

# Invitation to Quote

**Invitation to Quote (ITQ) on behalf of Higher Education Funding Council for  
England (HEFCE)**

**Subject Small Scale Expert Study To Test Key Areas In Development Of A Set  
Of Benchmarking Indicators/Benchmarking Tool For Higher Education  
Knowledge Exchange**

**Sourcing reference number BLOJEU-CR150081HEFCE**

**UK Shared Business Services Ltd (UK SBS)**  
[www.uksbs.co.uk](http://www.uksbs.co.uk)

Registered in England and Wales as a limited company. Company Number 6330639.  
Registered Office North Star House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 1FF  
VAT registration GB618 3673 25  
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**UKSBS**  
*Shared Business Services*

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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

#### 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 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 Customers.

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

## Our Procurement ambition

Our vision is to be recognised as a centre of excellence and deliver a broad range of procurement services across the public sector; to maintain and grow a procurement service unrivalled in public sector.

Procurement is a market-shaping function. Industry derived benchmarks indicate that UK SBS is already performing at or above “best in class” in at least three key measures (percentage savings, compliant spend, spend under management) and compare well against most other measures.

Over the next five years, it is the function’s ambition to lead a cultural change in procurement in the public sector. The natural extension of category management is to bring about a fundamental change in the attitude to supplier relationship management.

Our philosophy sees the supplier as an asset to the business and the route to maximising value from supply. This is not a new concept in procurement generally, but it is not a philosophy which is widely employed in the public sector.

We are ideally positioned to “lead the charge” in the government’s initiative to reform procurement in the public sector.

UK SBS Procurement’s unique selling points are:

- Focus on the full procurement cycle
- Leaders in category management in common and specialised areas
- Expertise in the delivery of major commercial projects
- That we are leaders in procurement to support research
- Use of cutting edge technologies which are superior to those used generally used across the public sector.
- Use of market leading analytical tools to provide comprehensive Business Intelligence
- Active customer and supplier management

***‘UK SBS’ contribution to the Government Procurement Agenda has been impressive. Through innovation and leadership UK SBS has built an attractive portfolio of procurement services from P2P to Strategy Category Management.’***

**John Collington**

**Former Government Chief Procurement Officer**

## Section 2 – About Our Customer

### **Background to the Council**

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) was established in June 1992 under the terms of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 as a non-departmental public body operating within a policy and funding context set by the Government. The Council assumed responsibility for funding higher education in England on 1 April 1993. The Council's main function is to administer grant provided by the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). The Council funds education, research, knowledge exchange and the associated activities at universities and other higher education institutions, as well as funding HE courses in FE colleges.

The Council's main office is in North Bristol and there is a small London office in the Centre Point building.

## 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	Nicholson House, Lime Kiln Close, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8SR
3.2	Buyer name	UK SBS Research Team
3.3	Buyer contact details	<a href="mailto:research@uksbs.co.uk">research@uksbs.co.uk</a>
3.4	Estimated value of the Opportunity	<b>£16,667 Exclusive of VAT</b> - note there is maximum limit to work inclusive of VAT of £20K
3.5	Process for the submission of clarifications and Bids	<b>All correspondence shall be submitted within the Emptoris e-sourcing tool. Guidance Notes to support the use of Emptoris is available <a href="#">here</a>. 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.</b>

### Section 3 - Timescales

3.6	Date of Issue of Contract Advert and location of original Advert	29/10/2015 Contracts Finder
3.7	Latest date/time ITQ clarification questions should be received through Emptoris messaging system	03/10/2015 14:00
3.8	Latest date/time ITQ clarification answers should be sent to all potential Bidders by the Buyer through Emptoris	04/11/2015 14.00
3.9	Latest date/time ITQ Bid shall be submitted through Emptoris	09/11/2015 14.00
3.11	Anticipated rejection of unsuccessful Bids date	13/11/2015
3.12	Anticipated Award date	18/11/2015
3.13	Anticipated Contract Start date	20/11/2015
3.14	Anticipated Contract End date	29/03/2016
3.15	Bid Validity Period	60 Days

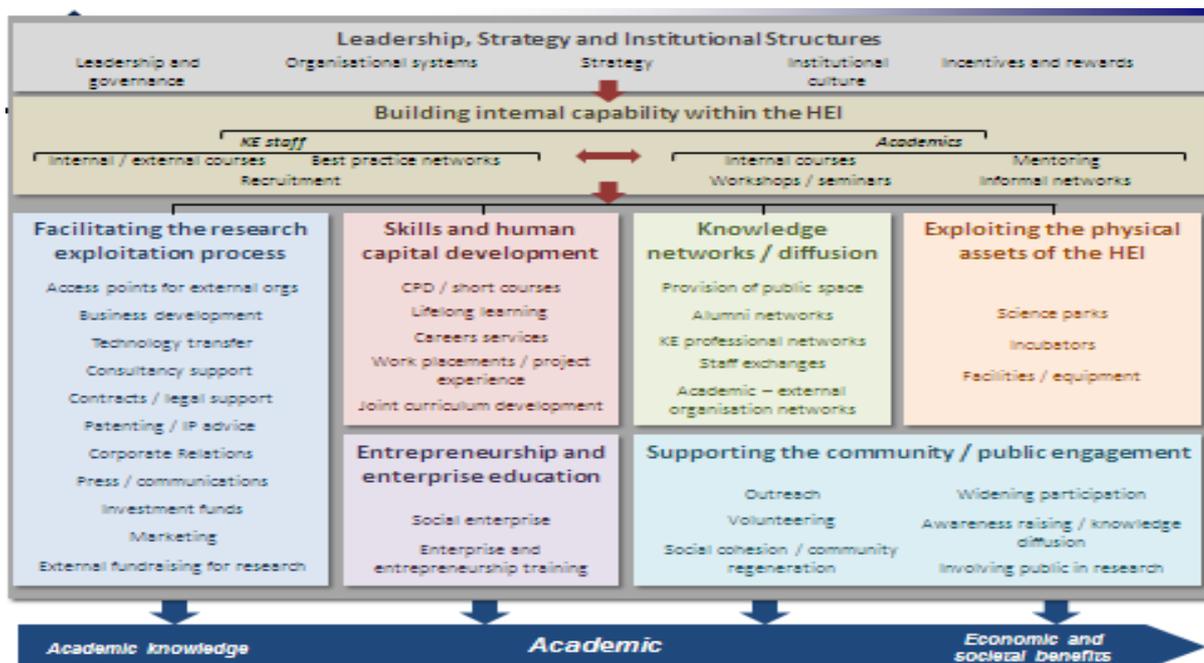
## Section 4 – Specification

### Background to HEFCE knowledge exchange policy and data

HEFCE’s ‘third stream’ of funding for higher education (HE) knowledge exchange (KE) – the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) - began in 1999. (See the HEFCE website (<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/econsoc/buscom/>) for more details on history, policy and funding of the third stream.) This funding was distinct from the two established HE funding streams for teaching and research.

HEFCE uses KE as the shorthand for the multiple interactions between universities and businesses, public services, charities and communities to create societal and economic benefit. These interactions include joint research and development projects, consultancy and training, knowledge transfer partnerships, setting up new companies and social enterprises and public and community engagement. This includes the enterprise/entrepreneurship agenda for staff and students.

HEFCE has always taken a broad view of knowledge exchange which includes, but is not limited to traditional areas of inter-action, such as technology transfer. HEIF supports an HE institutional infrastructure (see diagram below) that underpins a broad range of inter-actions relevant to teaching and research – for example, a technology transfer office or student enterprise hub.



By its nature, KE is funded from multiple sources, including by other public funders such as UK Research Councils, local economic development/regeneration, users (businesses, public services, third sector), core research and teaching and endowments/sponsorship.

At the outset of its KE policy, HEFCE established a new survey to capture the extent of knowledge exchange – the HE Business and Community Interaction (HE-BCI) survey, now run annually by the

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). See the HEFCE website on details of HEBCI <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/econsoc/buscom/hebci/>; <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/data/> for more information on HE data.

HEFCE was asked to develop a KE performance framework by Government in its Science and Innovation Strategy, 'Our plan for growth: Science and innovation', published in December 2014. The strategy states that 'the performance of UK Universities in partnerships and knowledge exchange can be further promoted through sharing of best practice and by assessment of performance. The government has asked HEFCE to develop a robust, evidence based framework against a suite of key knowledge exchange activities to assess performance and identify examples of good practice'.

The purpose of the framework is to assist HEIs in developing further a culture of continuous improvement in KE activity and being more efficient and effective in use of public funding. The purpose is not related to allocating public funding.

HEFCE is interested to look initially particularly at national policy areas where issues of common and effective practice have been raised, notably issues around handling intellectual property (IP) in research agreements (Dowling Review).

We wish to consider in this exercise whether some effective practice materials and benchmarking information could be useful to HEIs at strategic as well as operational levels. That is whether senior HE leaders and managers have need of evidence upon which to make decisions on how to embed KE in their mission and strategies and how to use resources effectively and efficiently across the breadth of their academic and institutional activities. We anticipate that there will be a wider set of effective practices and benchmarking evidence relevant to KE professional staff in HEIs.

HEFCE has conducted initial work to develop the framework. This has focussed on three areas:

- Development of performance indicators for KE
- Identification of sources of effective practice. The focus has been on generic and replicable practices that could be used across a number of HEIs (such as guidelines, training materials, how to guidance, toolkits etc), rather than particular examples (case studies, awards/prizes).
- Methods to order and categorise materials/indicators.

On categories, HEFCE is committed to a wide scope to KE but it seems necessary to break down the scope into sub-areas in order to organise data and materials in accessible ways. Our initial work has focussed on the following categorisations: technology transfer, research contracts/strategic research partnerships, SMEs, anchor/place-making role of universities, physical infrastructure (science parks and incubators, as well as sharing equipment and facilities), enterprise/entrepreneurship, skills and employability, leadership and environment. We want to test out approaches to categories in further work.

Initial work has included a number of initial stakeholder discussions and a consultation with the HE sector. On 16 June 2015, we issued a call for evidence to contribute particularly to the good practice element of the framework. We received over fifty responses which provided a set of specific

examples, as well as a general sense of how a development of this sort might operate. We also conducted initial internal HEFCE work on indicators. The outcome of this initial work has been the decision to tender for two small scale expert studies to test out aspects to the programme – one on effective practice materials; and one, this tender, on benchmarking indicators and a tool for benchmarking.

The development of the framework is highly exploratory and is likely to be conducted in a series of stages with consideration at end of each stage about next steps including whether or not to proceed down certain avenues. The first stage of work was internal to HEFCE with limited informal and soft consultation. The second stage is commissioning of two small scale expert pilots to test out key areas. Next steps/stages will be determined on basis of outcomes of the second stage. No work is being tendered for subsequent stages at this time.

### **Services Required**

Having conducted our own internal work, we are now seeking a small scale expert study to test out what we have done so far and make recommendations on how next stages might be taken forward. A major focus of this stage of the work is to consider any development from the perspective of HEIs themselves – what they would find useful and workable. We describe later in this section role of HE bodies in steering and activities being tendered.

This stage of work has two main aims:

- To satisfy Government that we are addressing sufficiently efficiency and effectiveness issues in KE and also issues raised, such as in the Dowling review, about the value of common practices and sharing effective practices.
- To identify ways to transfer ownership of any development to the HE sector where it can be embedded in use long-term.

HEFCE has experience of performance indicators related to the HESA UK Performance Indicators (UKPIs) exercise - <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/data/ukpi/>. Knowledge exchange has not been covered in the HESA exercise. Taking account of UKPIs experience and Our initial work has suggested that a number of issues need to be considered in devising KE indicators that will be useful to HEIs – that is performance indicators that can be used by HEIs to compare their performance against others, identify peers, and highlight other HEIs who may have effective practices that could help. These include:

- Normalising indicators to identify efficiency over scale is good practice. However, there may be very different effective practices in small and large scale approaches. It may help HEIs to benchmark themselves to look at scale as well as base efficiency. (And there may be other parties such as LEPs interested in scale of activities ie to identify concentrations and clusters.)
- KE is complex and influenced significantly by underlying research and teaching capabilities<sup>1</sup> – research intensity, levels of activity, discipline and other mix etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Work for HEFCE by Tomas Coates-Ulrichsen of Cambridge Centre for Science, Technology and Innovation (CSTI) on a number of analytical studies (see for example - <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rereports/Year/2014/keheifiimpact/Title,92166.en.html>). T Coates-Ulrichsen's expert work on evidence on KE may be relevant to this exercise. This has included work to devise a system for clustering HEIs for HEIF evaluation (see PACEC/CBR 2009), which may be relevant to work suggested later on benchmarking comparator groups.

Contextualising any indicators fully (so we are comparing like with like – and peers can identify their peers) is therefore very difficult.

- There may be multiple dimensions to performance that HEIs are interested in for improvement purposes – for example, trends and market share (who is growing or reducing in different areas).
- Handling outliers is always a challenge in benchmarking exercises. This is particularly true of the HE sector and KE with its great diversity.

In HEFCE's early work, we have focussed on data that is easily accessible to HEFCE - HESA data and which has robustness and validity as collected against common standards across the whole HE sector. We have looked particularly at HEBCI, though other HESA data such as the DHLE survey could be useful. There is no intention in this overall exercise to collect additional national data and to increase burden on HEIs. However, there may be a wider range of data related to KE beyond HEFCE/HESA sources that may be available and useful to HEIs themselves for benchmarking purposes.

We covered the issue of categories for brigading indicators earlier in this document. Our initial work suggests that the same indicators may be relevant to a number of categories. For example, an incubator (physical infrastructure category) and a Tech Transfer unit may both be interested in indicators of consultancy performance.

Our initial work explored developing a set of rankings of HEIs with individual indicators organised around main categories, which could be published/disseminated on the web. Our conclusion on initial work is that this may not be the most effective approach. A better method may be to develop a KE benchmarking tool that enables HEIs to compare themselves in a range of ways. This may include presenting the same data in a range of formats – for example, total performance, normalised and trend over time. It is also likely that an approach that allows HEIs to compare themselves against a peer/comparator group may be most effective, to address all the contextualisation issues in a sensitive way. This might be achieved either by presenting indicators in comparator groups in the tool itself (based, for example, on clusters used in HEIF evaluations<sup>2</sup>), or in producing a tool that allows HEIs to customise their own comparator/peer groups.

The focus of this pilot study is on testing out our initial work on a set of benchmarking indicators/benchmarking tool and making recommendations on next steps, through:

- Considering pilot work conducted by HEFCE. HEFCE analytical experts will be able to provide access to HEFCE/HESA data and briefing on its robustness and relevance to this exercise and on approach we have taken to date.
- Identifying the range of data sources that are available and suitable for use in benchmarking KE. This does not need to be limited to HEFCE/HESA data and we would be interested in proposals that suggest other data sources that might be used. We anticipate that

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/hefce1/pubs/hefce/2009/0915/09\\_15.pdf](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/hefce1/pubs/hefce/2009/0915/09_15.pdf)

the work will focus on a limited set of data for this pilot exercise, but a final report may suggest further avenues that could be pursued, such as overseas data.

- Devising an approach to presenting data that enables the most useful benchmarking information for HEIs themselves – which indicators should be used (data, normalisation, contextualisation etc).
- Advising on a structure for the benchmarking tool – how indicators could be categorised, presented and combined in an accessible and meaningful way for HEIs. The work needs to address issues of long-term costs and management of a benchmarking tool.
- Consulting HE sector bodies on relevance and use of the tool – are PIs relevant for benchmarking and presented in a meaningful way (normalisation and contextualisation)? Is the tool usable by HE staff? We wish to explore strategic and operational uses of the indicators and the tool.
- A final report which describes a potential solution that could be developed in a next stage. This should include commentary on a SWOT analysis of the solution proposed, conclusions and recommendations on next steps.

We expect that work will be conducted primarily through desk research and a limited number of interviews (HEFCE, HE bodies – particularly Universities UK, AURIL and Praxisunico, other funders, National Centre for Universities and Business).

We are interested in tenderers that have knowledge and links on data outside of HEFCE/HESA/HE, particularly international data. A final report may draw attention to a wider range of overseas and non-HE evidence and bodies that may be relevant and could be examined and consulted on a next stage.

We expect that the study will be overseen by a virtual steering group that includes HEFCE and expert leads on indicators/benchmarking from HE sector bodies.

The main deliverables from the work will be:

- A draft final report, which presents the proposed best solution, and draws conclusions and recommendations on next steps.
- A final report
- The consultants may be asked to attend various meetings and discussion for a to present and discuss findings

#### Day to Day Communications

The Council will appointed a Project Manager for this work. For the purposes of this study, the Council would expect to have contact with a nominated member of your organisation. Indicate how you would meet these requirements.

## **Equality and Diversity**

The Contractor should be aware that HEFCE, as a public body, is subject to the public sector duties listed within the 2010 Equality Act: [http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality\\_bill.aspx](http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_bill.aspx) The nature of the services required in this contract will mean that the contractor is itself carrying out a public authority function and the contractor is bound by the general duty in relation to carrying out the services. HEFCE will continue to monitor the contract in order to ensure it is meeting its requirements. The Council's Equality Scheme is a live document, and the current version can be accessed at: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/lgm/equal/equalscheme/>

## **Corporate Social Responsibility issues (CSR)**

As a responsible public body, HEFCE operates in accordance with our CSR policy. For further details see: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/aboutus/environ/>

## **Intellectual property rights, data handling and data protection**

As a public body, HEFCE is also subject to the Data Protection Act 1998 and the successful tenderer will be expected to act at all times in accordance with this Act. For more information see: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/aboutus/foi/dpact.htm>

Please be aware that HEFCE will retain ownership of any information collected during the course of this work that will not be in the public domain. You should also note that any information that is not in the public domain must at all times be treated as confidential.

## 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, the Customer and any specific external stakeholders UK SBS deem required. After evaluation 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 ( $5+5+6=16\div3=5.33$ ))

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	AW3.1	Validation check
Commercial	AW4.1	Contract Terms
Quality	AW6.1	Compliance to the Specification
-	-	Invitation to Quote – received on time within e-sourcing tool

Scoring criteria			
<b>Evaluation Justification Statement</b>			
In consideration of this particular requirement UK SBS has decided to evaluate Potential Providers by adopting the weightings/scoring mechanism detailed within this ITQ. 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	AW6.2	Understanding the HE sector	10%
Quality	AW6.3	Understanding the Requirements	20%
Quality	AW6.4	Staff and Capability to deliver	20%
Quality	AW6.5	Project Plan and Timescales	10%
Quality	AW6.6	Proposed Methodology	20%

## 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 may be multiple evaluators and their individual scores 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:  $\text{Score}/\text{Total Points} \times 50$  ( $80/100 \times 50 = 40$ )

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.
- 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 ITQ. 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 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.

## 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 (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 ITQ 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 Contract 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 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 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 ITQ 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 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

- [Emptoris Training Guide](#)
- [Emptoris e-sourcing tool](#)
- [Contracts Finder](#)
- [Tenders Electronic Daily](#)
- [Equalities Act introduction](#)
- [Bribery Act introduction](#)
- [Freedom of information Act](#)