

Line Gray

**Invitation to Tender**

**Professional Proofing and pre-flight services   
for DfE assessment materials   
(August 2022 - August 2023)**

Contract Ref: STA-0307

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Bidding company / Individual:** | [Please complete] |
| **Name of single point of contact:** |  |
| **Email address:** |  |
| **Phone Number:** |  |
| **Postal Address:** |  |

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Purpose**

This Invitation to Tender (ITT) has been issued by the Standards and Testing Agency (STA), on behalf of the Department for Education, to carry out a competitive procurement exercise to award a contract for professional proofing and pre-flight services.

STA requires external professional proofing and pre-flight services for:

• Proofing and quality assurance review of KS1 and KS2 standard national curriculum test materials, and phonics check, including electronic mark-up of identified amendments;

• Proofing and quality assurance review of KS1 and KS2 modified national curriculum test materials, including electronic mark-up of identified amendments; and

• carrying out pre-flight checks to ensure accurate printing of all materials.

**1.2 Structure**

This document:

* sets out the context for the required services;
* outlines the planned procurement process; and
* contains a Tender response section to evaluate the Bidder's proposed response to STA's requirements and the associated evaluation criteria.

**1.3 Disclaimer and conditions**

No information contained in this ITT or in any communication made between STA and any Bidder shall be relied upon as constituting a contract, agreement, or representation that any contract will be offered.

STA reserves the right, subject to the appropriate procurement regulations, to change without notice the basis of, or the procedures for, the competitive process or to terminate the process at any time. Under no circumstances shall STA incur any liability in respect of this ITT, or any supporting documentation and STA will not reimburse any costs incurred by Bidders or potential Bidders in connection with preparation and/or submission of their responses.

The information contained within this document is confidential and should not be disclosed except for purposes related to its completion.

**1.4 Freedom of information and transparency**

STA is committed to open government and to meeting its legal responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. All information submitted to a public authority may need to be disclosed by the public authority in response to a request under the Act. STA may also decide to include certain information in the publication scheme, which it maintains under the Act.

STA also has a commitment to the Government's transparency initiative relating to public sector suppliers, their transactions, and their contracts. This includes:

* publication of Tender or Quote documentation;
* publication of financial transactions relating to expenditure with third parties; and
* publication of new contracts.

If a Bidder considers that any of the information included in its response to this Invitation to Tender (ITT) is commercially sensitive, the information should be identified in the table below with an explanation of what harm may result from disclosure if a request is received, and the time period applicable to that sensitivity. Bidders should be aware that, even where they have indicated that information is commercially sensitive, STA might be required to disclose it under the Freedom of Information Act or as part of the Government's transparency arrangements.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Section** | **Commercial sensitivity** | **Time period** |
|  |  |  |

**2. SPECIFICATION OF REQUIREMENTS**

**2.1 Overview**

STA requires external professional proofing and pre-flight services for:

* Proofing and quality assurance review of KS1 and KS2 national curriculum test materials and phonics check, including electronic mark-up of identified amendments;
* Proofing and quality assurance review of KS1 and KS2 modified national curriculum test materials, including electronic mark-up of identified amendments; and
* carrying out pre-flight checks to ensure accurate printing of test materials, including electronic mark-up of identified amendments.

The supplier will need to:

* commit appropriate resource to working on the work packages between August 2022 and August 2023;
* be flexible to accommodate resource needs, providing additional resources at short notice to complete proofing and pre-flight activities to agreed timelines and to required quality standards;
* possess substantial and recent expertise in professional proofing and pre-flight checks of documents for print;
* possess substantial and recent expertise of producing electronic mark-up of documents using Adobe Acrobat Pro;
* understand the development of materials and use of design guidelines and have experience in reviewing confidential materials for assessment;
* possess the ability to communicate effectively with various stakeholders providing constructive feedback and be prepared to provide workable solutions to any problems and/or issues identified during this project;
* comply with STA's security procedures to maintain the integrity of the tests, including:
  + secure onsite working areas;
  + secure methods of electronic transfer and storage;
  + secure deletion/destruction of materials at the end of the project; and
  + comply with filing and naming conventions established by STA, in order to maintain an accurate audit trail.

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**2.2 Project Deliverables/Outputs and Project Timelines**

STA wishes to procure quality assurance and proofing services:

* 2023 key stage 1 and 2 national curriculum test proofing for both standard and modified test materials, and phonics check standard materials – conducted after tests are constructed internally and prior to final sign-off. The external supplier complements in-house proofing arrangements; offering quality assurance, editorial review, a comprehensive cross-read of content and a technical pre-flight review of content.

The Project deliverables/outputs are provided in the table below, and individual deliverables or outputs are indicated as project timelines where appropriate. All deliverables and outputs are categorised as mandatory, and it is essential that you confirm that you can meet them in full. Unless indicated below, all dates are negotiable with STA. Failure to provide confirmation in your proposal documents may result in your proposal being rejected.

The specific dates for all Requirements must be included within the project plan in the response to the Technical Evaluation.

For reference, past papers have been published: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum-assessments-practice-materials>.

Quality assurance proofing and pre-flight check for print of standard materials:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Standard test components (PRINT)** | **Pages (to note that these are estimates, based on 2022 materials and subject to change)** |
| 2023 key stage 1 English reading Paper 1: reading prompt and answer booklet | 20 |
| 2023 key stage 1 English reading Paper 2: reading answer booklet | 12 |
| 2023 key stage 1 English reading Paper 2: reading booklet | 12 |
| 2023 key stage 1 English reading test mark schemes Paper 1: reading prompt and answer booklet and Paper 2: reading answer booklet | 28 |
| 2023 key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling Paper 1: spelling (Electronic only) | 4 |
| 2023 key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling Paper 2: questions (Electronic only) | 16 |
| 2023 key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test mark schemes Paper 1: spelling and Paper 2: questions (Electronic only) | 20 |
| 2023 key stage 1 mathematics Paper 1: arithmetic | 20 |
| 2023 key stage 1 mathematics Paper 2: reasoning | 32 |
| 2023 key stage 1 mathematics test mark schemes  Paper 1: arithmetic and Paper 2: reasoning | 24 |
| 2023 key stage 2 English reading answer booklet | 12 |
| 2023 key stage 2 English reading booklet | 20 |
| 2023 key stage 2 English reading Mark schemes | 28 |
| 2023 key stage 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling Paper 1: questions | 32 |
| 2023 key stage 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling Paper 2: spelling | 4 |
| 2023 key stage 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling Mark schemes | 20 |
| 2023 key stage 2 mathematics Paper 1: arithmetic | 20 |
| 2023 key stage 2 mathematics Paper 2: reasoning | 24 |
| 2023 key stage 2 mathematics Paper 3: reasoning | 24 |
| 2023 key stage 2 mathematics Mark schemes | 40 |
| 2023 phonics screen check – combined total of all materials |  |
| **Test administration instruction (Print)** |  |
| 2023 key stage 1 English reading Administering Paper 1: combined reading prompt and answer booklet | 8 |
| 2023 key stage 1 English reading Administering Paper 2: reading booklet and reading answer booklet | 4 |
| 2023 key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling Administering Paper 1: spelling (Electronic only) | 8 |
| 2023 key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling Administering Paper 2: questions (Electronic only) | 4 |
| 2023 key stage 1 mathematics Administering Paper 1: arithmetic | 4 |
| 2023 key stage 1 mathematics Administering Paper 2: reasoning | 12 |
| 2023 key stage 2 English reading Administering the reading booklet and reading answer booklet | 4 |
| 2023 key stage 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling  Administering Paper 1: questions | 4 |
| 2023 key stage 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling Administering Paper 2: spelling | 8 |
| 2023 key stage 2 mathematics Administering Paper 1: Arithmetic | 4 |
| 2023 key stage 2 mathematics Administering Paper 2: reasoning | 4 |
| 2023 key stage 2 mathematics Administering Paper 3: reasoning | 4 |

**Project timelines**

**Standard materials review periods** – these dates are provided for illustration only and will be confirmed in August 2022.

**Key stage 1 English GPS standard materials and test administration guidance:**

Transferred to supplier: 12/12/22

**3-day proofing period:** 13/12/22 to 16/12/22

Returned to STA by end of 16/12/22

**Key stage 1 English reading standard materials and test administration guidance:**

Transferred to supplier: 16/12/22

**3-day proofing period:** 19/12/22 to 22/12/22

Returned to STA by end of 22/12/22

**Key stage 1 mathematics standard materials and test administration guidance:**

Transferred to supplier: 24/10/22

**3-day proofing period:** 25/10/22 to 27/10/22

Returned to STA by end of 25/10/22

**Key stage 2 English GPS standard materials and test administration guidance:**

Transferred to supplier: 7/11/22

**3-day proofing period:** 8/11/22 to 10/11/22

Returned to STA by end of 10/11/22

**Key stage 2 English reading standard materials and test administration guidance:**

Transferred to supplier: 11/11/22

**3-day proofing period:** 12/11/22 to 14/11/22

Returned to STA by end of 14/11/22

**Key stage 2 mathematics standard materials and test administration guidance:**

Transferred to supplier: 14/11/22

**3-day proofing period:** 15/11/19 to 17/11/22

Returned to STA by end of 17/11/22

**Phonics standard materials and test administration guidance:**

Transferred to supplier: 24/1/23

**2-day proofing period:** 25/1/23 to 26/1/23

Returned to STA by end of 26/1/23

**Quality assurance proofing and pre-flight check for print of modified materials:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Modified large print test components (PRINT)** | **Estimated pages** |
| 2023 key stage 1 English reading Modified large print  Paper 1 reading prompt and answer booklet | 36 + 4 |
| 2023 key stage 1 English reading Modified large print  Paper 2 reading answer booklet | 12 + 4 |
| 2023 key stage 1 English reading Modified large print  Paper 2 reading booklet | 16 + 4 |
| 2023 key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling Modified large print Paper 1: spelling | 4 + 4 |
| 2023 key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling Modified large print Paper 2: questions | 16 + 4 |
| 2023 key stage 1 mathematics Modified large print Paper 1: arithmetic | 16 + 4 |
| 2023 key stage 1 mathematics Modified large print Paper 2: reasoning | 28 + 4 |
| 2023 key stage 2 English reading Modified large print Reading answer booklet | 18 + 4 |
| 2023 key stage 2 English reading Modified large print Reading booklet | 8 + 4 |
| 2023 key stage 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling Modified large print Paper 1: questions | 18 + 4 |
| 2023 key stage 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling Modified large print Paper 2: spelling | 3 + 4 |
| 2023 key stage 2 mathematics Modified large print Paper 1: arithmetic | 9 + 4 |
| 2023 key stage 2 mathematics Modified large print Paper 2: reasoning | 14 + 4 |
| 2023 key stage 2 mathematics Modified large print Paper 3: reasoning | 12 + 4 |
| **Modified test administration instructions: MLP (Print)** |  |
| 2023 key stage 1 English reading Administering the modified large print (MLP) version of Paper 1: reading prompt and answer booklet | 8 |
| 2023 key stage 1 English reading Administering the modified large print (MLP) version of Paper 2: reading booklet and reading answer booklet | 8 |
| 2023 key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling Administering the modified large print (MLP) version of Paper 1: spelling | 4 |
| 2023 key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling Administering the modified large print (MLP) version of Paper 2: questions | 4 |
| 2023 key stage 1 mathematics  Administering the modified large print (MLP) version of Paper 1: arithmetic | 8 |
| 2023 key stage 1 mathematics  Administering the modified large print (MLP) version of Paper 2: reasoning | 8 |
| 2023 key stage 2 English reading Administering the modified large print (MLP) version of the reading booklet and reading answer booklet | 2 |
| 2023 key stage 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling Administering the modified large print (MLP) version of Paper 1: questions | 2 |
| 2023 key stage 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling Administering the modified large print (MLP) version of Paper 2: spelling | 2 |
| 2023 key stage 2 mathematics  Administering the modified large print (MLP) version of Paper 1: arithmetic | 2 |
| 2023 key stage 2 mathematics  Administering the modified large print (MLP) version of Paper 2: reasoning | 2 |
| 2023 key stage 2 mathematics Administering the modified large print (MLP) version of Paper 3: reasoning | 2 |
| **Modified test administration instructions - Braille (Print)** |  |
| 2023 key stage 1 English reading Administering the braille version of Paper 1: reading prompt and question booklet | 8 |
| 2023 key stage 1 English reading Administering the braille version of Paper 2: reading booklet and reading question booklet | 8 |
| 2023 key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling Administering the braille version of Paper 2: questions | 8 |
| 2023 key stage 1 mathematics Administering the braille version of Paper 1: arithmetic | 8 |
| 2023 key stage 1 mathematics Administering the braille version of Paper 2: reasoning | 8 |
| 2023 key stage 2 English reading Administering the braille version of the reading booklet and reading answer booklet | 4 |
| 2023 key stage 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling Administering the braille version of Paper 1: questions | 4 |
| 2023 key stage 2 mathematics Administering the braille version of Paper 1: arithmetic | 4 |
| 2023 key stage 2 mathematics Administering the braille version of Paper 2: reasoning | 4 |
| 2023 key stage 2 mathematics Administering the braille version of Paper 3: reasoning | 4 |
| **Braille transcripts (Print)** |  |
| 2023 key stage 1 English reading Braille transcript Paper 1: reading prompt and answer booklet | 8 |
| 2023 key stage 1 English reading Braille transcript Paper 2: reading answer booklet | 4 |
| 2023 key stage 1 English reading Braille transcript Paper 2: reading booklet | 4 |
| 2023 key stage 1 English grammar, punctuation and spelling Braille transcript Paper 2: questions | 6 |
| 2023 key stage 1 mathematics Braille transcript Paper 1: arithmetic | 4 |
| 2023 key stage 1 mathematics Braille transcript Paper 2: reasoning | 24 |
| 2023 key stage 2 English reading Braille transcript reading answer booklet | 8 |
| 2023 key stage 2 English reading Braille transcript reading booklet | 12 |
| 2023 key stage 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling Braille transcript Paper 1: questions | 11 |
| 2023 key stage 2 mathematics Braille transcript Paper 1: arithmetic | 8 |
| 2023 key stage 2 mathematics Braille transcript Paper 2: reasoning | 20 |
| 2023 key stage 2 mathematics Braille transcript Paper 3: reasoning | 20 |

**Modified materials project timelines** – dates to be confirmed.

Presently we estimate a series of 3-day proofing windows, similar to above, over February/March 2023.

* **Key stage 1 English GPS MLP materials and modified test administration guidance**
* **Key stage 1 English reading MLP materials and modified test administration guidance**
* **Key stage 1 mathematics MLP materials and modified test administration guidance**
* **Key stage 2 English GPS MLP materials and modified test administration guidance**
* **Key stage 2 English reading MLP materials and modified test administration guidance**
* **Key stage 2 mathematics MLP materials and modified test administration guidance**
* **Braille transcript proofing will also take place during February/March 2023**

**2.3 Department resources**

The successful Bidder will be expected to work with:

* Senior delivery manager (STA design)
* Assistant project manager – test design (STA design)
* Lead test development researcher (English reading)
* Lead test development researcher (English grammar, punctuation and spelling)
* Lead test development researcher (Mathematics)
* Other test development researchers and project managers as required.

This will require regular communication via email/phone to agree initial briefs and schedule, and subsequent amendments and sign off.

**2.4 Timescale**

The work will be required between August 2022 and April 2023. The option to extend for a further year will be built into the contract.

**2.5 Functional requirements**

The work will be required between August 2022 and March 2023. The option to extend for a further year will be built into the contract.

# 2.5.1 Test Security

All test materials are confidential. All files and proofs must be handled in a secure and confidential manner. Transmission of information regarding test materials via unsecured networks or email or by regular postal service is prohibited.

All staff working on the materials must sign a confidentiality agreement. Staff must work on these materials in a secure work area. They cannot work on materials at home.

On secure transfer of electronic materials, a list of products transferred will be supplied.

Contractor to email to inform and confirm receipt of electronic materials. Any discrepancies are to be notified to STA immediately.

**Security Compliance:** The Contractor must be compliant with all security requirements highlighted by STA Security and IS027001 compliant. Where compliance has not yet been achieved an action plan and risk register must be agreed by both parties to address any issues identified within an acceptable timeframe.

The Requirements Specification or Security Policy details the minimum standards of security required by STA for the delivery of the required Services under the Contract or any Order. STA will use all reasonable endeavours to work with the Contractor to ensure that where necessary, policies and processes are developed to assist the Contractor in meeting STA’s requirements prior to provision of the Services.

The Contractor must follow the processes and procedures as outlined in the Test Development Security Policy for External Suppliers as attached:



Where any breach of security occurs, the Supplier must follow the STA security incident guidelines. All project team members and any other individual working on this project must be made aware of their obligations under the STA security policy.

In the event that STA, in its sole discretion, considers that the required Security Policies or processes have not been implemented by the Contractor prior to delivery of the Services, STA reserves the right to cancel any Order and/or terminate the Contract with immediate effect.

**Secure file compression:** If files need to be transferred using a means other than the STA secure web portal, use the following compression and encryption guidance.

**Compressing files:** All files must be compressed, then encrypted (see File Management) prior to handover to STA. All electronic material provided back to STA must be encrypted to CESG standards (minimum of 256 AES) in a form that is fully compatible with and capable of extraction by a Windows desktop.

# 2.5.2 File Management

The Contractor must establish a secure file management system to log assets (PDF materials) and to restrict and monitor any access to the system.

Transfer of materials will be by the STA secure web portal. If other means of transfer are required, this will be via Galaxkey file transfer software (<https://www.galaxkey.com/>), or by a secure supplier solution as agreed by STA and the Contractor. The encryption method used by STA is PGP (<http://buy.symantec.com/estore/clp/productdetails/pk/drive-encryption>). STA will supply all electronic material to the Contractor in an encrypted form using a self-extracting encrypted file (produced on a Windows desktop). All electronic material provided back to STA must be encrypted to CESG standards (minimum of 256 AES) in a form that is fully compatible with and capable of extraction by a Windows desktop.

**2.5.3 Proofing**

STA requires a proofing review of the materials provided:

* Checking that style sheet/house style is adhered to
* Ensuring consistency of formatting
* Spelling, punctuation and grammar check
* Cross checking in-text references with other test components, so a suite of materials is internally coherent.
* Review using checklist provided by STA.

Reviewers will limit their comments to this level of review, and not provide sub-editing or editorial comment, unless those comments correct any ambiguity.

**2.5.4 Pre-flight review**

Contractor should review the PDFs supplied and check their suitability for lithographic reproduction – confirming that the files are correctly prepared for print.

* check for rich blacks or use of registration on document pages
* images and graphics embedded
* fonts are embedded
* files are the correct colour format and Pantone
* images are the correct resolution
* image files are not corrupt
* confirm that the page layout document size, margins, bleeds, marks and page information all fit within the constraints of the output specification
* confirm that the correct colour separations or ink plates are being output

**2.5.5 Working with STA**

Provision of mark ups – the Contractor must adhere to the STA’s guidance on electronic mark up of PDF documents using Adobe Acrobat Pro.

At the start-up meeting STA and Contractor to agree process for transmission of queries during the project cycle. No test content can be discussed within the body of an e-mail. Where test material needs to be discussed, queries can be uploaded to the STA secure web portal and a link sent to the STA.

STA and Contractor to agree point of contact (named person) within both organisations for the management of the process and for queries.

**2.5.6 Finished Products, Handover, Delivery Mode**

**Electronic Handover:** During the project, the Contractor must handover all PDF's securely. The Contractor should outline the process of securely handing over files in a manner that meets STA's security requirements.

Transfer of materials will be by the STA secure web portal. Should files need to be transferred via another method, this will be Galaxkey secure email transfer or contractor secure collaboration portal.

**Secure Archiving**: Following successful handover, all remaining materials (electronic materials including hard drives and back up media and hard copy materials) must be destroyed in line with CESG guidance after a period of 1 month when instructed by STA.

**3. INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS**

**Bidders should read these instructions carefully as well as the Specification of Requirements section above (section 2) before completing the Tender documentation.**

These instructions are designed to ensure that all Bidders are given equal and fair consideration. It is important therefore that you provide all the information asked for in the format and order specified.

The Bidder shall not make contact with any other employee, agent or consultant of the STA who is in any way connected with this procurement exercise during the period of the exercise, unless instructed otherwise by the STA.

All material issued in connection with this ITT shall remain the property of the STA and shall be used only for the purpose of this procurement exercise. Any confidential STA information shall either be returned to the STA or securely destroyed by the Bidder (at STA’s discretion) at the conclusion of the procurement exercise.

The Bidder shall ensure that each and every proposed sub-contractor, consortium member and adviser abides by the terms of these instructions.

The STA shall not be committed to any course of action as a result of:

* issuing this ITT or any invitation to participate in this procurement exercise;
* communicating with a Bidder or a Bidder’s representatives or agents in respect of this procurement exercise; or
* any other communication between the STA (whether directly or by its agents or representatives) and any other party.

Bidders shall accept and acknowledge that, by issuing this ITT, the STA shall not be bound to accept any bid, and reserves the right not to conclude a contract for the services for which bids are invited.

The STA reserves the right to amend, add to, or withdraw all or any part of this ITT at any time during the procurement exercise.

**3.1 Application validity**

Your bid should remain open for acceptance for a period of 60 days from the submission date.

* 1. **Proposed contract**

The term of the contract will be from August 2022 to August 2023.

* The parties acknowledge that, except for any information which is exempt from disclosure in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the contents of this Order are not Confidential Information. STA shall be responsible for determining at its absolute discretion whether any of the content of the Order is exempt from disclosure in accordance with the provisions of the FOIA.
* Notwithstanding any other term of the Order, the Contractor hereby gives consent for STA to publish the Order publicly in its entirety, including from time-to-time agreed changes to the Order, as well as payments made in accordance with the Order.

Bidders should set out below any concerns relating to the use of the terms and conditions for this work, noting that STA gives no undertaking to agree to any changes.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Contract Reference** | **Issue** | **Proposed mitigation** |
|  |  |  |

A copy of the draft contract is included in Appendix 1 for your information.

**3.3 Procurement and delivery timescales**

The proposed procurement timetable is set out below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Stage** |
| 16/05/2022 | ITT issued |
| 15/06/2022 Midday | Deadline for clarification questions |
| 01/07/2022 Midday | Deadline for submission of bids |
| 25/07/2022 | Notification to successful suppliers |
| 04/08/2022 | Stand Still period |
| 05/08/2022 | Contracts issued to successful supplier |
| 15/08/2022 | Deadline for receipt of signed contracts from suppliers |
| 15/08/2022 | Contract start date |

**3.4 Clarification questions**

Clarification requests should be submitted by e-mail only to: [TendersTD.STA@education.gov.uk](mailto:TendersTD.STA@education.gov.uk) and copied to Chris.davies@education.gov.uk

In order to ensure equality of treatment of Bidders, STA intends to publish the questions and clarifications raised by Bidders, together with the STA's responses (but not the source of the questions), to all participants at regular intervals along with this ITT and the proposed contract.

Bidders should indicate if a query is of a commercially sensitive nature – where disclosure of such a query and the answer would or would be likely to prejudice its commercial interests. However, if STA at its sole discretion does not either consider the query to be of a commercially confidential nature, or one which all Bidders would potentially benefit from seeing, then STA will either:

* invite the Bidder submitting the query either to declassify the query or allow the query, along with the STA’s response, to be circulated to all Bidders; or
* request the Bidder, if it still considers the query to be of a commercially confidential nature, to withdraw the query.

STA reserves the right not to respond to a request for clarification or to circulate such a request where it considers that the answer to that request would be likely to prejudice its own commercial interests.

**3.5 Preparation of bid**

Bidders are solely responsible for their costs and expenses incurred in connection with the preparation and submission of their bid. Under no circumstances will STA, or any of their advisers, be liable for any costs or expenses borne by Bidders, sub-contractors, suppliers, or advisers in this process.

Bidders are required to complete and provide all information required by the STA. Failure to comply with these requirements may lead STA to reject a bid.

STA relies on Bidders' own analysis and review of information provided. Consequently, Bidders are solely responsible for obtaining the information which they consider is necessary in order to make decisions regarding the content of their applications and to undertake any investigations they consider necessary in order to verify any information provided to them by STA during the procurement process.

**3.6 Confidentiality**

All information supplied by STA to Bidders must be treated in confidence and not disclosed to third parties except if this is necessary to obtain sureties for the purposes of submitting the Quote.

All information supplied by Bidders to STA will similarly be treated in confidence except for the disclosure of such information as may be required in accordance with the requirements of UK government policy on the disclosure of information relating to government contracts including the Freedom of Information Act.

**3.7 Conflict of interest**

Any conflicts of interest should be declared in the bidder’s bid including other work for STA that could conflict with the objective and successful discharge of these services. For example, bidders would need to declare their interest if they carried out work for any organisation contributing to the development or delivery of the national curriculum tests. This would include organisations or individuals on the modified, item writing and quality assurance frameworks.

**3.8 Value added tax**

Proposals should be made exclusive of relevant VAT. Test development is exempt from VAT.

**3.9 Submission of bids**

The application must be submitted in the form specified by completing the Bidder’s Response section and using Arial 11 font and in English. Word limits must be adhered to and material in excess of these limits will not be evaluated. Any attachments unless specifically asked for will be included in the word count.

Bidders should ensure all responses are explicit and complete for each specific question. References to answers in other questions/sections may not be considered and could result in a lower score being applied.

Bidders must submit their two responses in electronic format using Microsoft Word (or equivalent) with their organisation name in the document title. One should be labelled “priced” and the other labelled “non-priced”.

**Bids must be received by midday 1 July 2022** and should be sent to [TendersTD.STA@education.gov.uk](mailto:TendersTD.STA@education.gov.uk) and copied to [Chris.davies@education.gov.uk](mailto:Chris.davies@education.gov.uk)

Bids will be accepted at any time up to this deadline but will not be opened or evaluated until the deadline has passed.

Any bid received after the deadline may be rejected unless the Bidder can provide irrefutable evidence that the application was capable of being received by the due date and time and that delivery failure was beyond their reasonable control.

**3.10 Right to reject/disqualify**

The STA reserves the right to reject or disqualify a Bidder where:

* the Bidder fails to comply fully with the requirements of this ITT, including proper completion of the format for response, or is guilty of a serious misrepresentation in supplying any information required in this document; or
* there is a change in identity, control, financial standing or other factor relating to the Bidder that impacts on the selection and/or evaluation process.

**3.11 Debriefing**

Following the conclusion of the process, all unsuccessful Bidders will have the opportunity of a debriefing. Unsuccessful Bidders should notify STA by email that they wish to be debriefed. STA will aim to debrief unsuccessful Bidders within 15 working days of receiving such a request.

**4. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

## 4.1 Basis of award decision

Tenders will be evaluated in order to determine the most economically advantageous solution for STA in line with the Framework ordering process.

The most economically advantageous compliant tender will be determined by combining a technical evaluation of the proposed solution, and a commercial evaluation of the proposed price according to the Framework weightings:

* Technical Evaluation (quality) 80%
* Commercial Evaluation (whole life cost) 20%

## 4.2 Evaluation process

Tenders will be formally logged upon receipt. Any tender that is received after the deadline may be rejected.

Following the deadline, a compliance check will then be conducted on all bids that are received on time to determine whether they correspond to the Tender requirements. STA may reject any Tender that does not comply with these Tender requirements.

Tender evaluation will then comprise two stages:

**(1) Technical evaluation:** scoring of the un-priced technical responses will be based on the following:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Technical sub-criterion** | **Weighting** |
| Experience of work on similar projects | **20%** |
| Expertise of staff | **20%** |
| Security and secure file management and transfer | **40%** |
| Methodology and managing customer relationships | **20%** |

**The Technical Threshold for the above is 50%.**

**(2) Commercial evaluation:** assessment of the price for the services as set out in the pricing schedule.

## 4.3 Award decision

The technical and commercial evaluation scores will then be combined using the following methodology:

* Technical Score = 100 x (Bidder's technical score / Best technical score)
* Commercial Score = 100 x (Lowest price / Bidder's price)
* Combined Score = (80% x Technical Score) + (20% x Price Score)

The compliant Bidder who passed the Technical Threshold and with the highest Combined Score will be awarded the contract.

## 4.4 Bidder’s response

Tenders will be evaluated solely on the responses and associated evidence provided by the Bidder in this section of the ITT.

**Scoring 0 - 4**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Score** | **Description** |
| **4 marks** | A score of 4 will reflect that the bidder has demonstrated a consistent and coherent approach to how their solution will meet and comply with all the requirements covered by the evaluation question and the solution as described has a high probability of successful delivery. |
| **3 marks** | A score of 3 will reflect that the bidder has demonstrated a consistent and coherent approach to how their solution will meet and comply with almost all of the requirements covered by the evaluation question and the solution as described has a good probability of successful delivery. Any omission from the solution would not compromise the operational integrity of the service to be provided even though it does not meet the full requirement of the specification. |
| **2 marks** | A score of 2 will reflect that the bidder has demonstrated a partially consistent and/or partially coherent approach to how their solution will meet and comply with the requirements covered by the evaluation question and is unlikely to lead to successful delivery. The solution contains omissions that would compromise the operational integrity of part or all of the service to be provided. |
| **1 mark** | A score of 1 will reflect that the bidder has not provided a consistent and/or coherent approach to how their solution will meet and comply with the requirements covered by the evaluation question and is unlikely to lead to successful delivery.Responses will in parts be vague or unclear with little or no detail given on how they will deliver the specified solutions. Evidence provided is considered weak or inappropriate and it is unclear as to how this relates to specified service requirements. The solution contains omissions that would compromise the operational integrity of the service to be provided. |
| **0 marks** | No answer provided. |

**Q1. Experience of work on similar projects (20% of technical evaluation)**

|  |
| --- |
| Please give evidence of similar projects in terms of scope, scale and accountability that your organisation has successfully managed in the past five years and demonstrate your ability to manage successful projects on time and to budget. (maximum 500 words) |
| Total Word Count: |

# Q2. Expertise of staff (20% of technical evaluation)

|  |
| --- |
| Please detail the key roles you envisage in delivering these services and explain the number and capability of the personnel who you expect to fulfil these roles.  Include these as embedded files below (or separately if necessary) showing relevant skills and experience. (maximum 500 words excluding CV’s or staff profiles). Please submit a single combined file of all CVs/staff profiles, and a single combined file of any example materials. Please note there is a 10MB upper limit on incoming e-mails – please contact us if this is likely to present problems. |
| Total Word Count: |

# 

# Q3. Security and secure file management and transfer (40% of technical evaluation)

|  |
| --- |
| Please provide details of how you will adhere to the functional requirements (section 2.5) for the security of both physical and electronic materials, including secure electronic transfers, throughout the project. Where specified, demonstrate adherence to IS027001. (maximum 750 words) |
| Total Word Count: |

# Q4. Methodology and managing customer relationships (20% of technical evaluation)

|  |
| --- |
| Please provide details of how you will deliver this project, ensuring you respond to all requirements set out in the specification at an appropriate level of detail. STA requires a supplier who is responsive, flexible and can establish a close working relationship with STA. Please describe how you will provide a high level of customer service and work collaboratively with STA to ensure the successful delivery of the project. (maximum 500 words) |
| Total Word Count: |

1. **COMMERCIAL EVALUATION** 
   1. **Basis of pricing**

STA requires a pricing model to be produced as part of the Tender response covering the principal cost drivers for delivering the service. This will form the basis for price evaluation of the Tenders, and the basis for pricing changes within the scope of the contract if subsequently required.

Bidders must complete and submit pricing to include all charges that are applicable to the delivery of the STA Requirements. The price provided will be the price included within any subsequent contract and there will be no adjustment to the contract pricing if additional charges are subsequently identified.

Tenders must be submitted as a fixed price and will be evaluated on the total cost for meeting the requirements excluding VAT. VAT is not applicable for the development of tests. Purchase Orders will be submitted for the agreed fixed price after all work has been completed.

For the purpose of this tender bidders should identify the individual cost components for the work together with the total fixed price in the table below. The total cost will be used for evaluation purposes.

* 1. **COMMERCIAL EVALUATION - Pricing template for completion**

Please provide a breakdown of costs in the tables below. There will be no adjustment to the contract pricing if additional charges are subsequently identified. Please note that this work is VAT exempt.

Please provide the cost of proofing and pre-flight checks for an estimated 721 pages in the table below. Please note that this cost will be used to calculate the total cost of quality assuring the standard and modified test materials outlined in the specification of requirements document once the number of pages per document have been confirmed (as these are currently estimated within the SoR document).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Estimated Total Pages** | **Cost (£) exc. VAT** |
| Proofing and quality assurance check including Pre-flight check | 721 |  |

**Additional Costs**

Please specify any additional costs associated with delivering the STA requirements in relation to Professional Proofing Services in the table below. Please indicate in brackets next to the description of the cost whether this is a fixed or variable cost.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Cost (£) exc. VAT** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **Sub-total of additional costs:** | **£** |

**Total Costs**  
  
Please provide a total project cost based on the estimate of 721 pages.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Estimated Total Pages** | **Cost (£) exc. VAT** |
| Proofing and quality assurance check including Pre-flight check | 721 |  |
| Additional Costs total |  |  |
| Total cost used for Commercial Score |  |  |

* 1. **Declaration by Bidder**

*I have examined STA's requirements and the additional special terms set out in this ITT, and hereby offer to enter into a contract with STA for the required services and at the prices set out in this technical and pricing proposal.*

*I furthermore warrant that:*

* I have the required corporate authority to sign this Tender;
* there has been no breach of STA's confidentiality requirements;
* there is no conflict of interest in our proposed delivery of this service;
* there has been no collusion with other Bidders or potential Bidders;
* there has been no canvassing of STA staff; and
* the Tender shall remain open for acceptance by STA for a period of 30 days after the due date for return of Tenders.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Signed | *[Please complete]* |
| Name |  |
| Date |  |
| Role |  |
| Authorised to sign Tenders on behalf of [organisation name] |  |

**APPENDIX: DRAFT CONTRACT**

This draft contract document is for your information only. Successful bidders will be issued with contracts following the conclusion of the procurement process.

