

Invitation to Quote

Invitation to Quote (ITQ) on behalf of UK Research and Innovation
Subject UK SBS Review of the PhD in the Social Sciences
Sourcing reference number CR19073

UK Shared Business Services Ltd (UK SBS)
www.uksbs.co.uk

Registered in England and Wales as a limited company. Company Number 6330639.
Registered Office Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 1FF
VAT registration GB618 3673 25
Copyright (c) UK Shared Business Services Ltd. 2014

Version 1.0

UKSBS
Shared Business Services

Table of Contents

Section	Content
1	<u>About UK Shared Business Services Ltd.</u>
2	<u>About the Contracting Authority</u>
3	<u>Working with the Contracting Authority.</u>
4	<u>Specification</u>
5	<u>Evaluation model</u>
6	<u>Evaluation questionnaire</u>
7	<u>General Information</u>

Section 1 – About UK Shared Business Services

Putting the business into shared services

UK Shared Business Services Ltd (UK SBS) brings a commercial attitude to the public sector; helping our Contracting Authorities improve efficiency, generate savings and modernise.

It is our vision to become the leading service provider for the Contracting Authorities of shared business services in the UK public sector, continuously reducing cost and improving quality of business services for Government and the public sector.

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

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

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

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

Our Customers

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

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

Privacy Statement

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

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

- We will keep your data safe and private.
- We will not sell your data to anyone.

- We will only share your data with those you give us permission to share with and only for legitimate service delivery reasons.

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

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

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

Section 2 – About the Contracting Authority

UK Research and Innovation

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

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

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

For more information, please visit: www.ukri.org

Section 3 - Working with the Contracting Authority.

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

Section 3 – Contact details		
3.1.	Contracting Authority Name and address	UK Research and Innovation – ESRC Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN2 1FL
3.2.	Buyer name	Alex Thomas
3.3.	Buyer contact details	Research@uksbs.co.uk
3.4.	Maximum value of the Opportunity	£175,000.00 Excluding VAT
3.5.	Process for the submission of clarifications and Bids	All correspondence shall be submitted within the Messaging Centre of the e-sourcing. Guidance Notes to support the use of Delta eSourcing is available here. Please note submission of a Bid to any email address including the Buyer <u>will</u> result in the Bid <u>not</u> being considered.

Section 3 - Timescales		
3.6.	Date of Issue of Contract Advert on Contracts Finder	Tuesday, 5th November 2019 Contracts Finder
3.7.	Latest date / time ITQ clarification questions shall be received through Delta eSourcing messaging system	Monday, 18 th November 2019 11:00
3.8.	Latest date / time ITQ clarification answers should be sent to all Bidders by the Buyer through Delta eSourcing Portal	Wednesday, 20 th November 2019
3.9.	Latest date and time ITQ Bid shall be submitted through Delta eSourcing	Monday, 9 th December 2019 11:00
3.10.	Clarifications if required	Wednesday, 11 th December 2019
3.11.	Interviews	w/c Monday, 16 th December 2019
3.12.	Anticipated notification date of successful and unsuccessful Bids	Friday, 20 th December 2019
3.13.	Anticipated Contract Award date	Friday, 20 th December 2019
3.14.	Anticipated Contract Start date	Thursday, 2 nd January 2020
3.15.	Anticipated Contract End date	Monday, 30 th November 2020
3.16.	Bid Validity Period	60 Days

Section 4 – Specification

1. Background

ESRC is part of UK Research and Innovation, a new organisation that brings together the UK's seven research councils, Innovate UK and Research England to maximise the contribution of each council and create the best environment for research and innovation to flourish. The vision is to ensure the UK maintains its world-leading position in research and innovation. For more information visit the [UK Research and Innovation website](#).

UK Research and Innovation is a non-departmental public body funded by a grant-in-aid from the UK government.

The ESRC is the UK's largest organisation for funding research on economic and social issues. We support independent, high quality research which has an impact on business, the public sector and civil society. We invest in talent to ensure UK social science remains world-leading. Through our training and research funding, we nurture cohorts of social scientists across a large number of disciplines and interdisciplinary areas. It is vital that we take a longer-term, strategic view of the overall health of the social sciences and the PhD is a key component of this. We currently provide funding for over 500 studentships per annum through our network of 14 Doctoral Training Partnerships and 2 Centres for Doctoral Training (encompassing 73 Research Organisations in the UK). We train students for careers within and beyond academia – valuing the contribution their skills can make to the economy and society through working in a range of public, private and voluntary organisations. Our focus is on excellence: we want ESRC PhD training to represent the state of the art nationally and internationally, recognised for the rigour of the training and quality of graduates. Through investing at scale we are seeking to drive the quality and content of postgraduate training to ensure consistent high standards across the sector. The ESRC's expectations for doctoral training are detailed within [the Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines](#).

The ESRC has done a considerable amount to raise the quality of postgraduate training and our commitment to ensuring provision remains cutting-edge is reflected in our 2019 [Delivery Plan](#) where we set out to review the social science PhD in the UK. We are seeking a review of the UK's position overall, with a particular emphasis on enhancing current excellence within our ESRC-funded PhDs to ensure they remain fit for the future and represent sector-leading PhD training. The focus will be on the capabilities needed by social science graduates to ensure their contribution to research and their global competitiveness, and the optimum ways to develop this. All of this review is in the context of a research and innovation system which is committed to increasing equality, diversity and inclusion.

A key driver for the review is the changing research landscape. While there is no less need for deep expertise within fields of social science, there is also a growing amount of research grant funding that emphasises challenge-led research that requires collaboration across traditional disciplinary and professional boundaries, and that requires engagement with users in government, business and the voluntary sector. In addition, our Delivery Plan highlights how social scientists will increasingly need to work with new forms of data, or use traditional forms of data in different ways, employing and developing innovative methods to transform what is known about society and the economy. In all cases, it will continue to be vital that this work is underpinned by rigorous research designs. We need

to ensure that we nurture skills to work with the demands of new data, develop skills for team-orientated and interdisciplinary research environments and enhance the capabilities required by the next generation of employers. Our [2016 Review of Support for Early Career Researchers](#), our [2017 Skills Review](#) and discussions with our DTP/CDT Directors and other stakeholders have also raised concerns about whether ESRC doctoral training programmes (and the UK social science PhD more broadly) remain competitive in an increasingly globalised jobs market.

We are also aware that the content of doctoral training and expectations placed on social science PhD students, supervisors and ROs have increased significantly over the last two decades. Alongside methodological training which focuses on the acquisition of research skills and completion of a thesis, there are growing expectations for students to undertake broader transferable skills development both for careers in other sectors and to support excellent knowledge exchange and the development of impact focused skills. Students are typically being expected to undertake development activities which enhance the personal and the professional, provide them with research and academic skills, and exposure to innovation, impact and entrepreneurship. These growing demands associated with PhD training have until now not been accompanied by consideration of the length of a PhD¹ within the social sciences. Unsurprisingly, these increased expectations are leading to increasing concern over doctoral students' mental health and wellbeing. Many UK HEIs permit a period of time (e.g. six or 12 months) as a 'writing up' period but, importantly, this is largely unfunded².

The ESRC seeks to commission an appropriately skilled interdisciplinary team to develop a robust evidence base around the two questions posed in Section 2 (below), and to identify changes needed to ensure our training represents the state of the art and addresses the skills needs of employers both within and beyond academia. The review should not be constrained by our current approach. Nothing is off the table and we are open to creative solutions which recognise differences across social science disciplines and intended career pathways—we aren't necessarily looking for a one-size-fits all approach. We would like to receive robust evidence in relation to:

- The skills needed by future social scientists
- The optimum structures and content for social science PhDs
- Areas where our current approach is working well
- Areas within which revisions to our current requirements would be beneficial

The findings of this review will directly inform the ESRC's strategy for doctoral training and for recommissioning our Doctoral Training Partnerships in 2021/22. More broadly as a constituent part of UKRI the findings will contribute to wider discussions on the development of doctoral training across Councils as part of the UKRI Talent Strategy. Findings will also be of benefit to the sector more broadly.

2. Aims and Objectives of the Project

The overarching aim of this review is to undertake a comprehensive examination of the UK social science PhD and develop a robust evidence base for ESRC (and also ROs and other social science doctoral funders) regarding the state of the art for social science doctorates in terms of length, structure and training content. This should include identifying implications for the ESRC in response to the following two key questions:

¹ ESRC provides DTPs with the flexibility to set the length of their PhD programmes within an overall limit of five years full time support per student. Funding is allocated to DTPs based on a notional 3.5 years per student. DTPs programmes are normally three years for a PhD and four years for a Masters and PhD.

² While ESRC expects PhDs to be completed within the funded period, students do have a year after their funding end date to submit their PhD

1. What are the skills needed by social science PhD graduates to prepare them for careers both within and beyond academia?

-What are the skills UK social science PhD graduates need to compete in a global market-place?

-How competitive do students, graduates and employers perceive UK social science PhDs to be nationally and internationally?

-What skills should be core for all students? Should there be variation in skills across disciplines or in relation to career pathways/student motivation?

2. What are the optimum ways to develop these skills, while recognising the need to support a diverse and inclusive student population, and to safeguard student health and wellbeing?

-What are the strengths of current arrangements in relation to content, structure, support and supervision?

-What can we learn from different models nationally and internationally both within and beyond the social sciences?

In addressing the questions above, the contractor will collect relevant evidence relating to the following areas of focus. These areas are not exhaustive and if the contractor identifies additional topics, we are open to including these within the scope of the review. In reviewing and collecting evidence the contractor should seek to identify innovative practice in doctoral education and think prospectively about future needs relevant to the social sciences.

Areas of focus relevant to the key questions:

Question 1-The contractor will need to engage with stakeholders in industry, the public sector, a range of different groups within academia, and other bodies to identify the skills needed given the changing research environment and broader economy and society challenges. Skills should be broadly conceived but examples might include research design, methods, integrity, impact, interdisciplinary collaboration, knowledge exchange, entrepreneurship, and employability. The contractor should also seek to understand how competitively UK PhD students are viewed in the global jobs market so that they can gauge any difference between current perceptions and what is required for the future.

Question 2-Diversity of structures, programme lengths and pathways; the balance between research and training; the inclusion of placements; links to follow-up or postdoctoral training programmes; collaboration with users; academic rigour; models of supervision.

In addition to the review work and data collection conducted by the external contractor, two complementary work-packages will be led internally by staff within the ESRC, with the data available to the external contractor at the start of the project.

- WP1 will mine existing student datasets in the UK with a particular focus on student demographics and completion rates
- WP2 will track a previous cohort of ESRC-funded students to identify employer destinations on completion

Data and outputs from these work-packages will be shared with the external contractor to feed into the overall review.

3. Suggested Methodology

Data collection and methodological approach

We are looking for an interdisciplinary team to conduct a comprehensive review of the evidence. The successful bidder will represent a range of disciplines/professional areas to avoid a mono-disciplinary approach, and is expected to carry out the following:

- **Review of documentary sources**
 - The identification and critical assessment of international literature.
 - Review of relevant policy material and additional evidence which might point to areas of innovative practice and future skill needs.
 - Review of literature and policy material to indicate how different stakeholders perceive national and international competitiveness.
 - Bidders should outline their approach to identification, review and systematic assessment of data from documentary sources.
- **Analysis of secondary data**
 - Data collected by the ESRC office via work-packages 1 and 2 will be provided to the successful bidder at the start of the project.
 - In addition the contractor should use other existing relevant data sets that may provide evidence on the areas of focus (e.g. Postgraduate Research Experience Survey). Details of what the contractor intends to use and why it adds value to the work should be included within the bid.
- **Primary data collection to gather the perspectives of all stakeholders involved in doctoral education**
 - This is a crucial element of the review. It is essential that the perspectives of students, graduates, supervisors, leading social scientists, funders and all major employer-types including ROs and non-ROs (public, private and civil society), are well-reflected. Initiatives such as Catapult Centres will also be relevant to include.
 - The contractor is required to undertake direct engagement with these key stakeholder groups to collect data via (for example) surveys, focus groups, workshops or interviews (bidders should propose the engagement methods they feel are best suited to the stakeholders and areas of focus).
 - This primary engagement will allow key issues emerging from the initial documentary review to be explored and tested, and for additional qualitative data to fill gaps in understanding and inform the identification of implications for ESRC PhD support for moving forward.
 - ESRC wants to work with the bidder to ensure that this stakeholder engagement utilises established ESRC networks and we will host and meet the event costs of workshops/focus groups by using existing UKRI venues. Members of our Steering Group are keen to contribute to the stakeholder engagement if this is considered beneficial.
 - Bidders should provide full details of how this engagement will be approached in the bid, including: how participation from a range of stakeholders will be secured; the approach to sampling; the particular consultation tools proposed for each stakeholder group, and what information will be elicited from which group.
 - The views of leading social scientists are of particular relevance to our understanding of the competitiveness of the UK PhD. In addition to capturing views from home and international students and graduates, leading academics in different social science disciplines will be invited to reflect on their experiences and give their views on the future skills needed and optimum methods of development.

- Ensuring a spread of institutions in terms of type, size and geography is important as is engaging with institutions that the ESRC doesn't fund doctoral training in, as well as those that it does. It will also be important to ensure the range of social science disciplines are included.
- This element of the review should identify how ESRC's approach to PhD training currently affects HEI's approach to non-ESRC funded students, and how any major change in ESRC practice might impact non ESRC funded PhDs in the future.
- **International comparisons**
 - These are key so that the review is informed by best practice internationally. From the review of documentary sources, we expect the contractor to identify a small number of countries (the United States, plus two countries agreed between the contractor and the ESRC) where there is sufficient evidence of innovation and interest that relate to the UK context and to the themes in question. We would then want the contractor to explore these examples further via documentary analysis and/or desk-based interviews.
- **Analysis and Synthesis**
 - The contractor will be expected to analyse all of the data collected in order to develop evidence-based responses to the two overarching questions and identify what changes are needed to ensure the training we support represents the state of the art and addresses the skills needs of employers. Full details of the intended approach to analysis and synthesis should be included in the bid.

Phasing and timeline

We are looking for the evidence review, including international comparisons, to be conducted between January 2020 and July 2020. We anticipate that the stakeholder engagement activities and follow-up of the international examples will take place between April-July 2020 so that these can be designed in the light of emerging evidence from the review. The draft final report should be delivered by the end of September 2020 and the final report by 16 November 2020.

Collaboration with ESRC internal review team

Close working between the ESRC office and the external consultant will be vital throughout the work. Progress reviews every 2 weeks will take place via email, phone or video conferencing.

Ethics and research governance

The contractor is invited to explain how the research will be conducted in accordance with high ethical standards.

Data protection and security

The contractor is invited to outline how the evaluation will be conducted in accordance with relevant data protection and security standards, including how they will safely store, use and destroy contact details of stakeholders, documentary and the other information collected as part of the evaluation.

Declaration and management of potential conflicts of interests

The contractor will be asked to declare any conflicts of interest and strategies to manage these.

Oversight of the project

- The work of the contractor will be overseen on a day-to-date basis by the ESRC office.

- The Steering Group will meet 5 times during the course of the project (October, January, April, October and December) and will provide expert advice from the outset (meetings are likely to be held in London).
- Draft final report will be subject to peer review by the Steering Group. The contractor is required to respond to comments from the reviewers to produce the final report.

4. Deliverables

- Fortnightly informal progress updates (by email, phone or video conferencing) to the ESRC office and a project inception meeting in January 2020.
- Attendance at the January, April and October Steering Group meetings
- One interim written progress report for the Steering Group in April 2020
- Data collection tools – templates for the documentary review, survey questionnaires, interview topic guides etc – these must all be signed off before use by the ESRC.
- Draft final and final report:
 - The format of the final report can be agreed during the course of the study.
 - The final report must include detailed description of the data collection methodology used to collect and analyse evidence (with full details in an appendix and a summary in the main report) and the limitations;
- The final report should set out findings in relation to each of the areas of focus, and evidence-based responses and implications for ESRC arising from the two overarching questions, identifying what changes are needed to ensure the training we support represents the state of the art and addresses employers skills needs.

Terms and Conditions

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

Section 5 – Evaluation model

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

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

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

The evaluation and if required team may comprise staff from UK SBS and the Contracting Authority and any specific external stakeholders the Contracting Authority deems required. After evaluation and if required moderation scores will be finalised by performing a calculation to identify (at question level) the mean average of all evaluators (Example – a question is scored by three evaluators and judged as scoring 5, 5 and 6. These scores will be added together and divided by the number of evaluators to produce the final score of 5.33 ($5+5+6=16\div3=5.33$))

Pass / Fail criteria		
Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject
Commercial	SEL1.2	Employment breaches/ Equality
Commercial	SEL1.3	Compliance to Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act
Commercial	SEL2.10	Cyber Essentials
Commercial	SEL2.12	General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Act and the Data Protection Act 2018
Commercial	FOI1.1	Freedom of Information
Commercial	AW1.1	Form of Bid
Commercial	AW1.3	Certificate of Bona Fide Bid
Commercial	AW3.1	Validation check
Commercial	AW4.1	Compliance to the Contract Terms
Commercial	AW4.2	Changes to the Contract Terms
Commercial	AW6.3	Non-Disclosure Agreement
Price	AW5.1	Maximum Budget
Price	AW5.4	E Invoicing
Price	AW5.5	Implementation of E-Invoicing
Quality	AW6.1	Compliance to the Specification
Quality	AW6.2	Variable Bids
-	-	Invitation to Quote – received on time within e-sourcing tool
	In the event of a Bidder failing to meet the requirements of a Mandatory pass / fail criteria, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to disqualify the Bidder and not consider evaluation of any of the Award stage scoring methodology or Mandatory pass / fail criteria.	

Scoring criteria

Evaluation Justification Statement

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

Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject	Maximum Marks
Price	AW5.2	Price	20%
Quality	PROJ1.1	Approach	35%
Quality	PROJ1.2	Staff to Deliver	20%
Quality	PROJ1.3	Project Plan and Timescales	15%
Quality	PROJ1.4	Interview	10%

Evaluation of criteria

Non-Price elements

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

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

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

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

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

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

0	The Question is not answered, or the response is completely unacceptable.
10	Extremely poor response – they have completely missed the point of the question.
20	Very poor response and not wholly acceptable. Requires major revision to the response to make it acceptable. Only partially answers the requirement, with major deficiencies and little relevant detail proposed.
40	Poor response only partially satisfying the selection question requirements with deficiencies apparent. Some useful evidence provided but response falls well short of expectations. Low probability of being a capable supplier.
60	Response is acceptable but remains basic and could have been expanded upon. Response is sufficient but does not inspire.
80	Good response which describes their capabilities in detail which provides high levels of assurance consistent with a quality provider. The response includes a full description of techniques and measurements currently employed.

100	Response is exceptional and clearly demonstrates they are capable of meeting the requirement. No significant weaknesses noted. The response is compelling in its description of techniques and measurements currently employed, providing full assurance consistent with a quality provider.
-----	--

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

Example

Evaluator 1 scored your bid as 60
 Evaluator 2 scored your bid as 60
 Evaluator 3 scored your bid as 40
 Evaluator 4 scored your bid as 40
 Your final score will $(60+60+40+40) \div 4 = 50$

Price elements will be judged on the following criteria.

The lowest price for a response which meets the pass criteria shall score 100. All other bids shall be scored on a pro rata basis in relation to the lowest price. The score is then subject to a multiplier to reflect the percentage value of the price criterion.

For example - Bid 1 £100,000 scores 100.
 Bid 2 £120,000 differential of £20,000 or 20% remove 20% from price scores 80
 Bid 3 £150,000 differential £50,000 remove 50% from price scores 50.
 Bid 4 £175,000 differential £75,000 remove 75% from price scores 25.
 Bid 5 £200,000 differential £100,000 remove 100% from price scores 0.
 Bid 6 £300,000 differential £200,000 remove 100% from price scores 0.
 Where the scoring criterion is worth 50% then the 0-100 score achieved will be multiplied by 50.

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

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

Section 6 – Evaluation questionnaire

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

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

PLEASE NOTE THE QUESTIONS ARE NOT NUMBERED SEQUENTIALLY

Section 7 – General Information

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

DO:

- 7.1 Do comply with Procurement document instructions. Failure to do so may lead to disqualification.
- 7.2 Do provide the Bid on time, and in the required format. Remember that the date/time given for a response is the last date that it can be accepted; we are legally bound to disqualify late submissions. Responses received after the date indicated in the ITQ shall not be considered by the Contracting Authority, unless the Bidder can justify that the reason for the delay, is solely attributable to the Contracting Authority
- 7.3 Do ensure you have read all the training materials to utilise e-sourcing tool prior to responding to this Bid. If you send your Bid by email or post it will be rejected.
- 7.4 Do use Microsoft Word, PowerPoint Excel 97-03 or compatible formats, or PDF unless agreed in writing by the Buyer. If you use another file format without our written permission, we may reject your Bid.
- 7.5 Do ensure you utilise the Delta eSourcing messaging system to raise any clarifications to our ITQ. You should note that we will release the answer to the question to all Bidders and where we suspect the question contains confidential information, we may modify the content of the question to protect the anonymity of the Bidder or their proposed solution
- 7.6 Do answer the question, it is not enough simply to cross-reference to a 'policy', web page or another part of your Bid, the evaluation team have limited time to assess bids and if they can't find the answer, they can't score it.
- 7.7 Do consider who the Contracting Authority is and what they want – a generic answer does not necessarily meet every Contracting Authority's needs.
- 7.8 Do reference your documents correctly, specifically where supporting documentation is requested e.g. referencing the question/s they apply to.
- 7.9 Do provide clear, concise and ideally generic contact details; telephone numbers, e-mails and fax details.
- 7.10 Do complete all questions in the questionnaire or we may reject your Bid.
- 7.11 Do ensure that the Response and any documents accompanying it are in the English Language, the Contracting Authority reserve the right to disqualify any full or part responses that are not in English.
- 7.12 Do check and recheck your Bid before dispatch.

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

DO NOT

- 7.13 Do not cut and paste from a previous document and forget to change the previous details such as the previous buyer's name.
- 7.14 Do not attach 'glossy' brochures that have not been requested, they will not be read unless we have asked for them. Only send what has been requested and only send supplementary information if we have offered the opportunity so to do.
- 7.15 Do not share the Procurement documents, they are confidential and should not be shared with anyone without the Buyers written permission.
- 7.16 Do not seek to influence the procurement process by requesting meetings or contacting UK SBS or the Contracting Authority to discuss your Bid. If your Bid requires clarification the Buyer will contact you. All information secured outside of formal Buyer communications shall have no Legal standing or worth and should not be relied upon.
- 7.17 Do not contact any UK SBS staff or the Contracting Authority staff without the Buyers written permission or we may reject your Bid.
- 7.18 Do not collude to fix or adjust the price or withdraw your Bid with another Party as we will reject your Bid.
- 7.19 Do not offer UK SBS or the Contracting Authority staff any inducement or we will reject your Bid.
- 7.20 Do not seek changes to the Bid after responses have been submitted and the deadline for Bids to be submitted has passed.
- 7.21 Do not cross reference answers to external websites or other parts of your Bid, the cross references and website links will not be considered.
- 7.22 Do not exceed word counts, the additional words will not be considered.
- 7.23 Do not make your Bid conditional on acceptance of your own Terms of Contract, as your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.24 Do not unless explicitly requested by the Contracting Authority either in the procurement documents or via a formal clarification from the Contracting Authority send your response by any way other than via e-sourcing tool. Responses received by any other method than requested will not be considered for the opportunity.

Some additional guidance notes

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

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

- 7.41 All timescales are set using a 24-hour clock and are based on British Summer Time or Greenwich Mean Time, depending on which applies at the point when Date and Time Bids shall be submitted through the Delta eSourcing Portal.
- 7.42 All Central Government Departments and their Executive Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies are subject to control and reporting within Government. In particular, they report to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury for all expenditure. Further, the Cabinet Office has a cross-Government role delivering overall Government policy on public procurement - including ensuring value for money and related aspects of good procurement practice.

For these purposes, the Contracting Authority may disclose within Government any of the Bidders documentation/information (including any that the Bidder considers to be confidential and/or commercially sensitive such as specific bid information) submitted by the Bidder to the Contracting Authority during this Procurement. The information will not be disclosed outside Government. Bidders taking part in this ITQ consent to these terms as part of the competition process.

- 7.43 The Government introduced its new Government Security Classifications (GSC) classification scheme on the 2nd April 2014 to replace the current Government Protective Marking System (GPMS). A key aspect of this is the reduction in the number of security classifications used. All Bidders are encouraged to make themselves aware of the changes and identify any potential impacts in their Bid, as the protective marking and applicable protection of any material passed to, or generated by, you during the procurement process or pursuant to any Contract awarded to you as a result of this tender process will be subject to the new GSC. The link below to the Gov.uk website provides information on the new GSC:

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

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to amend any security related term or condition of the draft contract accompanying this ITQ to reflect any changes introduced by the GSC. In particular where this ITQ is accompanied by any instructions on safeguarding classified information (e.g. a Security Aspects Letter) as a result of any changes stemming from the new GSC, whether in respect of the applicable protective marking scheme, specific protective markings given, the aspects to which any protective marking applies or otherwise. This may relate to the instructions on safeguarding classified information (e.g. a Security Aspects Letter) as they apply to the procurement as they apply to the procurement process and/or any contracts awarded to you as a result of the procurement process.

USEFUL INFORMATION LINKS

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