereupon the Supplier shall discontinue all work on the Contract. The Contracting Authority shall pay the Supplier fair and reasonable compensation for work-in-progress at the time of termination, but such compensation shall not include loss of anticipated profits or any consequential loss. The Supplier shall have a duty to mitigate its costs and shall on request provide proof of expenditure for any compensation claimed.
- A2-2 The Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority may terminate the Contract with immediate effect by giving written notice to the Supplier if:
- A2-2-1 the circumstances set out in clauses B3-1-1, C3-1 or C4-1 apply;
- A2-2-2 the Supplier breaches any term of the Contract and (if such breach is remediable) fails to remedy that breach within [30] days of being notified in writing of the breach; or
- A2-2-3 the Supplier suspends, or threatens to suspend, payment of its debts or is unable to pay its debts as they fall due or admits inability to pay its debts or (being a company) is deemed unable to pay its debts within the meaning of section 123 of the Insolvency Act 1986, or (being an individual) is deemed either unable to pay its debts or as having no reasonable prospect of so doing, in either case, within the meaning of section 268 of the Insolvency Act 1986, or (being a partnership) has any partner to whom any of the foregoing apply; or
- A2-2-4 the Supplier commences negotiations with all or any class of its creditors with a view to rescheduling any of its debts, or makes a proposal for or enters into any compromise or

arrangement with its creditors; or

A2-2-5 (being a company) a petition is filed, a notice is given, a resolution is passed, or an order is made, for or in connection with the winding up of the Supplier; or

A2-2-6 (being an individual) the Supplier is the subject of a bankruptcy petition or order; or

A2-2-7 a creditor or encumbrancer of the Supplier attaches or takes possession of, or a distress, execution, sequestration or other such process is levied or enforced on or sued against, the whole or any part of its assets and such attachment or process is not discharged within 14 days; or

A2-2-8 (being a company) an application is made to court, or an order is made, for the appointment of an administrator or if a notice of intention to appoint an administrator is given or if an administrator is appointed over the Supplier; or

A2-2-9 (being a company) a floating charge holder over the Supplier's assets has become entitled to appoint or has appointed an administrative receiver; or

A2-2-10 a person becomes entitled to appoint a receiver over the Supplier's assets or a receiver is appointed over the Supplier's assets; or

A2-2-11 any event occurs, or proceeding is taken, with respect to the Supplier in any jurisdiction to which it is subject that has an effect equivalent or similar to any of the events mentioned in clause A2-2-3 to clause A2-2-10 inclusive; or

A2-2-12 there is a change of control of the Supplier (within the meaning of section 1124 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010); or

A2-2-13 the Supplier suspends, or threatens to suspend, or ceases or threatens to cease to carry on, all or substantially the whole of its business; or

A2-2-14 the Supplier's financial position deteriorates to such an extent that in the Contracting Authorities opinion the Supplier's capability to adequately fulfil its obligations under the Contract has been placed in jeopardy; or

A2-2-15 (Being an individual) the Supplier dies or, by reason of illness or incapacity (whether mental or physical), is incapable of managing his or her own affairs or becomes a patient under any mental health legislation.

A2-3 Termination of the Contract, however arising, shall not affect any of the parties' rights and remedies that have accrued as at termination. Clauses which expressly or by implication survive termination or expiry of the Contract shall continue in full force and effect.

A2-4 Without prejudice to clause A2-3, clauses B1, B2, B3, B4, B6, B7, B8, C1, C2, C3, C4, C6 and C7 shall survive the termination or expiry of the Contract and shall continue in full force and effect.

A2-5 Upon termination or expiry of the Contract, the Supplier shall immediately:

A2-5-1 cease all work on the Contract;

A2-5-2 deliver to the Contracting Authority all Supplies which are ready for delivery (upon election from the Contracting Authorities or UK SBS's acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority's);

A2-5-3 cease use of and return (or, at the Contracting Authorities or UK SBS's acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority's election, destroy) all of the Contracting Authorities Materials in the Supplier's possession or control; and

A2-5-4 Cease all use of, and delete all copies of, the Contracting Authorities or UK SBS's confidential information.

## Section B

### B1 The Supplies

- B1-1 The Supplier shall supply all Supplies in accordance with the Contract. In particular, the Supplier warrants that the Supplies shall:
- B1-1-1 correspond with their description in the Order (including any Special Conditions and any applicable Specification);
  - B1-1-2 be of satisfactory quality (within the meaning of the Sale of Goods Act 1979, as amended) and fit for any purpose held out by the Supplier or made known to the Supplier by the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority, expressly or by implication, and in this respect the Contracting Authority relies on the Supplier's skill and judgement;
  - B1-1-3 where applicable, be free from defects in design, material and workmanship and remain so for 12 months after delivery;
  - B1-1-4 comply with all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements relating to the manufacture, labeling, packaging, storage, handling and delivery of the Supplies;
  - B1-1-5 be supplied in accordance with all applicable legislation in force from time to time; and
  - B1-1-6 Be destined for supply into, and fully compliant for use in, the United Kingdom (unless specifically stated otherwise in the Order).
- B1-2 The Supplier shall ensure that at all times it has and maintains all the licences, permissions, authorisations, consents and permits that it needs to carry out its obligations under the Contract.
- B1-3 The Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority shall have the right to inspect and test the Supplies at any time before delivery.
- B1-4 If following such inspection or testing the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority considers that the Supplies do not conform or are unlikely to comply with the Supplier's undertakings at clause B1-1, the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority shall inform the Supplier and the Supplier shall immediately take such remedial action as is necessary to ensure compliance.
- B1-5 Notwithstanding any such inspection or testing, the Supplier shall remain fully responsible for the Supplies and any such inspection or testing shall not reduce or otherwise affect the Supplier's obligations under the Contract, and the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority shall have the right to conduct further inspections and tests after the Supplier has carried out its remedial actions.
- B1-6 The Contracting Authorities rights under the Contract are without prejudice to and in addition to the statutory terms implied in favour of the Contracting Authority under the Sale of Supplies Act 1979, the Supply of Goods and Services Act 1982 and any other applicable legislation as amended.

### B2 Delivery

- B2-1 The Supplier shall ensure that:
- B2-1-1 the Supplies are properly packed and secured in such manner as to enable them to reach their destination in good condition;
  - B2-1-2 each delivery of the Supplies is accompanied by a delivery note which shows the date of the Order, the Order number (if any), the type and quantity of the Supplies (including the code number of the Supplies, where applicable), special storage instructions (if any) and, if the Supplies are being delivered by instalments, the

outstanding balance of Supplies remaining to be delivered (the **Delivery Note**); and

- B2-1-3 If the Supplier requires the Contracting Authority to return any packaging material to the Supplier, that fact is clearly stated on the Delivery Note. Any such packaging material shall be returned to the Supplier at the Supplier's cost.
- B2-2 The Supplier shall deliver the Supplies:
- B2-2-1 on the Delivery Date;
  - B2-2-2 carriage paid;
  - B2-2-3 to the location or locations as is or are set out in the Order, or as instructed by the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority in writing prior to delivery (the **Delivery Location**);
  - B2-2-4 during the Contracting Authorities normal business hours on a Working Day, or as instructed by the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority.
- B2-3 Delivery of the Supplies shall be completed on the completion of unloading the Supplies at the Delivery Location and in accordance with the provisions of this clause B2. The Supplier will unload the Supplies at its own risk as directed by the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority. The Supplies will remain at the risk of the Supplier until delivery to the Contracting Authority (including unloading) is complete, including that the Supplier has obtained sign-off of the Delivery Note by or on behalf of the Contracting Authority, at which point ownership of the Supplies shall transfer to the Contracting Authority.
- B2-4 If the Supplier delivers to the Contracting Authority more than the quantity of Supplies ordered, the Contracting Authority will not be bound to pay for the excess and any excess will remain at the Supplier's risk and will be returnable to the Supplier at the Supplier's expense.
- B2-5 If the Supplier delivers more or less than the quantity of Supplies ordered, and the Contracting Authority accepts the delivery, a pro rata adjustment shall be made to the invoice for the Supplies.
- B2-6 The Supplier shall not deliver the Supplies in instalments without the prior written consent from the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority. Where it is agreed that the Supplies are to be delivered in instalments, they may be invoiced and paid for separately. However, failure by the Supplier to deliver any one instalment on time, or at all, or any defect in an instalment, shall entitle the Contracting Authority to the remedies set out in clause B3.
- B2-7 The Supplier shall:
- B2-7-1 obtain, at its risk and expense, any export and import licences or other authorisations necessary for the export and import of the Supplies and their transit through any country or territory; and
  - B2-7-2 Deal with all customs formalities necessary for the export, import and transit of the Supplies, and will bear the costs of complying with those formalities and all duties, taxes and other charges payable for export, import and transit.
- B2-8 Without prejudice to the Contracting Authorities statutory rights, the Contracting Authority will not be deemed to have accepted any Supplies until the Contracting Authority has had at least [14 Working Days] after delivery to inspect them and the Contracting Authority also has the right to reject any Supplies as though they had not been accepted for [14 Working Days] after any latent defect in the Supplies has become apparent.
- B2-9 If, in connection with the supply of the Supplies, the Contracting Authority permits any employees or representatives of the Supplier to have access to any of the Contracting Authorities premises, the Supplier will ensure that, whilst on the Contracting Authorities

premises, the Supplier's employees and representatives comply with:

B2-9-1 all applicable health and safety, security, environmental and other legislation which may be in force from time to time; and

B2-9-2 any Contracting Authority policy, regulation, code of practice or instruction relating to health and safety, security, the environment or access to and use of any Contracting Authority laboratory, facility or equipment which is brought to their attention or given to them whilst they are on the Contracting Authorities premises by any employee or representative of the Contracting Authority.

### **B3 Remedies**

B3-1 If the Supplies, or any part of them, including any instalment(s), are not delivered on the Delivery Date, or do not comply with the undertakings set out in clause B1-1 or any requirements set out in the Special Conditions (if any), or the Supplier has otherwise not supplied the Supplies in accordance with, or the Supplier has failed to comply with, any of the terms of the Contract, then, without limiting any of its other rights or remedies, the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority shall have the right, at their discretion, to any one or more of the following remedies, whether or not it has accepted the Supplies or any part of them:

B3-1-1 to terminate the Contract in whole or in part without liability to the Supplier;

B3-1-2 at its discretion reject any of the Supplies which have been delivered by the Delivery Date and refuse to accept any subsequent delivery of Supplies that the Supplier attempts to make (and any such rejected Supplies shall be stored and are returnable at the Supplier's sole risk and expense);

B3-1-3 purchase substitute Supplies from elsewhere;

B3-1-4 accept late delivery of the Supplies;

B3-1-5 to require the Supplier to remedy any defect in, repair or replace the rejected Supplies, or to provide a full refund of the price of the rejected Supplies;

B3-1-6 to recover from the Supplier any costs incurred by the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority in obtaining substitute Supplies from a third party; and

B3-1-7 To claim damages for any other costs, loss or expenses incurred by the Contracting Authority or UK SBS whilst acting as the agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority, which are in any way attributable to the Supplier's failure to carry out its obligations under the Contract.

B3-2 These Conditions shall apply to any repaired or replacement Supplies supplied by the Supplier.

B3-3 The Supplier shall indemnify, and shall keep indemnified the Contracting Authority and UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority, in full and hold the Contracting Authority and UK SBS harmless against all claims, costs, expenses, damages and losses, whether direct or indirect (including loss of profits, loss of business, depletion of goodwill and similar losses), including any interest, penalties, and legal and other professional fees and expenses awarded against or incurred or paid by the Contracting Authority and UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority as a result of or in connection with:

B3-3-1 any claim made against the Contracting Authority or UK SBS for actual or alleged infringement of a third party's intellectual property rights arising out of, or in connection with, the manufacture, supply or use of the Supplies, to the extent that the claim is attributable to the acts or omissions of the Supplier, its employees, agents or subcontractors;

B3-3-2 any claim made against the Contracting Authority or UK SBS by a third party arising

out of, or in connection with, the supply of the Supplies, to the extent that such claim arises out of the breach, negligent performance or failure or delay in performance of the Contract by the Supplier, its employees, agents or subcontractors; and

B3-3-3 any claim made against the Contracting Authority or UK SBS by a third party for death, personal injury or damage to property arising out of, or in connection with, defects in Supplies, to the extent that the defect in the Supplies is attributable to the acts or omissions of the Supplier, its employees, agents or subcontractors.

This clause B3-3 shall survive termination or expiry of the Contract.

B3-4 The Contracting Authorities rights and remedies under these Conditions are in addition to its rights and remedies implied by statute and common law.

#### **B4 Title, Risk and Use**

B4-1 Title and risk in the Supplies shall pass to the Contracting Authority on completion of delivery.

B4-2 The Supplier warrants that it has full clear and unencumbered title to the Supplies and that upon completion of delivery the Supplier has full and unrestricted rights to sell and transfer absolutely all Supplies to the Contracting Authority.

#### **B5 Price and Payment**

B5-1 The price of the Supplies shall be the price set out in the Order.

B5-2 The price of the Supplies excludes amounts in respect of value added tax (VAT) or other applicable sales tax, but includes the costs of all materials, costs charges, expenses, packaging, insurance and carriage of the Supplies. No extra charges shall be effective unless agreed in writing and signed by or on behalf of the Contracting Authority.

B5-3 The Contracting Authority shall, on receipt of a valid VAT invoice from the Supplier, pay to the Supplier such additional amounts in respect of VAT as are chargeable on the supply of the Supplies at the statutory rate in force at the relevant time.

B5-4 The Supplier may invoice the Contracting Authority for the Supplies on or at any time after the completion of delivery.

B5-5 The Contracting Authority shall pay correctly rendered invoices within [30] days of receipt of the invoice. Payment shall be made to the bank account nominated in writing by the Supplier unless the Contracting Authority agrees in writing to another payment method.

B5-6 The Supplier shall not be entitled to assert any credit, set-off or counterclaim against the Contracting Authority in order to justify withholding payment of any such amount in whole or in part. The Contracting Authority may, without limiting any other rights or remedies it may have, set off any amount owed to it by the Supplier against any amounts payable by it to the Supplier under the Contract.

B5-7 The Supplier acknowledges and agrees that it will pay correctly rendered invoices from any of its suppliers or other sub-contractors within 30 days of receipt of the invoice.

For the avoidance of doubt, in any situations that the Contracting Authority is making payments to the Supplier without being presented with an invoice, the absence of an invoice does not waiver any obligation regarding payments made by the Supplier to its subcontractors or supply chain.

B5-8

The Supplier shall ensure, pursuant to the Governments payment objectives that it shall in its performance of this contract meet the standard required of

B5-9 The Supplier shall be obliged during its performance of the Contract to provide evidence



to the Contracting Authority that payments being made to its subcontractors or supply chain, by either of the following methods:

B5-9-1 information can be easily be obtained directly and free of charge by the Contracting Authority from a national database, with details provided by the Supplier on how the Contracting Authority may access this information at any time during the performance of the Contract when requested to do so by the Contracting Authority; or

B5-9-2 the information shall be provided to the Contracting Authority by email free of charge on frequency advised below, such as the supplier has a sufficiency of invoice volumes to do so and that the volumes of invoices handled by the Supplier accurately represents the assurance sought.

B5-10 The Supplier shall not be obliged to provide such above assurances to the Contracting Authority during the Contract by either of the above referred methods, in the following circumstances only:

B5-10-1 if the Supplier in its performance of the Contract does not at any time need to engage a subcontractor; or

B5-10-2 if the volumes of invoices processed by the Supplier in its performance of the Contract falls below the above required standard, due to the volumes of invoices processed by the Supplier, being particularly high or particularly low as measurement by percentage may distort the true picture. In such circumstances the Supplier shall suitably inform the Contracting Authority of either of these situations supported by a suitable declaration and supporting evidence in

For the avoidance of doubt, the Contracting Authority reserves the right at any time in considering the Suppliers submission or information secured via access to any national data base, to seek further explanation or declaration from the Supplier to ensure that payments meet the required obligations placed upon the Contracting Authority.

B5-11 The Supplier shall without reservation assist the Contracting Authority to the reasonable extent as is requested, to assist the Contracting Authority to secure these assurances during the Contract.

B5-12 In situations that the Contracting Authority is making payments to the Supplier without an Invoice, the absence of an invoice (e.g. timesheet submissions for services) does not waiver any obligation regarding payments made to the Suppliers subcontractors or supply chain.

## **B6 Contracting Authority Property**

B6-1 The Supplier acknowledges that all information (including confidential information), equipment and tools, drawings, specifications, data, software and any other materials supplied by the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority to the Supplier (**Contracting Authorities Materials**) and all rights in the Contracting Authorities Materials are and shall remain at all times the exclusive property of the Contracting Authority and or UK SBS (as appropriate). The Supplier shall keep the Contracting Authorities Materials in safe custody at its own risk, maintain them in good condition until returned to the Contracting Authority or UK SBS, and not dispose or use the same other than for the sole purpose of performing the Supplier's obligations under the Contract and in accordance with written instructions or authorisation from the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority.

B6-2 In respect of any Supplies that are transferred to the Contracting Authority under this Contract, including without limitation the Deliverables or any part of them, the Supplier warrants that it has full clear and unencumbered title to all such items, and that at the date of delivery of such items to the Contracting Authority, it will have full and unrestricted

rights to transfer all such items to the Contracting Authority

- B6-3 Save as otherwise provided in the Special Conditions, the Supplier assigns to the Contracting Authority, with full title guarantee and free from all third party rights, all Intellectual Property Rights in the products of the Services, including for the avoidance of doubt the Deliverables. Where those products or Deliverables incorporate any Intellectual Property Rights owned by or licensed to the Supplier which are not assigned under this clause, the Supplier grants to the Contracting Authority a worldwide, irrevocable, royalty-free, transferable licence, with the right to grant sub-licences, under those Intellectual Property Rights to maintain, repair, adapt, copy and use those products and Deliverables for any purpose
- B6-4 The Supplier shall obtain waivers of all moral rights in the products, including for the avoidance of doubt the Deliverables, of the Services to which any individual is now or may be at any future time entitled under Chapter IV of Part I of the Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 or any similar provisions of law in any jurisdiction
- B6-5 The Supplier shall, promptly at the request of the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority, do (or procure to be done) all such further acts and things and the execution of all such other documents as the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority may from time to time require for the purpose of securing for the Contracting Authority the full benefit of the Contract, including all right, title and interest in and to the Intellectual Property Rights assigned to the Contracting Authority in accordance with clause **Error! Reference source not found..**

## **B7 Insurance**

- B7-1 During the term of the Contract and for a period of 3 years thereafter, the Supplier shall maintain in force the following insurance policies with reputable insurance companies:
- B7-1-1 professional Indemnity insurance for not less than £ 2 million per claim;
  - B7-1-2 B8-1-2 public liability insurance for not less than £ 5 million per claim (unlimited claims); and
  - B7-1-3 B8-1-3 employer liability insurance for not less than £ 5 million per claim (unlimited claims); and
  - B7-1-4 The Supplier shall ensure that the Contracting Authority's interest is noted on each insurance policy, or that a generic interest clause has been included.
- B7-2 On request from the Contracting Authority's or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority, the Supplier shall provide the Contracting Authority or UK SBS with copies of the insurance policy certificates and details of the cover provided.
- B7-3 The Supplier shall ensure that any subcontractors also maintain adequate insurance having regard to the obligations under the Contract which they are contracted to fulfil.
- B7-4 The Supplier shall:
- B7-4-1 do nothing to invalidate any insurance policy or to prejudice the Contracting Authority's entitlement under it; and
  - B7-4-2 notify the Contracting Authority if any policy is (or will be) cancelled or its terms are (or will be) subject to any material change.
- B7-5 [If the Supplier fails or is unable to maintain insurance in accordance with clause B7-1, the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority may, so far as it is able, purchase such alternative insurance cover as it deems

to be reasonably necessary and shall be entitled to recover all reasonable costs and expenses it incurs in doing so from the Supplier.]

## **B8 Liability**

- B8-1 In this clause B8, a reference to the Contracting Authority or UK SBS's liability for something is a reference to any liability whatsoever which the Contracting Authority or UK SBS might have for it, its consequences, and any direct, indirect or consequential loss, damage, costs or expenses resulting from it or its consequences, whether the liability arises under the Contract, in tort or otherwise, and even if it results from the Contracting Authorities or UK SBS's negligence or from negligence for which the Contracting Authority or UK SBS would otherwise be liable.
- B8-2 The Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority is not in breach of the Contract, and neither the Contracting Authority nor UK SBS have any liability for anything, to the extent that the apparent breach or liability is attributable to the Supplier's breach of the Contract.
- B8-3 Subject to clause B8-6, neither the Contracting Authority nor UK SBS acting as agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority shall have any liability for:
- B8-3-1 any indirect or consequential loss or damage;
  - B8-3-2 any loss of business, rent, profit or anticipated savings;
  - B8-3-3 any damage to goodwill or reputation;
  - B8-3-4 loss, theft, damage or destruction to any equipment, tools, machinery, vehicles or other equipment brought onto the Contracting Authorities premises by or on behalf of the Supplier; or
  - B8-3-5 Any loss, damage, costs or expenses suffered or incurred by any third party.
- B8-4 Subject to clause B8-6, the Contracting Authority and UK SBS's total liability shall be limited to the price of the Supplies.
- B8-5 Subject to clause B8-6, the Supplier's total liability in connection with the Contract shall be limited to £ 1,000,000
- B8-6 Nothing in the Contract restricts either the Contracting Authority, UK SBS or the Supplier's liability for:
- B8-6-1 death or personal injury resulting from its negligence; or
  - B8-6-2 its fraud (including fraudulent misrepresentation); or
  - B8-6-3 Breach of any obligations as to title implied by Section 12 of the Sale of Goods Act 1979 or Section 2 of the Supply of Goods and Service Act 1982.
  - B8-6-4 Nothing in this contract restricts Supplier liability in regard to breaches of Intellectual Property or GDPR.

## **Section C**

### **C1 Confidential Information**

- C1-1 A party who receives Confidential Information shall keep in strict confidence (both during the term of the Contract and after its expiry or termination) all Confidential Information which is disclosed to it. That party shall only disclose such Confidential Information to those of its employees, agents or subcontractors who need to know the same for the purpose of discharging that party's obligations under the Contract, and shall ensure that such employees, agents or subcontractors shall keep all such information confidential in accordance with this clause C1. Neither party shall, without the prior written consent of the other party, disclose to any third party any Confidential Information, unless the information:

C1-1-1 was public knowledge or already known to that party at the time of disclosure; or  
 C1-1-2 subsequently becomes public knowledge other than by breach of the Contract; or  
 C1-1-3 subsequently comes lawfully into the possession of that party from a third party;  
 or

C1-1-4 is agreed by the parties not to be confidential or to be disclosable.

- C1-2 To the extent necessary to implement the provisions of the Contract (but not further or otherwise), either party may disclose the Confidential Information to any relevant governmental or other authority or regulatory body, provided that before any such disclosure that party shall make those persons aware of its obligations of confidentiality under the Contract and shall use reasonable endeavours to obtain a binding undertaking as to confidentiality from all such persons.
- C1-3 All documents and other records (in whatever form) containing Confidential Information supplied to or acquired by a party from the other party shall be returned promptly to the other party (or, at the election of the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority, destroyed) on expiry or termination of the Contract, and no copies shall be kept.

## **C2 Transparency**

- C2-1 The Supplier acknowledges that the United Kingdom Government's transparency agenda requires that contracts, such as the Contract, and any sourcing document, such as the invitation to sourcing, are published on a designated, publicly searchable website.
- C2-2 The Supplier acknowledges that, except for any information which is exempt from disclosure in accordance with the provisions of FOIA, the content of the Contract is not Confidential Information. The Contracting Authority and or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority shall be responsible for determining in their absolute discretion whether any of the content of the Contract is exempt from disclosure in accordance with the provisions of FOIA.
- C2-3 Notwithstanding any other term of the Contract, the Supplier hereby consents to the Contracting Authority and or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority publishing the Contract in its entirety, (but with any information which is exempt from disclosure in accordance with the provisions of FOIA redacted) including from time to time agreed changes to the Contract, to the general public.

## **C2**

If any of the situations in C2-2-1, C2-2-2, C2-2-3 apply the Supplier consents to the Contract or sourcing documents being redacted by the Contracting Authority to the extent necessary to remove or obscure the relevant material and being published on the designated website subject to those redactions

In this entire clause the expression "sourcing documents" means the advertisement issued by UK SBS seeking expressions of interest, any pre-qualification questionnaire stage and the invitation to tender.

## **C3 Force Majeure**

- C3-1 If any event or circumstance that is beyond the reasonable control of the Supplier, and which by its nature could not have been foreseen by the Supplier or, if it could have been foreseen, was unavoidable, (provided that the Supplier shall use all reasonable endeavours to cure any such events or circumstances and resume performance under the Contract) prevent the Supplier from carrying out its obligations under the Contract for a continuous period of more than 10 Business Days, the Contracting Authority or UK

SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority may terminate this Contract immediately by giving written notice to the Supplier.

#### **C4 Corruption**

C4-1 The Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority shall be entitled to terminate the Contract immediately and to recover from the Supplier the amount of any loss resulting from such termination if the Supplier or a Supplier's Associate:

C4-1-1 offers or agrees to give any person working for or engaged by the Contracting Authority, UK SBS or any Public Body any favour, gift or other consideration, which could act as an inducement or a reward for any act or failure to act connected to the Contract, or any other agreement between the Supplier and the Contracting Authority, or UK SBS or any Public Body, including its award to the Supplier or a Supplier's Associate and any of the rights and obligations contained within it;

C4-1-2 has entered into the Contract if it has knowledge that, in connection with it, any money has been, or will be, paid to any person working for or engaged by the Contracting Authority, UK SBS or any Public Body by or for the Supplier, or that an agreement has been reached to that effect, unless details of any such arrangement have been disclosed in writing to the Contracting Authority or UK SBS before the Contract is entered into;

C4-1-3 breaches the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Acts 1889 to 1916, or the Bribery Act 2010; or

C4-1-4 Gives any fee or reward the receipt of which is an offence under Section 117(2) of the Local Government Act 1972.

C4-2 For the purposes of clause C4-1, "loss" shall include, but shall not be limited to:

C4-2-1 The Contracting Authorities or UK SBS's costs in finding a replacement supplier;

C4-2-2 direct, indirect and consequential losses; and

C4-2-3 Any loss suffered by the Contracting Authority or UK SBS as a result of a delay in its receipt of the Supplies.

#### **C5 Data Protection**

C5-1 The Supplier shall comply at all times with all data protection legislation applicable in the UK from time to time.

C5-2 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

#### **General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)**

##### **1. Data Protection**

The Supplier will be compliant with the Data Protection Legislation, as defined in the terms and conditions applying to this opportunity. A guide to The General Data Protection Regulation published by the Information Commissioner's Office can be found [here](#).

The only processing that the Supplier is authorised to do is listed in Annex 1 by the Contracting Authority and may not be determined by the Supplier.

#### **Annex 1: Processing, Personal Data and Data Subjects**

(1) The contact details of the Contracting Authorities Data Protection Officer are:

Contracting Authority Data Protection Officer

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy  
1 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0ET

Email: [REDACTED]

- (2) The contact details of the Suppliers Data Protection Officer (or if not applicable, details of the person responsible for data protection in the organisation) are: [To be completed by the Contractor]
- (3) The Supplier shall comply with any further written instructions with respect to processing by the Contracting Authority.
- (4) Any such further instructions shall be incorporated into this Annex 1.

PS22196 Fake Reviews

#### GDPR Annex A - Schedule of Processing, Personal Data and Data Subjects

The Supplier shall only process in accordance with the instructions as advised below and comply with any further written instructions with respect to processing by the Contracting Authority. Any such further written processing instructions required by the Contracting Authority shall be incorporated into this Schedule and shall be a subject of a formal amendment to this Contract.

| Description                           | Details   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Subject matter of the processing      | <p>The processing is needed to ensure that the Supplier can effectively deliver the contract to generate insights about how consumer behaviour is influenced by online fake reviews, what consumer detriment this causes and if there are potential non-regulatory options to help mediate the impacts of online fake reviews.</p> <p>The Supplier will need to confirm that they are UK GDPR or GDPR (if operating in the EEA) compliant when submitting a bid.</p> <p>The contractor will provide interviewees with a privacy notice before participating to ensure they understand the nature of the research, how their data will be used and stored.</p> |
| Duration of the processing            | <p>All data collected specifically for this research project will initially be processed by the supplier. This collecting, analysing and processing will take place from around August 2022 to January 2023.</p>  |
| Nature and purposes of the processing | <p>The nature of the processing will include collection, recording, organisation, structuring, storage, adaptation or alteration, retrieval, use, disclosure by transmission, dissemination or otherwise making available, alignment or combination of data.</p> <p>Processing takes place for the purposes of research and generating insights. These insights are then used for the development and enforcement of consumer protection</p>  |

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
|                       | <p>policy.</p> <p>Processing will be analysis of breakdowns into different categories and potentially relational analysis. An example is what share of consumers would spend more time reading product reviews next time they make an online purchase. An example of the latter is whether consumers with certain demographic characteristics, e.g., have not bought a good online in the past 12 months, are more likely to be misled by fake online reviews.</p> <p>Further, the aggregate insights will be documented in an accompanying report and summary tables (as well as raw tables: see, anonymised underlying data) will be generated and published.</p> <p>For the duration of the project where BEIS data is stored on the supplier's systems, the data owned and controlled by BEIS when joined with the supplier's own data may qualify as personal data. The supplier will take appropriate steps to process this BEIS data in line with UK GDPR. This includes clear privacy notices to individuals what data will be collected, how it will be used, and how it will be stored. The privacy notice will indicate which data is being collected for BEIS and which is being collected for the supplier and any differences in privacy policy that apply due to possible different usages. The supplier will also ensure safe storage and appropriate access controls.</p> <p>The nature of processing will include the storage and use of names and business contact details of staff of both the Contracting Authority and the Supplier as necessary to deliver the services and to undertake the Contract and performance management. The Contract itself will include the names and business contact details of staff of both the Contracting Authority and the Supplier involved in managing the Contract.</p> |
| Type of Personal Data | <p>BEIS will not receive single identifiable data such as name, date of birth, NI number, address, (exact) pay, images, or biometric data. The data collected for BEIS and for which BEIS will be the data controller includes information specific to consumers' experiences when purchasing products online. The list of themes is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants' attitudes towards and engagement with online reviews</li> <li>• How frequently participants have purchased a product online in the previous 12 months.</li> <li>• How much more/less time participants would spend on future purchase decisions.</li> </ul>  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How participants trust is affected when making future product purchases online</li> <li>The financial, time, and emotional impact on respondents of purchasing a product due to misleading information.</li> </ul> <p>Names, business telephone numbers and email addresses, office location and position of staff of both the Contracting Authority and the Supplier as necessary to deliver the services and to undertake the Contract and performance management. The Contract itself will include the names and business contact details of staff of both the Contracting Authority and the Supplier involved in managing the Contract</p> |
| Categories of Data Subject   | <p>Any adult. While this is a consumer survey, it will target a representative sample of the whole adult UK population (because everyone is a consumer of <i>something</i>).</p> <p>Staff of the Contracting Authority and the Supplier, including where those employees are named within the Contract itself or involved within the Contract management.</p>   |
| Plan for return and destruction of the data once the processing is complete UNLESS requirement under European Union or European member state law to preserve that type of data | <p>The Personal Data will be retained by the Supplier until the expiry of the contract in January 2023, following which the Contractor will delete the Personal Data and erase the Personal Data from any computers, storage devices and storage media that are to be retained by the Supplier after the expiry of the Contract in January 2023.</p> <p>The Supplier will certify to the Contracting Authority that it has completed such deletion.</p> <p>Where Personal Data is contained within the Contract documentation, this will be retained in line with the Department's privacy notice found within the Procurement Documents.</p>   |

## 2. GDPR Questionnaire

The Supplier agrees that during any term or extension it shall complete and return the attached questionnaire as advised below.

Note: The Contracting Authority also reserves the right to amend or increase these frequencies, as it deems necessary to secure assurance with regards to compliance.

The Contracting Authority requires such interim assurances to ensure that the Supplier is still compliant with the needs of the GDPR Act due to the implications of a breach.

The Supplier agrees that any financial burden associated with the completion and submission of this questionnaire at any time, shall be at the Suppliers cost to do so and will not be



reimbursable.



GDPR Assurance  
Questionnaire May1

## **C6 Freedom of Information**

- C6-1 The Supplier acknowledges that the Contracting Authority and or UK SBS may be subject to the requirements of FOIA and EIR and shall assist and co-operate with the Contracting Authority and or UK SBS to enable them to comply with its obligations under FOIA and EIR.
- C6-2 The Supplier shall and shall procure that its employees, agents, sub-contractors and any other representatives shall provide all necessary assistance as reasonably requested by the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority to enable the Contracting Authority or UK SBS to respond to a Request for Information within the time for compliance set out in section 10 of FOIA or regulation 5 of EIR.
- C6-3 The Contracting Authority and or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority shall be responsible for determining (in its absolute discretion) whether any Information:
- C6-3-1 is exempt from disclosure in accordance with the provisions of FOIA or EIR;
- C6-3-2 is to be disclosed in response to a Request for Information,
- And in no event shall the Supplier respond directly to a Request for Information unless expressly authorised to do so in writing by the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority.
- C6-4 The Supplier acknowledges that the Contracting Authority and or UK SBS may be obliged under the FOIA or EIR to disclose Information, in some cases even where that Information is commercially sensitive:
- C6-4-1 without consulting with the Supplier, or
- C6-4-2 Following consultation with the Supplier and having taken its views into account.
- C6-5 Where clause C6-4-2 applies the Contracting Authority and or UK SBS shall, in accordance with any recommendations issued under any code of practice issued under section 45 of FOIA, take reasonable steps, where appropriate, to give the Supplier advanced notice, or failing that, to draw the disclosure to the Supplier's attention as soon as practicable after any such disclosure.
- C6-6 Where the Supplier organisation is subject to the requirements of the FOIA and EIR, C6-7 will supersede C6-2 – C6-5. Where the Supplier organisation is not subject to the requirements of the FOIA and EIR, C6-7 will not apply.
- C6-7 The Contracting Authority and UK SBS acknowledge that the Supplier may be subject to the requirements of the FOIA and EIR and shall assist and co-operate with the Supplier to enable them to comply with its obligations under the FOIA and EIR.

## **C7 General**

### **C7-1 Entire Agreement**

- C7-1-1 The Contract constitutes the entire agreement between the Contracting Authority and the Supplier in relation to the supply of the Supplies and the Contract supersedes any earlier agreements, arrangements and understandings relating to that subject matter.

**C7-2 Liability**

C7-2-1 Where the Contracting Authority is more than one person, the liability of each such person for their respective obligations and liabilities under the Contract shall be several and shall extend only to any loss or damage arising out of each such person's own breaches.

C7-2-2 Where the Contracting Authority is more than one person and more than one of such persons is liable for the same obligation or liability, liability for the total sum recoverable will be attributed to the relevant persons in proportion to the price payable by each of them under the Contract.

**C7-3 Assignment and Subcontracting**

C7-3-1 The Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority may at any time assign, transfer, charge, subcontract or deal in any other manner with any or all of their rights or obligations under the Contract.

C7-3-2 The Supplier may not assign, transfer, charge, subcontract or deal in any other manner with any or all of its rights or obligations under the Contract, without prior written consent from the Contracting Authority or UK SBS, acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority.

C7-3-3 For above threshold procurements, The Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority may (without cost to or liability of the Contracting Authority or UK SBS) require the Supplier to replace any subcontractor where in the reasonable opinion of the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority any mandatory or discretionary grounds for exclusion referred to in Regulation 57 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 apply to the subcontractor

**C7-4 Further Assurance**

C7-4-1 The Supplier will promptly at the request of the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority do (or procure to be done) all such further acts and things, including the execution of all such other documents, as the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority may from time to time require for the purpose of securing for the Contracting Authority the full benefit of the Contract, including ensuring that all title in the Supplies is transferred absolutely to the Contracting Authority.

**C7-5 Publicity**

C7-5-1 The Supplier shall not make any press announcements or publicise this Contract in any way without prior written consent from the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority.

C7-5-2 The Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority shall be entitled to publicise this Contract in accordance with any legal obligation upon the Contracting Authority or UK SBS, including any examination of this Contract by the National Audit Office pursuant to the National Audit Act 1983 or otherwise.

C7-5-3 The Supplier shall not do anything or cause anything to be done, which may damage the reputation of the Contracting Authority or UK SBS or bring the Contracting Authorities or UK SBS's into disrepute.

**C7-6 Notices**

C7-6-1 Any notice or other communication given to a party under or in connection with the Contract shall be in writing, addressed to:

C7-6-1-a in the case of the Contracting Authority:

C7-6-1-b in the case of the Supplier: the address, fax number and email address set out in the Order, or any other address, fax number or email address which that party may have specified to the other party in writing in accordance with this clause C7-6, and shall be delivered personally, or sent by pre-paid first-class post, recorded delivery, commercial courier, fax or e-mail.

C7-6-2 A notice or other communication shall be deemed to have been received: if delivered personally, when left at the address referred to in clause C7-6-1; if sent by pre-paid first-class post or recorded delivery, at 9.00 am on the second Working Day after posting; if delivered by commercial courier, on the date and at the time that the courier's delivery receipt is signed; or, if sent by fax or e-mail between the hours of 9.00am and 5.00pm on a Working Day, upon successful transmission (provided that the sender holds written confirmation automatically produced by the sender's fax machine of error free and complete transmission of that fax to the other party's fax number), or if sent by fax or e-mail outside the hours of 9.00am and 5.00pm on a Working Day, at 9.00am on the next Working Day following successful transmission (provided that the sender holds written confirmation automatically produced by the sender's fax machine of error free and complete transmission of that fax to the other party's fax number).

C7-6-3 This clause C7-6-3 shall only apply where UK SBS is not the Contracting Authority. In such cases, UK SBS may give or receive any notice under the Contract on behalf of the Contracting Authority and any notice given or received by UK SBS will be deemed to have been given or received by the Contracting Authority.

C7-6-4 [Except for clause C7-6-5, t] [T]he provisions of this clause C7-6-4 shall not apply to the service of any proceedings or other documents in any legal action.

C7-6-5 [The Supplier irrevocably appoints and authorises [NAME] of [ADDRESS] (or such other person, being a firm of [solicitors] resident in England, as the Supplier may by notice substitute) to accept service on behalf of the Suppliers of all legal process, and service on [NAME] (or any such substitute) shall be deemed to be service on the Supplier.]

## C7-7 **Severance**

C7-7-1 If any court or competent authority finds that any provision of the Contract (or part of any provision) is invalid, illegal or unenforceable, that provision or part-provision shall, to the extent required, be deemed to be deleted, and the validity and enforceability of the other provisions of the Contract shall not be affected.

C7-7-2 If any invalid, unenforceable or illegal provision of the Contract would be valid, enforceable and legal if some part of it were deleted, the provision shall apply with the minimum modification necessary to make it legal, valid and enforceable.

C7-8 **Waiver.** A waiver of any right or remedy under the Contract is only effective if given in writing and shall not be deemed a waiver of any subsequent breach or default. No failure or delay by a party to exercise any right or remedy provided under the Contract or by law shall constitute a waiver of that or any other right or remedy, nor shall it preclude or restrict the further exercise of that or any other right or remedy. No single or partial exercise of such right or remedy shall preclude or restrict the further exercise of that or any other right or remedy.

C7-9 **No Partnership, Employment or Agency.** Nothing in the Contract creates any partnership or joint venture, nor any relationship of employment, between the Supplier and either the Contracting Authority or UK SBS. Nothing in the Contract creates any agency between the Supplier and either the Contracting Authority or UK SBS.

**C7-10 Third Party Rights.** A person who is not a party to this Contract shall not have any rights under or in connection with it, except that UK SBS and any member of the UK SBS, Associated Bodies or Authorised Entities that derives benefit under this Contract may directly enforce or rely on any terms of this Contract.

**C7-11 Variation.** Any variation to the Contract, including any changes to the Supplies, these Conditions, the Special Conditions or the Order, including the introduction of any additional terms and conditions, shall only be binding when agreed in writing by the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority and the Supplier.

**C7-12 Governing Law and Jurisdiction**

C7-12-1 Subject to clause C7-12-2, the Contract, and any dispute or claim arising out of or in connection with it or its subject matter or formation (including non-contractual disputes or claims), shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with, English law, and the parties irrevocably submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of England and Wales

C7-12-2 The Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority shall be free to enforce its intellectual property rights in any jurisdiction.

**C7-13 Modern Slavery Act 2015**

C7-13-1 The Supplier shall not use, or allow its Subcontractors to use, forced, bonded or involuntary prison labour;

C7-13-2 shall not require any Contract or staff or Subcontractor staff to lodge deposits or identify papers with the Employer or deny Supplier staff freedom to leave their employer after reasonable notice;

C7-13-3 warrants and represents that it has not been convicted of any slavery or human trafficking offences anywhere around the world.

C7-13-4 warrants that to the best of its knowledge it is not currently under investigation, inquiry or enforcement proceedings in relation to any allegation of slavery or human trafficking offenses anywhere around the world.

C7-13-5 shall make reasonable enquiries to ensure that its officers, employees and Subcontractors have not been convicted of slavery or human trafficking offences anywhere around the world.

C7-13-6 shall have and maintain throughout the term of each Contract its own policies and procedures to ensure its compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and shall include in its contracts with its Subcontractors anti-slavery and human trafficking provisions;

C7-13-7 shall implement due diligence procedures to ensure that there is no slavery or human trafficking in any part of its supply chain performing obligations under a Contract;

C7-13-8 shall not use, or allow its employees or Subcontractors to use, physical abuse or discipline, the threat of physical abuse, sexual or other harassment and verbal abuse or other forms of intimidation of its employees or Subcontractors;

C7-13-9 shall not use, or allow its Subcontractors to use, child or slave labour;

C7-13-10 shall report the discovery or suspicion of any slavery or trafficking by it or its Subcontractors to the Contracting Authority without delay during the performance of this Contract to utilise the following help and advice service, so as to ensure that it suitably discharges its statutory obligations.

The "Modern Slavery Helpline" refers to the point of contact for reporting suspicion,

seeking help or advice and information on the subject of modern slavery available online at <https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/report> or by telephone on 08000 121 700

C7-13-11 During the Term or any extension of the Contract, the Contracting Authority is committed to ensuring that its supply chain complies with the above Act.

C7-13-12 The Supplier shall provide a slavery and trafficking report covering the following but not limited to areas as relevant and proportionate to the Contract evidencing the actions taken, relevant to the Supplier and their supply chain associated with the Contract.

C7-13-12-a Impact assessments undertaken

C7-13-12-b Steps taken to address risk/actual instances of modern slavery and how actions have been prioritised

C7-13-12-c Evidence of stakeholder engagement

C7-13-12-d Evidence of ongoing awareness training

C7-13-12-e Business-level grievance mechanisms in place to address modern slavery

C7-13-12-f Actions taken to embed respect for human rights and zero tolerance of modern slavery throughout the organisation

C7-13-13 The Contracting Authority or UK SBS when acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority reserves the sole right to audit any and all slavery and trafficking reports submitted by the Supplier to an extent as deemed necessary and the Supplier shall unreservedly assist the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority in doing so.

Note: The Contracting Authority also reserves the right to amend or increase the frequency of reporting, as it deems necessary to secure assurance in order to comply with the Modern Slavery Act.

The Contracting Authority requires such interim assurances to ensure that the Supplier is compliant and is monitoring its supply chain, so as to meet the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act.

The Supplier agrees that any financial burden associated with the completion and submission of this report and associated assistance at any time, shall be at the suppliers cost to do so and will not be reimbursable.

#### **C7-14 Changes in Costs Resulting from Changes to Government Legislation, Levies or Statutory Payments**

C7-14-1 The Contracting Authority will reimburse during any term or extension (or, where such costs, awards or damages arise following termination/expiry) of this Agreement, any increases in the Supplier's cost of providing the Supplies by reason of any modification or alteration to the Government legislation duties or levies or other statutory payments (including but not limited to National Insurance and/or VAT and/or introduction of or amendment to working time minimum wages). Subject always to open book access to the Supplier's records and always after a period of due diligence carried out by the Contracting Authority, relevant and proportionate to the value concerned.

#### **C7-15 Taxation Obligations of the Supplier**

C7-15-1 The relationship between the Contracting Authority, UK SBS and the Supplier

will be that of “independent contractor” which means that the Supplier is not an employee, worker, agent or partner of the Contracting Authority or UK SBS and the Supplier will not give the impression that they are.

C7-15-2 As this is not an employment Contract the Supplier will be fully responsible for all their own tax including any national insurance contributions arising from carrying out the Services. If the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority the Contracting Authority or UK SBS has to pay, and they will also pay back the Contracting Authority or UK SBS for any fine or other punishment imposed on the Contracting Authority or UK SBS because the tax or national insurance was not paid by the Supplier.

#### **C7-16 Cyber Essentials Questionnaire**

The Supplier agrees that during any term or extension it shall complete and return the attached questionnaire as advised below, within 14 days from notice, and shall send this information as directed by the Contracting Authority or UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority. The Contracting Authority and UK SBS acting as an agent on behalf of the Contracting Authority is required to provide such assurances to comply with Government advice and guidance.

Note: The Contracting Authority also reserves the right to amend or increase the frequency of the questionnaire submission due dates, as it deems necessary.

The Contracting Authority requires such interim assurances to ensure that the Supplier is still compliant with the security needs of this Contract.

The Supplier agrees that any financial burden associated with the completion and submission of this questionnaire and associated assistance at any time, shall be at the suppliers cost to do so and will not be reimbursable.



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## Schedule 1 Special Conditions

### Supply Chain Visibility

#### Governmental oversight on improving visibility of subcontract opportunities available to SMEs and VCSEs in the supply chain

- 1) The Supplier shall:
  - a. subject to clause 3, advertise on Contracts Finder all subcontract opportunities arising from or in connection with the provision of the u Services and/or Supplies above a minimum threshold of (£25,000) that arise during the Contract Period;
  - b. within 90 days of awarding a subcontract to a subcontractor, update the notice on Contracts Finder with details of the successful subcontractor;
  - c. monitor the number, type and value of the subcontract opportunities placed on Contracts Finder advertised and awarded in its supply chain during the Contract Period;
  - d. provide reports on the information at clause 1.1.3 to the Contracting Authority in the format and frequency as specified by the Contracting Authority below; and
  - e. promote Contracts Finder to its suppliers and encourage those organisations to register on Contracts Finder.
- 2) Each advert referred to at clause 1.1 above shall provide a full and detailed description of the subcontract opportunity with each of the mandatory fields being completed on Contracts Finder by the Supplier.
- 3) NOTE: The Contracting Authority does not require the Supplier to comply with Clause 1.1 under its contractual obligation to any and all subcontracts that were arranged or existed prior to the award of the contract i.e. when the Supplier has already established its supply-chain as part of the tendering process.

For the avoidance of doubt the obligation at Clause 1.1 shall only apply in respect of subcontract opportunities arising after the contract award date. Additional exemptions that the Contracting Authority will also consider a waiver this requirement Clause 1.1 to advertise on Contracts Finder are:

- where there are issues of national security, which mean that subcontracts cannot be openly advertised;
  - where a contract is to be delivered overseas and the resulting subcontracts can only be delivered by in-country partners and/or there are local laws, customs, or security issues that mean subcontracts cannot be advertised;
  - where the Supplier has confirmed there will be no subcontracted spend;
- 4) Notwithstanding clause 1, the Contracting Authority may by giving its prior written approval, agree that a subcontract opportunity is not required to be advertised on Contracts Finder.

## Management Charges and Information

1. In addition to any other management information requirements set out in this Contract, the Supplier agrees and acknowledges that it shall, at no charge, provide timely, full, accurate and complete SME Management Information (MI) Reports to the Contracting Authority which incorporate the data described in the MI Reporting template below which is:
  - 1.1. the total contract revenue received directly on a specific contract;
  - 1.2. the total value of sub-contracted revenues under the contract (including revenues for non-SMEs/non-VCSEs); and
  - 1.3. the total value of sub-contracted revenues to SMEs and VCSEs.
2. The SME Management Information Reports shall be provided in the correct format as required by the MI Reporting Template and any guidance issued by the Contracting Authority from time to time. The Supplier shall use the initial MI Reporting Template which is set out in the Annex to this Schedule and which may be changed from time to time (including the data required and/or format) by the Contracting Authority by issuing a replacement version. The Contracting Authority shall give at least thirty (\*30) days' notice in writing of any such change and shall specify the date from which it must be used.
3. The Supplier further agrees and acknowledges that it may not make any amendment to the current MI Reporting Template without the prior written approval of the Contracting Authority.

## MI Reporting Template

| Report Subject matter    Dateline From XX/XX/XXXX to X/X/XXXX   | Value £<br>(Pounds Sterling) |
|---|------------------------------|
| total contract revenue received directly on a specific contract   |                              |
| the total value to date of report of sub-contracted revenues under the contract (including revenues for non-SMEs/non-VCSEs) |                              |
| the total value of sub-contracted revenues to SMEs and VCSEs  |                              |

4. The Supplier shall provide the following above MI Reporting Template to the Contracting Authority on the following basis:
  - 4.1. The Contracting Authority maybe required by the Cabinet Office Crown Commercial Services to amend the MI reporting table from time to time. The Contracting Authority shall give the Supplier at Least [30] Days' notice in writing of any such change and shall specify the date from which it must be used.
  - 4.2. The Supplier agrees that any financial burden associated with the completion and submission in a timely, full and accurate manner of this MI reporting table at any time, shall be at the Suppliers cost to do so and will not be reimbursable.
5. The Contracting Authority will not specify or direct the Supplier in regard to how it undertakes any procurement activity, however the Supplier is expected to allow a reasonable and proportionate amount of time for bidders to reply to its advertised



opportunities. Any and all contracts awarded by the Supplier as a result of the advertised opportunity, shall be the subject of an update to the original advertised notice within 90 days of award and details of the successful Supplier shall be published on Contracts Finder.

### **Supplier Guidance and assistance**

The Supplier can register on Contracts Finder by following link  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/694326/Contracts\\_Finder\\_public\\_sector\\_contractors\\_user\\_guide\\_v\\_2.0.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/694326/Contracts_Finder_public_sector_contractors_user_guide_v_2.0.pdf)

## Schedule 2 Pro forma purchase order form

The format of the Proforma Purchase Order will be as follows. Please note that the Purchase Order form will be submitted directly to your chosen email address on completion of the receipt of the signed contract and will contain the confirmed value of goods and services as well as the Purchase Order number that must be used for invoicing purposes.

Purchase Order #0

(Contracting Authority Logo)

Supplier:

Tel:

Fax:

Ship to: Contracting authority ship to address

|               |                             |
|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Order         |                             |
| Order Date    |                             |
| Revision      | 0                           |
| Revision Date |                             |
| Payment Terms | As per terms and conditions |

PLEASE QUOTE THE PURCHASE ORDER NUMBER ON ALL CORRESPONDENCE.  
INVOICES NOT QUOTING THE PO NUMBER WILL BE RETURNED UNPAID


For all purchase order queries, please contact  
P2PAdmin@uksbs.co.uk  
For all Invoicing queries, please contact finance@uksbs.co.uk

Invoice to: Contracting Authority Invoice Address

| Line        | Part Number/Description | Delivery Date | Quantity | UOM | Unit Price (GBP) | Tax | Net Amount (GBP) |
|-------------|-------------------------|---------------|----------|-----|------------------|-----|------------------|
| 1           |                         |               |          |     |                  |     |                  |
| Total       |                         |               |          |     |                  |     |                  |
| Grand Total |                         |               |          |     |                  |     |                  |

Whenever a UK SBS Contract number is cited within the narrative description of the Purchase Order that Purchase Order is subject to the Terms and Conditions relating to that Contract, otherwise, the Purchase Order is subject to the Terms and Conditions incorporated herein by this reference. For a copy of the Terms and Conditions please see <http://www.uksbs.co.uk/services/procure/Documents/SCPOterms.pdf>

Commercial In Confidence



VAT Registration Number GB 618 367 325

(Contracting Authority) , Polaris House, North Star Avenue  
Swindon, United Kingdom SN2 1EU

## Schedule 3 The Service

### D1 SCOPE OF SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED

D1-1 To carry out PS22196 - Fake Reviews Research as outlined in Annex A – Specification and Annex B – Bid Response.

### D2 COMMENCEMENT AND DURATION

D2-1 This Contract shall commence on Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2022 and subject to any provisions for earlier termination contained in the Standard Terms shall end no later than Tuesday, 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023.

### D3 MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

D3-1 The Customer appoints: [REDACTED] Department of Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy, 1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0ET; Email: [REDACTED] (or such other person as is notified by the Customer to the Supplier in writing) to be the Customer's Contract Manager.

D3-2 The Supplier appoints: [REDACTED] ALMA Economics Limited, 43 Tanner Street, London, SE1 3PL, Email: [REDACTED] (or such other person as is notified by the Supplier to the Customer in writing) to be the Supplier's Contract Manager.

D3-3 UK Shared Business Services appoints: [REDACTED] Category Manager, Professional Services, Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 1FF; Email: [REDACTED]

### D4 – Contract Price

D4-1 Total Contract price shall not exceed £59,950.00 excluding VAT in accordance with the Contract price and breakdown submitted for this Contract detailed below;

Please ensure that you DO NOT alter this spreadsheet. Any

UKSBS

# ANNEX A - Specification

## Section 4 – Specification

|   |
|---|
| <b>1. Background</b>  |
| <p>In 2021, BEIS launched the Reforming Consumer and Competition Policy (RCCP) consultation.<sup>1</sup> The department asked for views on ways for government to address fake online reviews and proposed adding practices related to this to the list of automatically unfair commercial practices in Schedule 1 of the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations (CPUTRs) 2008.</p> <p>These are reviews that do not reflect an actual consumer's genuine experience of a good or service, and have been left in an attempt to manipulate consumer perception or target a particular business.</p> <p>The policy proposals are currently in development and are subject to further evidence gathering and cost-benefit analysis. Although there are wide ranging estimates from various consumer groups and review sites on the prevalence of fake reviews,<sup>2,3,4</sup> the evidence base on the harm they cause to consumers is relatively underdeveloped. Therefore, this research will provide high-quality evidence to the policy and analytical teams that cannot be achieved using internal resources primarily due to time constraints as well as some skill constraints.</p> <p>Government plans to consult on the details of the developing policy proposals in due course. An impact assessment (IA) assessing the costs and benefits of the policy options is expected to be published alongside the consultation. This research is intended to help develop the cost-benefit analysis (CBA) and inform the policy solution. It is expected that the outputs of this research will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve understanding of the scale of the problem of fake reviews and how they impact consumers</li><li>• Influence the development of the policy by testing potential solutions and ensuring policy making is evidence based</li><li>• Provide evidence for the CBA which will assess the impacts of policy options, on both consumers and businesses.</li></ul> |
| <b>2. Aims and Objectives of the Project</b>  |
| <p>The aim of this work is to understand:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) The prevalence of online fake reviews for a pre-determined basket of goods on the most popular third-party UK e-commerce websites</li><li>b) How online fake reviews influence consumer choice when making online purchases</li><li>c) The consumer detriment that occurs as a result of fake reviews and how this varies by demographic groups</li><li>d) The effectiveness of potential non-regulatory interventions in nullifying the harmful impact of fake reviews on consumer decisions</li></ol>  |

<sup>1</sup> Reforming Consumer and Competition Policy Consultation (2021)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-competition-and-consumer-policy>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fakespot.com/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://reviewmeta.com/>

<sup>4</sup> Ott, M., Cardie, C. and Hancock, J., 2012, April. Estimating the prevalence of deception in online review communities. In Proceedings of the 21st international conference on World Wide Web (pp. 201-210). <https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.1145/2187836.2187864>

By answering these questions, the department will gain insight into how widespread the problem of fake reviews may be in the UK e-commerce sector as well as into how harmful they are to consumers. It is not within the scope of this research to understand the prevalence and associated harm of fake reviews outside of UK e-commerce. The department understands that fake reviews also pose a large problem on social media<sup>5,6,7</sup> and other review hosting platforms. That said, given the number and variety of platforms that can host reviews, the department wishes to limit the scope to UK e-commerce platforms to allow a deep dive on how consumer behaviour is influenced by misleading reviews when spending decisions are involved.

The results of this analysis will be used to:

- Inform policy development and ensure policy decisions are evidence based and informed by the testing of potential solutions.
- Inform the development of the CBA of options to help support policy decision-making, particularly the impacts (monetary and non-monetary) policy options would have on businesses and consumers.
- Act as baseline evidence for monitoring the results of potential regulatory changes, to assess the effectiveness of the proposals in reducing the incidence and impact of fake online reviews.

### 3. Suggested Methodology

|   |  |                        |
|---|--|------------------------|
| <b>If applicable:</b>                                     |  | <b>Insert numbers:</b> |
| <b>Total number of Participants (experimental design)</b> |  | <b>4,000</b>           |
| <b>Total number of Interviews (survey)</b>                |  | <b>4,000</b>           |
| <b>Total number of Interviews (qualitative)</b>           |  | <b>0</b>               |
| <b>Total number of Focus Groups</b>                       |  | <b>0</b>               |
| <b>Total number of Case Studies</b>                       |  | <b>0</b>               |
| <b>Any other specific requirements</b>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a sample of goods from the chosen online platforms based on the basket of goods outlined below.</li> <li>• Establishing and outlining a standardised methodological framework for spotting suspicious reviews that is replicable and based on existing evidence on how to spot fake online reviews.</li> </ul> |                        |

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.which.co.uk/news/2022/01/how-facebook-fuels-amazons-fake-reviews/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cma-expects-facebook-and-ebay-to-tackle-sale-of-fake-reviews>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cma-intervention-leads-to-further-facebook-action-on-fake-reviews>

The department sets out a proposed research approach below. However, the department welcomes feedback on this suggested methodology and welcomes differing proposals or amendments from bidders should there be other means to better meet the objectives of this research.

The department envisages a two phased approach, split by a break clause between the phases, that centres around a pre-determined basket of goods:

1. The aim of Phase 1 will be to estimate the prevalence of suspicious reviews, for a chosen basket of goods defined by the contractor, on the most popular third-party e-commerce sites used by UK consumers.
2. Phase 2 should then aim to test the effects of practices related to fake reviews on consumer choice of the selected goods. This phase should also establish the types and magnitude of consumer detriment experienced by subjects, both monetarily and non-monetarily, as well as testing intervention options that aim to mitigate the effects of the fake review related practices.

### **Basket of goods**

A common basket of goods across phases will allow the results of Phase 1 to be built upon by Phase 2, whereby the goods where prevalence is assessed in Phase 1 are also the goods tested with consumers in Phase 2.

The table below shows a breakdown of online purchases by good category from the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) Internet Access Survey (2020)<sup>8</sup>.

*Table 1 - Reported Online Purchases, Internet Access Survey, ONS (2020)*

| <b>Good category</b>   | <b>Percentage of respondents reporting purchase of good (%)</b> |
|--|---|
| Clothes (including sports clothing), shoes and accessories         | <b>55</b>   |
| Deliveries from restaurants, fast-food chains or catering services | <b>32</b>   |
| Printed books, magazines or newspapers                             | <b>29</b>   |
| Furniture, home accessories or gardening products                  | <b>28</b>   |
| Computers, tablets, mobile phones or accessories                   | <b>24</b>   |
| Children's toys or childcare items                                 | <b>22</b>   |
| Cosmetics, beauty or wellness products                             | <b>22</b>   |
| Cleaning products or personal hygiene products                     | <b>18</b>   |

For experimental reasons, such as having goods which are desirable for a wide range of participants, the basket of goods should have the following characteristics:

1. Commonly purchased online
2. Commonly sold on e-commerce websites by third party traders
3. Physical and non-perishable products
4. Gender balanced
5. Heterogenous to the extent brand and perceived quality will play a role in decision making
6. Intended for use by adults

Based on the above data, the criteria set out above and additional internal datasets within the department, government recommends the following three good categories: home and kitchen goods, electronic accessories and health and cosmetics. Although these categories were not the most reported purchases, they meet the above criteria. For example, although clothing was the most reported purchase by respondents, a large proportion of online clothing sales are through reputable first party retailers and brands.

The second most reported purchase is food deliveries; however, services (like deliveries) are not within the scope of this research given the difficulties in testing these types of products with consumers in an experimental setting. In the case of children's goods, consumer preferences may depend on parental status and may yield null consumer choices during the second phase of research if someone is not a parent or carer.

The department welcomes additional thoughts and challenges from the contractor on how to construct a basket of goods, particularly if they wish to propose alternative methods to construct a basket. The goods should aim to meet the proposed criteria set out above but the department welcomes feedback on the criteria from bidders. Alterations to the basket of goods should be justified by the contractor and will be subject to BEIS clearance following review of the initial methodology report provided to the department.

Based on the categories chosen above, the department has set out an illustrative basket of goods below, that it believes will meet the criteria. These have been selected through identifying the most sold products in 2021/2022 on popular e-commerce sites for each relevant category.

*Table 2 - Example basket of goods*

| Product category       | Products  |
|------------------------|---|
| Home and kitchen       | Kettle, iron, vacuum, desk chair                              |
| Electronic accessories | Bluetooth headphones, keyboard, mobile charger, smart speaker |
| Health and cosmetics   | Skincare product, yoga mat, re-usable water bottle            |

## Phase 1: Estimating prevalence on popular UK e-commerce sites

Suppliers will be required to create a protocol for the entirety of the research project during Phase 1. Furthermore, there will be a break clause for this research project to be used at the department's discretion after the completion of the first phase.

The first phase should estimate the prevalence of reviews displaying signs of being commissioned, intentionally misleading or over inflated for the pre-selected basket of goods on the most popular (in terms of number of visitors) third party e-commerce platforms used by UK consumers.<sup>9</sup> A technique to do this could be, but is not limited to data science approaches based on existing evidence on how to identify fake reviews. Previous examples of approaches used include web-scraping<sup>10,11</sup> and machine-learning.<sup>12,13,14</sup>

First party e-commerce retailers are not in scope as existing evidence does not suggest that individual brands are employing fake review related practices, rather these are activities undertaken on popular third-party e-commerce platforms.

The contractor will be responsible for:

1. Creating a research protocol for the entirety of the project that should include an ethical evaluation of both phases.
2. Creating a sample of goods from the chosen online platforms based on the basket of goods outlined. The basket of goods should contain a range of cheaper to more expensive products. This will enable the interactions of price and misleading reviews to be tested in Phase 2. In terms of specific product types, the department proposes that three products of the same price are chosen for each good in the basket to ensure price effects do not overpower the impact of reviews on consumer decisions made in Phase 2. The basket of goods selected should also have a range of star ratings to form the baseline against which the fake review treatments are applied. For example, for any one product type, star ratings ranging from 3 to 5 stars could be selected whereby the genuine 3-star product is inflated to 5-stars as an intervention.
3. Furthermore, the contractor should ensure that the goods chosen have star ratings which reflect their actual quality and price, ensuring the chosen basket itself has not been significantly skewed by outright misleading reviews. The department would welcome suggestions from the contractor on how they would complete this action. The contractor should consider that sellers who engage more with reviewers will likely gain more positive reviews compared to sellers of similar quality products who engage less. This is fair

<sup>9</sup><https://www.webretailer.com/b/online-marketplaces-uk/>

This article covers 12 online marketplaces (either pure-play marketplaces or retailers with a third-party marketplace) with more than one million monthly visits from the UK, based on data from [SimilarWeb](#). A global list of online marketplaces, based on the same data, is available in [The World's Top Online Marketplaces](#).

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.fakespot.com/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://reviewmeta.com/>

<sup>12</sup> Salminen, J., Kandpal, C., Kamel, A.M., Jung, S.G. and Jansen, B.J., 2022. Creating and detecting fake reviews of online products. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 64, p.102771.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0969698921003374>

<sup>13</sup> Ott, M., Cardie, C. and Hancock, J., 2012, April. Estimating the prevalence of deception in online review communities. In *Proceedings of the 21st international conference on World Wide Web* (pp. 201-210).

<https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.1145/2187836.2187864>

<sup>14</sup> Ott, M., Choi, Y., Cardie, C. and Hancock, J.T., 2011. Finding deceptive opinion spam by any stretch of the imagination. arXiv preprint arXiv:1107.4557. <https://arxiv.org/abs/1107.4557>



practice, so the supplier should take a proportionate approach in ensuring selected products have reviews and ratings reflective of their actual quality.

4. Building an anonymised dataset of reviews for the chosen basket of goods including star rating and review text. Web-scraping, an available Application Programming Interface (API) or manual sampling techniques could be used to build the dataset. It is the responsibility of the supplier to ensure the final method and resulting dataset are in compliance with data privacy laws and any website terms and conditions. The dataset should be a statistically significant sample of all a product's reviews and reflect any final displayed ratings.
5. Reviewing existing advice on how to spot fake reviews, for which some examples are referenced.<sup>15,16,17,18,19</sup> A few examples of this advice are but are not limited to: looking at whether many highly rated reviews have been posted in a short period; whether there are duplicated positive reviews; whether reviews are referring to another product after a seller has manipulated a product page<sup>20</sup> and; whether reviews are suspiciously emotive.
6. Establishing and outlining a standardised methodological framework for spotting suspicious reviews that is replicable (e.g. by the department or subsequent researchers based on information to be included in the final report) and based on existing evidence on how to spot fake online reviews. An underlying automated data science approach to the framework is recommended to remove any error and subjectivity arising from human evaluation.
7. Using the framework to produce a range of estimates on the prevalence of likely fake or suspicious reviews and inflated star ratings using the review data gathered for the selected basket of goods. This could involve using data science techniques, or other research methods that bidders propose.
8. Considering factors around whether a platform has/is already undertaking activities to remove/moderate suspicious reviews. Based on publicly available evidence regarding website operator moderation activities, the supplier should provide commentary on how this may have impacted any of the provided estimates, if at all.
9. Ensuring that the sample tested allows for statistically significant results.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.which.co.uk/reviews/online-shopping/article/online-shopping/how-to-spot-a-fake-review-aiDaS3elivfr>

<sup>16</sup> Anderson, E.T. and Simester, D.I., 2014. Reviews without a purchase: Low ratings, loyal customers, and deception. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 51(3), pp.249-269.  
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1509/jmr.13.0209>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0969698921003374>

<sup>18</sup> Chen, L., Li, W., Chen, H. and Geng, S., 2019. Detection of fake reviews: Analysis of sellers' manipulation behavior. *Sustainability*, 11(17), p.4802. <https://www.mdpi.com/527126>

<sup>19</sup> Hu, N., Bose, I., Koh, N.S. and Liu, L., 2012. Manipulation of online reviews: An analysis of ratings, readability, and sentiments. *Decision support systems*, 52(3), pp.674-684.  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0167923611002065>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/nicolenguyen/amazon-review-reuse-fraud>

10.

## **Phase 2: Impact on consumer decisions**

This phase of the methodology should aim to estimate the impact of fake review related practices on consumer behaviour and detriment with the goods assessed in Phase 1. It should also identify the elements of review fakery that are most effective in influencing consumer choice as well as assessing how effective non-regulatory policy options are in mitigating the impact of fake reviews. As a point of reference, a recent study by Which? assessed the effects on consumer behaviour using an experimental design.<sup>21</sup>

The department recommends that the contractor takes a factorial experimental approach to assess how various practices related to fake reviews impact consumer choice. This can be done through inviting participants to interact with a medium emulating popular e-commerce websites. Through this they can choose to 'buy' one out of the three goods presented for each product type in the basket based on information provided in a real-world scenario (including product reviews). One product's page should have treatments of review fakery applied. Here, multiple factors can be formed to measure how different fake review treatments impact consumer choice for the selected basket of goods.

This phase should also gather wider qualitative information on the wellbeing of participants once they are provided with a hypothetical scenario where the quality of their chosen good wasn't as the review information suggested.

The contractor will be responsible for:

1. Ensuring the research protocol created in Phase 1 includes an ethical evaluation of this experimental phase.
2. Creating a sample that is representative of the UK adult population to take part in the experiment. The sample should also recruit for a mix of levels of online activity amongst participants. Bidders should suggest the sample sizes they expect to use in their bids and where they would get the sample from. This should include statistical power calculations generating a sample size large enough to yield significant results at the 95% confidence interval based on the expected effect size of the treatments. Strong bids will demonstrate considerations around optimising or adding treatment groups if anticipated sample sizes are over-powered.
3. Collecting information on demographic characteristics of participants
4. Collecting information on online activity of participants
5. Testing the hypothesis that if consumers are exposed to falsely positive reviews and star ratings when purchasing goods online, they are more likely to make a purchase than they would be if they had access to genuine review information.

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<sup>21</sup> <https://consumerinsight.which.co.uk/articles/fake-reviews>

6. Conducting an experiment, where consumers are tasked with choosing one of three products from each group, presented on a user interface that is kept as close as possible to an online retail environment. This should be accessible from both a mobile and a desktop, given the widespread use of smart phones in online shopping. Alternatively, a survey approach could be used if the survey is designed to look like the user-interfaces used by popular e-commerce sites, but it should ensure the participant has easy access to all the information they would have if interacting with a real website.
7. Allocating product groups across participants. The contractor could ask participants what products they would be most interested in purchasing and then use a least-fill approach<sup>22</sup> to allocate to products across the sample.
8. Ensuring that when presented with purchasing decisions, participants are only asked to choose between products of the same type and price (as required in Phase 1). This is to ensure that price effects do not overpower purchasing decisions.
9. Measuring each group's likelihood of purchasing a product in the experiment (the dependent variable).
10. Creating a factorial experimental design with five factors in a 5 x 2 format where treatments related to fake reviews (the independent variables) are distributed. Treatments should include but are not limited to inflated star ratings, fake positive review text (subtle and strong) and platform endorsement (e.g. 'Amazon's choice'). The contractor should also test potential non-regulatory policy solutions that have been agreed with the department through treatments, such as a warning banner, highlighting to participants that there may be fake reviews on the product page. Strong bids will propose additional viable non-regulatory solutions to be tested. The department proposes that inflated star ratings would be the common treatment across the 5 x 2 factorial design.
11. Creating and placing 'subtle' and 'strong' fake review text in the appropriate treatment groups. The text used must be reflective of how misleading review text is implemented in reality, for example, the fakery used should not be strikingly obvious to participants as validity will be diminished. The framework used in Phase 1 should inform how fakery is implemented in the experiment. Given that the ability to spot suspicious reviews will vary from participant to participant, the use of 'subtle' and 'strong' fake review text treatments will inform the most effective elements of review fakery. For example, the 'strong' fake review text could include more duplicate reviews or positive review clustering in comparison to the 'subtle' treatment group.
12. Considering mediator and moderator variables and how they affect the relationship between the independent and dependent variables in the experimental design. Bidders should include how they intend to do this in their bids.

13. An example of what the factorial design could look like is included below (where sample sizes have been generated randomly for display purposes and should not be considered final). The contractor may alter the proposed treatments and factorial design to optimise sample size and effect interactions, changes will be subject to BEIS clearance at an interim meeting after the completion of Phase 1.

*Table 3 - Example of sample treatments*

|                              |   | Inflated star rating |           |                  |
|------------------------------|---|----------------------|-----------|------------------|
|                              |   | No                   | Yes       | Sample size      |
| <b>Additional treatments</b> | No                                      | 400                  | 400       | N = 800          |
|                              | 'Subtle' fake review text               | 400                  | 400       | N = 800          |
|                              | 'Strong' fake review text               | 400                  | 400       | N = 800          |
|                              | Platform endorsement & fake review text | 400                  | 400       | N = 800          |
|                              | Warning banner & fake review text       | 400                  | 400       | N = 800          |
|                              |   | N = 2,000            | N = 2,000 | <b>N = 4,000</b> |

14. Ensuring all imitated product pages for the pre-selected basket of goods present price and other key product information.
15. Recording the time taken for each participant to make purchase decisions to understand whether the various treatments impact the time taken for participants to shop around.
16. Ensuring that the participants have a chance to win the products used to incentivise authentic consumer choices based on their true preferences. Participants could be asked to rank the items in preferential order prior to the experiment to determine which product they would prefer to have if they should win it.
17. Surveying participants after the experiment has concluded. The department suggests that the survey(s) should aim to do the following but welcomes suggestions from bidders too:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ask participants to rank in order of most important to least important their purchasing factors when shopping online. These factors could include but are not limited to purchase price, quality, online user reviews, style/fashion, environmental impact.</li> <li>b. Ask participants if they read some or all of the reviews for each product. For those participants that did read some, then these participants should be asked to rate the reviews that they were presented with. The department would welcome suggestions on a suitable rating scale from bidders.</li> <li>c. Present hypothetical situations to assess how participants trust is affected. For example, assessing whether they would purchase another 5-star good from the same supplier if it's quality upon receiving the product wasn't as the reviews suggested.</li> <li>d. Present hypothetical situations to assess whether participants would change their behaviour in the future. For example, assessing how much more/less time participants would spend on future purchase decisions.</li> <li>e. Present hypothetical situations to assess what their willingness to pay for genuine information would be.</li> <li>f. Present hypothetical situations to assess the effects on participants' wellbeing of being misled by elements of review fakery.</li> </ul> <p>18. Assessing the risk of hypothetical bias for d, e and f above. Bidders are encouraged to suggest potential mitigations for reducing the risk of hypothetical bias.</p> <p>19. Assessing the external validity of the experiment and whether the findings would be relevant for other products and services which use online reviews. Factors which impact external validity may include how representative the experiment is of a real-world setting (including how participants have to make a purchase decision) and stated rather than revealed preferences in the wider wellbeing assessment. The department welcomes suggestions on how the contractor would complete this assessment. An example could be adjusting the moderator variables where possible to help identify the limitations of when the relationships between variables hold.</p> | <div> <h4>4. Deliverables &amp; Payment Milestones</h4> </div> <p>As a summary, the following should be delivered by the supplier by the end of the contract:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Initial paper - Methodology for both research phases</li> <li>2. Methodology report – to accompany the final report</li> <li>3. Interim report for Phase One</li> <li>4. Final report and presentation</li> <li>5. Underlying datasets</li> <li>6. QA Log</li> <li>7. Risk Register</li> </ul> |
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## **Payment Milestones**

Payments will be made in two stages –

Milestone 1 will comprise of Stages 1-3 up the delivery of the Interim Report.

Milestone 2 will comprise of Stage 4 (Final report and all additional delivery materials).

More specifically, the outputs of the two phases of research should cover the following:

### **Phase 1**

An assessment of the prevalence of likely fake/suspicious reviews across the chosen basket of goods for the chosen e-commerce platforms. This should include, but is not limited to:

- i. The number of written reviews out of the total examined displaying signs of being commissioned, intentionally misleading or over inflated.
- ii. The number of star ratings out of the total examined which show signs of being over inflated based on the reviews associated with them.
- iii. The extent to which star ratings are inflated based on seemingly genuine reviews of the product.

The department does not expect the contractor to answer how many reviews are definitively fake, as this is not possible. Rather it is the contractor's responsibility to assess whether a review is likely fake or not based on research conducted during scoping of Phase 1.

### **Phase 2**

An assessment of how fake reviews and inflated star ratings impact consumer behaviour in an online e-commerce setting. This should include, but is not limited to:

- i. An estimation of the impact the treatments have on a consumer's decision to select a good over an alternative with fair reviews across demographic groups relative to the control group.
- ii. An estimation of the impact the treatments have on a consumer's time spent to select a good relative to the control group.
- iii. An estimation of the impact of different consumer facing interventions in nullifying the effect of fake reviews on consumer choice across different demographic groups.
- iv. An assessment of the moderator and mediator variables impact on the relationships between the independent and dependent variables.
- v. An assessment of how fake review related practices impact a consumer's willingness-to-pay for a good.
- vi. An assessment of how fake reviews impacted trust, wellbeing, and future intentions across different demographic groups.
- vii. An assessment of the external validity of the findings across other goods and services

sold online.

The final report will include:

- a) An executive summary
- b) A summary of the methodology used at each phase and any underlying assumptions and caveats.
- c) A summary table containing the estimated number of suspicious reviews and star ratings (alongside the total sample size) for each product in the selected basket of goods.
- d) A summary of the findings from Phase 1 including a description of the framework used and the features of these reviews and their rate of occurrence in the identification of suspicious reviews.
- e) A summary table of outputs from Phase 2, including a breakdown of consumer product choices made in each group; regressions tables plotting the effects on product choice for each group; regressions tables plotting the effects on decision time for each group; tables of panel demographic characteristics and tables of responses to questions on review ratings, well-being and future behaviour.
- f) Written detail of findings from the experiment including commentary on the impact on consumer choice. The supplier should also include commentary on how this impacts interaction with price and demographic groups.
- g) The supplier will provide a virtual presentation to BEIS to disseminate the main findings in the final report.
- h) The final report and presentation are to be completed by the end of August.

Furthermore, the supplier should provide cleaned data sets of any data gathered during the research.

### **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.

For and on behalf of ALMA Economics

Ltd (The Supplier)

Signed



Name



Position



Date

24 August 2022

For and on behalf of The Department for  
Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy  
(The Contracting Authority)

Signed



Name



Position



Date

25 August 2022

**THIS IS THE LAST PAGE OF THESE TERMS & CONDITIONS**