

## Professional Financial Services: Accounting and data collection services to the EFA and the Department for Education

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/8e0df129-130a-4dca-a68d-62559922555b>

Following the publication of the PIN notice on contract finders on 4 February 2016, the NRF team held a market engagement session on 19 February, which was followed by suppliers' 1:1 meetings during w/c 29 February.

The table below records the responses to the topics raised during the 1:1 sessions and the documents we are able to share at this stage.

	Topic	Response / Document reference
1	IT strategy and infrastructure preferences  1- Is DfE/EFA happy with Cloud technology? 2- Will our Azure platform be ready by March 2017? 3- What other systems does the solution need to be able to interface with?	1- Yes, all our applications will soon be based in the cloud.  2- Azure will be live from September and we'll be moving applications over to it up to Easter 2017.  3- This is a more complex question and depends on exactly what the supplier is proposing to build. The NRF team is working with the DfE IT Group and will provide the technical specifications as part of the ITT pack. We hope to publish from IT group the interface script/technology suppliers will be required to develop so systems can communicate successfully as well as any testing requirements/process suppliers will need to adhere to.
2	Sector Report prototype (including Grant Tracker)	<a href="#">See documents 1 to 4</a>
3	Working papers / other background on the valuations currently provided by Mouchel	<a href="#">See documents 5 to 7</a>
4	Details of the valuation checks currently undertaken on the BFR and AR	Previous years' validations tests are published on <a href="http://gov.uk">gov.uk</a> .
5	A timeline showing the products we will be expecting from the supplier and when	See document 9
6	GDS data security levels	It is worth noting that a new system might also have to be <a href="#">GDS compliant</a> depending on scope.
7	Parliamentary correspondence setting out the New	<a href="#">See documents 1 to 4</a>

	Reporting Framework	
8	Information on the diversity of the academies sector and issues and difficulties they find with our current returns	The list of ATs that are consolidated can be found <a href="#">here</a> Additional information can be found in section 4 of the <a href="#">2013-14 Academies annual report</a> The EFA has published a video around areas of difficulties. It can be found <a href="#">here</a>
9	Proportion of ATs that fail to submit / provide returns late	See document 10
10	Are ATs VAT exempt? (Including from VAT registration)	Please refer to <a href="#">HMRC</a> guidance
11	Volumetric on number of AT, MAT, geographic spread and forecast volumes over the term of the contract.	Please refer to section 4 of the <a href="#">Academies annual report</a> published in June 2015 for historic information.  The Schools White Paper: Educational Excellence Everywhere <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/educational-excellence-everywhere">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/educational-excellence-everywhere</a> This white paper sets out how, by the end of 2020, all remaining maintained schools will be academies or in the process of conversion.
12	Volumetric on number of L&B and Pensions valuation (and re-valuations where applicable) and forecast volumes over the term of the contract.	Some info about <a href="#">L&amp;B valuations</a> is published and suppliers might find this helpful  <a href="#">See document 8</a> Forecast volumes for quinquennial L&B re-valuations

### **Assumptions/clarifications**

- 1- We do not expect changes to the existing data collection process for the August 2016 AR return (due Jan 2017)
- 2- The sector report will not include a Statement of Parliamentary Supply
- 3- We will no longer have a March 2016 Accounts return
- 4- We don't expect the supplier to support the dry run of the sector accounts. We might include them in the lessons learned sessions to ensure knowledge transfer.
- 5- During the market engagement presentation on 19 February, we informed suppliers that the ITT publication timeline was mid to end of April. We can confirm that we are on track to meet that deadline and the anticipated. As per OJEU, suppliers will have a minimum of 30 calendar days to work on their bid. More time could/might be allowed depending on progress and ITT publication date.

## **Additional information**

We can now confirm that the White Paper has been published. You can find the following at the links below:

Written Ministerial Statement: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-03-17/HCWS625/>

The Schools White Paper: Educational Excellence Everywhere: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/educational-excellence-everywhere>

Impact Assessment: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/educational-excellence-everywhere-impact-assessment>

Methodology for identifying Achieving Excellence Areas: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defining-achieving-excellence-areas-methodology>

## **Next steps**

Additional questions and/or requests for additional 15 minutes follow up sessions need to be submitted to the [aff.programmeoffice@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:aff.programmeoffice@education.gsi.gov.uk) inbox by COP 31 March 2016. Any questions and/or requests submitted after this deadline cannot be accommodated.