



Mini Competition

Mini Competition against an existing Framework Agreement (MC) on behalf of Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

Subject UK SBS Frameworks for Standards for Non-Financial Reporting in the UK

Sourcing reference number CR19042 – Lot 1

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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 customers improve efficiency, generate savings and modernise.

It is our vision to become the leading provider for our customers 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 customers. This allows our customers 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 its customers, 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 Innovation and Skills (BIS) transition their procurement to UK SBS and Crown Commercial Service (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 Customers.

Our Customers who have access to our services and Contracts are detailed [here](#).

Section 2 – About Our Customer

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy brings together responsibilities for business, industrial strategy, science, innovation, energy, and climate change, merging the functions of the former BIS and DECC.

BEIS is responsible for:

- developing and delivering a comprehensive industrial strategy and leading the government's relationship with business
- ensuring that the country has secure energy supplies that are reliable, affordable and clean
- ensuring the UK remains at the leading edge of science, research and innovation
- tackling climate change

BEIS is a ministerial department, supported by 47 agencies and public bodies.

Section 3 - Working with UK Shared Business Services Ltd.

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	Customer Name and address	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy 1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0ET
3.2	Buyer name	Alexandra Richards
3.3	Buyer contact details	Research@uksbs.co.uk
3.4	Maximum value of the Opportunity	£100,000.00 VAT Excluded
3.5	Process for the submission of clarifications and Bids	<p>All correspondence shall be submitted within the Emptoris e-sourcing tool. Guidance Notes to support the use of Emptoris is available here.</p> <p>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.</p>

Section 3 - Timescales		
3.6	Date of Issue of Mini Competition to all Bidders	Thursday 6 th June 2019
3.7	Latest date/time Mini Competition clarification questions should be received through Emptoris messaging system	Wednesday 19 th June 2019 11:00am
3.8	Latest date/time Mini Competition clarification answers should be sent to all potential Bidders by the Buyer through Emptoris	Thursday 20 th June 2019
3.9	Latest date/time Mini Competition Bid shall be submitted through Emptoris	Monday 24 th June 2019 11:00am
3.10	Anticipated rejection of unsuccessful Bids date	Monday 1 st July 2019
3.11	Anticipated Award Date	Wednesday 3 rd July 2019
3.12	Anticipated Call Off Contract Start Date	Thursday 4 th July 2019

3.13	Anticipated Call Off Contract End Date	Friday 29 th November 2019
3.14	Bid Validity Period	60 Working Days
3.15	Framework and Lot the procurement should be based on	BIS Research & Evaluation Framework CR150025 LOT 1

Section 4 – Specification

Background

Company reporting, in annual reports and through other mechanisms, covers both financial and non-financial topics. Such reporting is designed to inform shareholders, prospective investors, and other stakeholders—including employees and potential employees—of not only the company’s financial performance, but also of their approach to understanding and addressing risks around the impacts of their activities in non-financial areas. “Non-financial” information refers to narrative information that adds, in part, depth and context to the financial information contained in the company accounts, published in the annual report or elsewhere. It covers a variety of areas: policy around environmental risks, pursuing and securing human rights, protecting against corruption, and promoting diversity.

In the UK, two key pieces of legislation govern non-financial reporting. First, the Companies Act 2006 (Strategic Report and Directors’ Report) Regulations 2013 require all companies, except those subject to the small companies’ exemption, to produce focused strategic reports. Firms must disclose human rights issues within their strategic reports, and information on greenhouse gas emissions within their directors’ report. Second, the EU Directive on Non-Financial Reporting (Directive 2014/95/EU) requires all large (those with greater than 500 employees) public interest entities (quoted companies, banks, insurance companies) to disclose information on environmental, social, and community matters, to the extent necessary for an understanding of the company’s development, performance and position, and the impact of their activities.

Research commissioned by BEIS around the effectiveness of these pieces of legislation is due for publication, along with a Post Implementation Review, later in 2019. Initial findings from this research indicate that stakeholders have some concerns around the materiality, rigour, and comparability of non-financial reporting.

These initial findings join lobbying from stakeholders for further reporting on non-financial issues, both to cover new areas and to expand the rigour of those already reported on. Furthermore, the increasing global interest in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) raises the potential to structure company reporting around them. The UN asserts that “The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a global blueprint for dignity, peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and in the future.”¹ The UN expects firms as well as other stakeholders to help realise the goals. This has included encouraging governments to legislate to make companies report on relevant items to help achieve the 17 goals, which cover a variety of themes including anti-poverty, gender equality, clean water and energy, responsible production, action on climate change and environmental protection, and developing strong institutions – including through tackling corruption.

Aims and Objectives of the Project

Currently companies use IFRS or GAAP standards with regard to financial reporting, but there is no equivalent standard for non-financial reporting. The proposed work looks to explore preferences around potential frameworks for standards for such reporting. ‘Framework’ is an inclusive term in this proposal, referring to both the *conceptual basis* for

¹ UN Sustainable Development Goals, <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/why-the-sdgs-matter/>

reporting (such as around the UN SDG structure), and the *documented location* of reporting for different non-financial topics (such as the annual report or company website).

The ambition of the project will be to form an initial evidence base around the preferences of UK stakeholders around non-financial standards. This will inform international discussions and ensure UK officials are well informed of stakeholder perceptions and areas in which companies and investors may have concerns. Care will be taken to inform stakeholders that the results will not commit the Government to a model framework, and that the spirit of the research is exploratory.

The specific aim of the work will be to understand, inductively, key stakeholder preferences around potential frameworks for standards around non-financial reporting through in-depth qualitative work. It will then examine how preferences this inductive work identifies are viewed by three key groups: companies (who would need to comply with any set of standards), investors (who would potentially use the reporting to inform investment decisions), and employees or potential employees.

The work will look to contribute to a key government objective around non-financial reporting: to ensure that the UK is strategically placed “at the leading edge of international developments in sustainability reporting.”²

Furthermore, by exploring ways to enhance standards around non-financial reporting, further evidence is generated to promote trust in the UK business environment, and so, potentially, further investment. As the Green Finance Taskforce suggest, “disclosure and transparency help to encourage trust in capital markets. This is important for London’s international reputation and its attractiveness to issuers on the London Stock Exchange.”³

The outputs of the work will be used to contribute to the UK’s ambition to be a leading player in the evolution of non-financial reporting.

The government has already said that it “encourages businesses to communicate what they do for society and the environment as effectively and visibly as possible.” It desires clear, informative reporting that meets investor expectations. The proposed study will collect perceptions of the nature of potential frameworks of standards to inform the future of reporting.

Furthermore, BEIS is represented at a UN group on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting which is looking into the link between the UN SDGs and company reporting. This study will provide BEIS with evidence to take to the group and enable the UK’s ‘leading edge’ position to be maintained.

Research Questions

² HM Government, ‘Government Response to Advisory Group Report on ‘Growing a Culture of Social Impact Investing in the UK’’ (2018), https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/717511/Government_Response_to_Advisory_Group.pdf

³ Green Finance Taskforce, ‘Accelerating Green Finance’ (2018), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/accelerating-green-finance-green-finance-taskforce-report>

Thoughts around the research questions proposed are informed by the 'Reporting principles' section of UNCTAD's guidance on SDG reporting.⁴ The ambition will be to obtain a detailed understanding of the preferences of UK stakeholders around the following themes:

- What existing literature exists on potential frameworks for standards for non-financial reporting, at what does secondary research tell us about preferences around them?
- What frameworks of standards for non-financial reporting do key stakeholders propose when posed the question openly? What are their views on existing frameworks identified from current literature?
- Should standards be international or UK based?
- How far should reporting be structured around the UN SDGs? How might compliance be measured? Are some SDGs believed to be more important or relevant than others? Are some SDGs sector specific?
- Where should the line be drawn between what all companies report on (the principle of universality), versus reporting on what is material to them (but need not be reported on by all companies)?
- If metrics around non-financial reporting are proposed by stakeholders, can and should they be comparable across firms, over time and place, and are there suggestions on how this may be achieved?
- How might reporting boundaries work? For financial reporting, it is sometimes the case that international standards are required for consolidated reports but not for legal entities. Should reporting of non-financial information at company level to corporate level follow consolidation principles or rules? At what 'level' should reporting be required?
- What should the reporting period be? Should it synchronise with financial reporting?
- How far do companies feel they can meet potential frameworks identified by key stakeholders? What costs might be involved? How different are the capabilities of the suppliers of the reporting, and the expectations of the consumers?

Suggested Methodology

The proposed methodology outlined below should be considered tentative. Bidding contractors will be invited to comment on the proposal and invite alternative methodological suggestions, so long as they would answer the core research questions posed.

It is recommended that the research comprises four stages.

Stage 1

It is first recommended that the contractor undertakes a literature review to understand all the main issues that subsequent qualitative work should consider, and provide structure to consultations with stakeholders. The literature review should cover existing views and research around non-financial reporting, and identify potential frameworks for the way in which non-financial reporting may be structured. The contractor should weigh up the degree of support for different potential frameworks, and use the results to help frame the discussion guide for Stage 2 of the research, workshops with stakeholders.

Stage 2

⁴ UNCTAD, 'Guidance on Core indicators for entity reporting on the contribution towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals' (2018), pp. 8-9, https://isar.unctad.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Guidance-on-Core-Indicator_ISAR-35.pdf

It is then recommended that the contractor organises, recruits people to, and convenes research workshops to enable stakeholders to discuss their views on the core research questions around frameworks for non-financial reporting. Participants should have existing understanding of and interest in non-financial reporting, and be drawn from companies, investment organisations, trade unions, and other stakeholders such as NGOs interested in environmental protection, human rights, anti-corruption, and other matters on which firms might reasonably be required to report. The contractor can select the stakeholders in consultation with BEIS policy officials.

Stakeholders should be asked to consider core attributes of what a framework of standards should look like, including who should develop them, which areas should be subject to standards and which not (including consideration of materiality and universality / comparability), the appropriateness of tying them into UN SDGs, and preferred practicalities including the frequency of reporting and where the reporting would ideally occur (the annual report may not always be the most appropriate vehicle). They should be asked to reflect on existing potential frameworks identified from the literature review, and how far they meet their expectations around non-financial reporting.

The contractor should aim to identify stakeholders' preferred criteria for what will make effective standards. For example, clear metrics, reference to concrete activities, flexibility, clarity, feasibility of meeting the standards, relevance, consideration of likely future risks, the degree to which reporting can be used / further action identified, and so on.

To avoid relying on feedback from a single workshop, it is proposed that the contractor convenes two workshops, with about 25 participants each, to enable small group discussions on focused matters as part of the session. The discussion guide should be structured to enable both discussion of existing proposed frameworks and to open up the floor to alternative views. It should accommodate the main issues around non-financial reporting identified from the literature review. As the participants will have existing interest in non-financial reporting, there may be a risk of 'loud voices' and contractors should propose means of ensuring all views are heard. This may involve, for example, avoiding whole group discussions throughout the sessions, and breaking the group into smaller sub-groups to consider specific points, before feeding back.

Care will be taken to emphasise the exploratory nature of the research, and that suggestions are designed to create an evidence base for further research and discussion. They are not to be viewed as tying the government to specific courses of action.

The contractor will then be required to consider the feedback obtained and write up an interim report summarising the key ideas identified from the literature review and the workshops, and use them to make a case for the specific statements, ideas, and questions to be included in the survey instruments in Stage 3 of the research.

Stage 3

It is then proposed that the contractor undertakes more universal testing, through online surveys with three groups (businesses, investors, and employees / potential employees), and a workshop with institutional investors, to gauge broader opinion on the ideas from Stages 1 and 2 of the research. The contractor should attempt to obtain a ranking of criteria of a 'good' framework of non-financial reporting standards by stakeholder, and views on the key issues raised by existing literature and the stakeholders involved in the workshops, reflecting on the core research questions identified previously. If potential frameworks have been identified, such as the UN SDGs, the surveys should cover views on them, with questions tailored towards likely pre-existing understanding of those frameworks. It may be necessary to ask questions around the principles and assumptions underlying the frameworks rather than the frameworks themselves if understanding of them is likely to be

limited. To gauge this, the contractor should undertake appropriate cognitive testing. Finally, for suppliers of non-financial reporting, companies, it may be useful to obtain broad estimates of costs associated with new requirements.

Business Survey: the relevant affected firms are those also subject to the EU Directive on Non-Financial Reporting, and hence those for whom it is necessary to report on the broad suite of non-financial topics. That is, all large (those with greater than 500 employees) and public interest entities (quoted companies, banks, insurance companies). Companies not registered but listed in the UK are not in scope of the Directive and can be excluded from the sampling frame.

According to the FAME database, there is a population of up to 550 eligible firms, and a survey of 100 of them would mean the margin of error around a particular result would be +/-8.9pts at the 95% confidence level. Though it would be preferable to draw a larger sample to reduce this margin of error, a required sample of 100 is likely to be realistic to achieve given previous research efforts that have exhibited the difficulty in obtaining a high response rate to surveys of companies. Furthermore, the potential for statistical consideration of differences in opinion over perspectives around non-financial reporting make a survey preferable to the alternative of purely qualitative work.

It is suggested that contractors reach out to all firms in scope to identify the individual in the communications or social responsibility department of the company with familiarity with non-financial reporting. BEIS analysts will be able to supply the contractor with appropriate FAME data, including generic contact details of firms. The contractor will be required to contact the firm and obtain the email details of the most appropriate survey respondent, before sending them the link.

If the contractor considers that the required response rate is unlikely to be achievable, they are invited to propose other methodological techniques to obtain business opinion. Such techniques might include depth interviews with a smaller sample of firms or use of an online portal to facilitate easy entry of information.

Investor Survey: it might be argued that investors are far more likely to be interested in firms' financial rather than non-financial performance – however this supposition is not viewed as something to obstruct the research, rather something the contractor should *test* through the research. It is proposed that the contractor surveys 500 retail investors through an online omnibus survey with appropriate screening questions. The sample should have adequate representation of direct, indirect, and both direct and indirect investors (preferably a third in each category, to allow robust comparison), to generate understanding of whether those who exercise greater choice in which companies they invest in express different views around structures for non-financial reporting. A sample of 500 people should produce a maximum margin of error +/-4.4pts when the group is considered as a whole.

Institutional Investor Workshop: Survey research will not be attempted to obtain the views of investment managers due to complexities around defining the population and obtaining a sufficiently high response rate. Nevertheless, they are an important stakeholder and their views will be sought in a separate workshop. It is proposed that the contractor works with BEIS and their contacts in the Investment Association to discuss the research questions included the survey with a group of up to 25 investment managers. A fully representative sample of investment managers will not be achievable due to the low N, but participants will be expected to span different sectors and management of different products. The contractor will be required to recruit participants in partnership with BEIS and the Investment Association (from whose members participants will be drawn), create a topic guide, and organise and convene the session.

Employee / Potential Employee Survey: individuals may use information on the non-financial performance of firms to inform a decision whether to seek employment with them, or even whether to stay in employment with them. It is therefore proposed that the contractor undertakes survey research with those who work for, or would consider working for, the companies in scope. This will test for the strength of this effect and gather evidence on the preferences of those for whom such information may be influential. To increase efficiency, it is advised that contractors use the same online omnibus survey with appropriate screening questions for this purpose as for the survey of retail investors. There is, indeed, likely to be a considerable number of individuals who are both retail investors and employees / potential employees. It may be appropriate to ask such individuals to answer some questions twice, so they can express views through each 'lens', or alternatively to route them into the category currently with fewer responses to push for the target sample number. Contractors are invited to provide views on either option. There is the potential for bias, for example, if employees / potential employees are also retail investors in a firm, as they have more at stake in the company as a shareholder which might influence their survey responses as an employee / potential employee. A sample of 500 employees / potential employees is again recommended (maximum margin of error +/-4.4pts), to enable statistically robust comparisons.

Stage 4

The contractor will finally be required to bring together the findings from the previous stages to reflect judiciously on the most viable frameworks for standards in non-financial reporting, with reflection on where the demand for non-financial reporting might best meet the supply of this reporting, and how frameworks and structures around this reporting might support this.

- The degree of demand for non-financial reporting can draw on the literature review and stakeholder workshops, as well as the various surveys which measure interest in non-financial reporting among potential consumers (investors, employees, and potential employees, and even companies if they feel the reporting can inform strategy). Consideration of demand should reflect on the importance of universality and comparability against materiality.
- The potential to supply non-financial reporting should draw particularly on the findings of the company survey, reflecting on the ease with which reporting requirements proposed by stakeholders can be met, and potential costs.
- All previous stages of the research should help inform recommendations on how far potential frameworks might accommodate where demand and supply for non-financial reporting meet.

Before the analysis is formalised, the contractor is required to organise and convene a workshop to peer review the conclusions, to include BEIS Policy officials and academics with expertise in the area. The contractor should use their experience of conducting the literature review to identify the leading academics interested in non-financial reporting and request their participation, in person or virtually, in this discussion. Feedback should be integrated into the final report. To keep the volume of feedback manageable, it is proposed that 6 to 8 academics are invited to the workshop.

Deliverables

- Regular updates on emerging findings and project progress
- Research instruments – questionnaires and discussion guides
- Interim report of findings
- Presentation of results, including PowerPoint slides
- Quality assured final report

- Anonymised dataset of survey results

Section 5 – Evaluation of Bids

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

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

To maintain a high degree of rigour in the evaluation of your bid, a process of moderation will be undertaken to ensure consistency by all evaluators.

After moderation the scores will be finalised by performing a calculation to identify (at question level) the mean average of all evaluators (Example – a question is scored by three evaluators and judged as scoring 5, 5 and 6. These scores will be added together and divided by the number of evaluators to produce the final score of 5.33 ($5+5+6 = 16 \div 3 = 5.33$))

Pass / fail criteria		
Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject
Commercial	FOI1.1	Freedom of Information Exemptions
Commercial	AW1.1	Form of Bid
Commercial	AW1.3	Certificate of Bona Fide Bid
Commercial	SEL3.13	General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
Price	AW5.1	Maximum Budget
Price	AW5.5	E Invoicing
Price	AW5.6	Implementation of E-Invoicing
Quality	AW6.1	Compliance to the Specification
-	-	Invitation to Quote – received on time within e-sourcing tool

Scoring criteria			
Evaluation Justification Statement			
In consideration of this particular requirement UK SBS has decided to evaluate Potential Providers by adopting the weightings/scoring mechanism detailed within this Mini Competition. UK SBS 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	40%
Quality	PROJ1.2	Staff to Deliver	10%
Quality	PROJ1.3	Understanding the Environment	20%

Quality	PROJ1.4	Project Plan and Timescales	10%
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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: Score/Total Points available multiplied by 20 ($60/100 \times 20 = 12$)

Where an evaluation criterion is worth 10% then the 0-100 score achieved will be multiplied by 10.

Example if a Bidder scores 60 from the available 100 points this will equate to 6% by using the following calculation: Score/Total Points available multiplied by 10 ($60/100 \times 10 = 6$)

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 the final score returned may be different as there will be multiple evaluators and their

individual scores after a moderation process will be averaged (mean) to determine your final score.

Example

Evaluator 1 scored your bid as 60

Evaluator 2 scored your bid as 60

Evaluator 3 scored your bid as 50

Evaluator 4 scored your bid as 50

Your final score will $(60+60+50+50) \div 4 = 55$

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: 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.ukpbs.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 Emptoris messaging system to raise any clarifications to our Mini Competition. You should note that typically 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 your customer is and what they want – a generic answer does not necessarily meet every customer'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 and concise 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

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

- 7.23 All enquiries with respect to access to the e-sourcing tool and problems with functionality within the tool may be submitted to Crown Commercial Service (CCS – previously Government Procurement Service), Telephone 0345 010 3503.
- 7.24 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.
- 7.25 Question numbering is not sequential and all questions which require submission are included in the Section 6 Evaluation Questionnaire.
- 7.26 Any Contract offered may not guarantee any volume of work or any exclusivity of supply.
- 7.27 We do not guarantee to award any Contract as a result of this procurement
- 7.28 All documents issued or received in relation to this procurement shall be the property of UK SBS.
- 7.29 We can amend any part of the procurement documents at any time prior to the latest date / time Bids shall be submitted through Emptoris.
- 7.30 If you are a Consortium you must provide details of the Consortiums structure.
- 7.31 Bidders will be expected to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.32 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 Mini Competition Bidders are agreeing that their Bid and Contract may be made public
- 7.33 Your bid will be valid for 60 days or your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.34 Bidders may only amend the Special terms if you can demonstrate there is a legal or statutory reason why you cannot accept them. If you request changes to the Contract and UK SBS fail to accept your legal or statutory reason is reasonably justified we may reject your Bid.
- 7.35 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.
- 7.36 If you fail mandatory pass / fail criteria we will reject your Bid.
- 7.37 Bidders are required to use IE8, IE9, Chrome or Firefox in order to access the functionality of the Emptoris e-sourcing tool.
- 7.38 Bidders should note that if they are successful with their proposal UK SBS reserves the right to ask additional compliancy checks prior to the award of any Call Off Contract. In the event of a Bidder failing to meet one of the compliancy checks UK SBS may decline to proceed with the award of the Call Off Contract to the successful Bidder.

- 7.39 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 Emptoris
- 7.40 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, UK SBS 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 UK SBS during this Procurement. The information will not be disclosed outside Government. Bidders taking part in this Mini Competition consent to these terms as part of the competition process.

- 7.41 From 2nd April 2014 the Government is introducing its new Government Security Classifications (GSC) classification scheme 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 from 2nd April 2014. The link below to the Gov.uk website provides information on the new GSC:

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

UK SBS reserves the right to amend any security related term or condition of the draft contract accompanying this Mini Competition to reflect any changes introduced by the GSC. In particular where this Mini Competition 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

- [Emptoris Training Guide](#)
- [Emptoris e-sourcing tool](#)
- [Equalities Act introduction](#)
- [Bribery Act introduction](#)
- [Freedom of information Act](#)

