Ref: PS23433

Commissioning Letter

IFF Research Ltd
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London
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Wednesday, 10th April 2024

PS22407 – Research Collaboration Network Framework for - PS23433 Population Baseline Pilot Survey OPSS

Thank you for your response to the Specification for the above Commission by Department for Business and Trade (the Contracting Authority) through PS22407 – Research Collaboration Network Framework.

Contracting Parties

This Call-Off Contract is between

(1) Department for Business and Trade; and
(2) IFF Research Ltd (the Framework Agreement).

Annexes: A.   Mini-Competition Tender dated (18/12/2023)
            B.   Suppliers Mini-Competition Response (12/01/2024)

Department for Business and Trade accepts your Mini-Competition Response (Annex B), submitted in response to our Mini-Competition Tender (Annex A).

Terms and Conditions

The Terms and Conditions applicable to this contract are those set out in PS22407 – S3 – Services Purchasing Contact to the Framework.

Contract Price

The agreed total charges are £134,835.34 exclusive of VAT

The breakdown of the total contract charges are:

All invoices should be sent to
Department for Business and Trade,
Old Admiralty Building, Admiralty Place, London, SW1A 2DY
Invoices to be sent to email: ap@uksbs.co.uk

Your invoice(s) for this work must include the following information: Commission number: PS23433

You are reminded that any Intellectual Property Rights provided in order to perform the Services will remain the property of the Contracting Authority.

- **The Services Commencement Date is Wednesday, 10th April 2024**
- **The Completion date is Friday, 06th September 2024**

The Contract may be terminated for convenience by giving 30 day's notice in accordance with clause A3-8 of the PS22407 – S3 – Services Purchasing Contract.

Congratulations on your success in being selected to undertake this Commission.

Yours sincerely

Office for Product Safety and Standards
Department for Business and Trade (DBT)

BY SIGNING AND RETURNING THIS COMMISSIONING LETTER THE SERVICE PROVIDER AGREES to enter a legally binding contract with the Customer to provide to the Customer the Services specified in this Commissioning Letter and Annexes incorporating the rights and obligations in the Call-off Terms and Conditions set out in the Framework Agreement.

Annex A – Mini-Competition Tender

1. **Background**

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) was created in January 2018 by the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) now known as the Department for Business and Trade. Responsibilities of The Office include:

    a) Giving detailed advice on the interpretation of safety related regulations, and sits on many standards making committees.

    b) Responding to incidents where the safety of a consumer product is called into question.

    c) Offering policy advice to HMG on product safety issues.

    d) Enforcement of a wide range of other product standards and regulations, for instance Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), Construction Products, Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS), and Timber regulations.

The project detailed here is being recruited as part of the OPSS Research Programme that was launched in March 2018. This programme provides high quality strategic research to strengthen the evidence base for OPSS policy development, delivery and enforcement, giving business the confidence to innovate and protecting consumers from unsafe products. The wide range of evidence-based research supported by the Research Programme helps to address critical questions relating to current product safety, and/or issues that might arise due to future market developments.

Our primary purpose is to protect people and places from product-related harm, ensuring consumers and businesses can buy and sell products with confidence. To support our purpose, we have five core objectives that we report our activity and impact against, which are:

1. to deliver protection through responsive policy and active enforcement
2. to apply policies and practices that reflect the needs of citizens
3. to enable responsible businesses to thrive
4. to co-ordinate local and national regulation
5. to inspire confidence as a trusted regulator

To meet the objectives above, it is important to understand the markets that OPSS intervenes in and therefore OPSS identifies sales data as one of its top priority data gaps. OPSS has identified the following ways by which sales data can be defined:

1. number of businesses operating in the market
2. total revenue from sales in the market
3. number of sales from products
4. number of unique products in a market
5. population of products that exist in UK society (including in domestic properties).

This project seeks to build our understanding of the population data (see point 5 above).

OPSS currently has the following evidence but lacks reliable information of a general nature on the total number of items owned by UK households which OPSS regulates. There is a data gap regarding the specific details of the products that are used in UK households as well as the purchase route of those products:

    1. Business population estimates which provides the number of business operating in the market but does not provide data on what products that were produced through these businesses currently exist in UK households,

    2. The number of electrical appliances in the UK population[1] but this figure is based on modelled estimated based on assumptions so doesn't give us the true value of the population figures for

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[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/household-electricity-survey--2

    electrical items. Also this data set does not give a breakdown by manufacturer or purchase route

3. Revenue, value of sales and trade data provides us with the sales and revenue of all products manufactured in the UK and imported into the UK but does not give us information on what out of the products currently exist in UK households

4. OPSS has commissioned various consumer surveys which gather data on whether products such as toys, electrical appliances, baby's products, cosmetics, large domestic appliances, clothes, sports and leisure goods are bought online, but it doesn't distinguish between whether they are bought online or an online market place (such as Amazon, eBay, Etsy). The OPSS Product Safety and Consumer Surveys[2] also ask if a gift was bought online but do not collect data on whether a product in someone's house was given as a gift

5. Data on household expenditure to give a number for the percentage of households with a durable good (such as washing machine) but does not give us stock of items and doesn't give any details about the type of goods households spend on

6. Injury data from NHS, but it doesn't provide us information on what products caused those injuries

7. When a product is identified as non-compliant or unsafe, information on the number of sales of a product is provided by manufacturers but there is no information on how many of those products are in circulation in the economy

2. Aims and Objectives of the Project

OPSS wants to conduct a household survey which aims to gather data on the number of OPSS related products in people's homes. The survey will enable us to answer the question 'how many OPSS related products are in people's homes' directly, instead of relying on a proxy figure such as sales data. As an evidence-led organisation, it is important for OPSS to understand the markets for which it holds regulatory responsibility and subsequently for producing market analysis for purposes such as policy development, impact assessments, regulatory delivery and context setting in spending reviews. To produce an accurate and effective market analysis, it is essential to have access to information on the kind of products that are used by consumers in UK households and the buying patterns of consumers to understand the market in depth.

Therefore, the aim of the survey is to directly support market analysis and feed into the following workstreams of OPSS:

1. In cases when a non-compliant or unsafe product is recalled, having a number on the population of the product will help estimate the impact on society.

2. Having data on the number of users, age of an item and frequency of use of an item is essential for conducting risk assessments.

3. The population number will also help OPSS understand the profile of users of certain products

4. Knowing the route of purchase (gift, direct purchase new, direct purchase second hand etc) is important for understanding the profile of the typical owners, some of whom might be at increased risk and vulnerable which will support our consumer awareness campaigns

5. We need further insights and breakdown of products on what is bought from online marketplaces for OPSS to ensure that people are buying safe products from online marketplaces

6. Detailed information on where items are bought will give us analytical power to delve deep into the sources of harm and break it down by source of purchase.

7. Important for risk assessment as the frequency of use and age of item will help inform risk probability as this is a calculation based on the life-time of a product.

This will be a pilot survey. The aim of this pilot survey is to test a methodology for conducting a household survey. The scope of OPSS related products is vast so the pilot will develop and test survey methods using a shorter list of product categories. We have also selected specific products within those categories which is provided in the methodology section, to test whether collecting this

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[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/opss-product-safety-and-consumers-wave-3

data is possible by using various survey methodologies and the focus of this project will be on methodological learnings.

The data collected from this pilot will provide useful insight for OPSS, but it is assumed that subsequent surveys using a successfully piloted method will be required to meet OPSS's full evidence needs (using all products that fall within OPSS remit). Therefore ,a key aim of this pilot is to make recommendations for future methods, including identifying risks and caveats to be considered by OPSS. It is expected that the recommendations should include a range of options to consider, enabling OPSS to balance quality of evidence with deliverability considerations. Therefore, this is an exercise so that in the long run, we have a robust methodology which will be able to get us reliable data on all products that fall within OPSS remit.

3. Suggested Methodology

If applicable:	Insert numbers:
Total number of Participants (experimental design)	
Total number of Interviews (survey)	**800**
Total number of Interviews (qualitative)	
Total number of Focus Groups	
Total number of Case Studies	

Any other specific requirements	

The minimum requirements for the methodology are as below:

1. The sample should be representative of products purchased by households UK

We are looking to survey 800 households. OPSS is the UK's product regulator, therefore the population of interest is all UK households. We would like to develop and test a methodology that provides a nationally representative picture of products in UK households, and that can be repeated over time to update our evidence base.

Our current thinking is that the best research methodology is a whole-household survey using a sample frame derived from the Post Code Address File (or similar). We think relying on proprietary research panels available to research firms may not be the best way to draw the sample for this pilot because a) it would make replication of the survey over time and by different contractors more difficult, and b) it would be difficult to get answers on certain products, for instance toys (as the individual answering the survey will answer that he/ she does not use this product). A more appropriate approach may involve randomising households using the postcode address file such as the approach taken by the Living Food Survey (conducted by the Office of National Statistics). On methodology we can consider the approach used by the Living Cost and Food Survey where the survey has a household section and an individual section. This method seems appealing as the products that fall within the remit of OPSS are also used by members of the public that are too old or either too young to participate in a survey and the products list also includes items that are owned collectively by a household for example washing machines. Hence having a household section and an individual section maybe necessary to get a full list of items that are used by people in a household.

We would want to collect demographic data such as age, ethnicity, employment status etc and are interested in responses from subgroups for example families with small children to collect data on toys and identify spending patterns. Please see the data on demographics collected by other OPSS surveys such as the Consumer Surveys and the Living Cost Survey (ONS). We will consult contractors to ensure that the sample is representative of the population. However, our current suggestion is to stratify the sample by family demographics, types of houses (terraced & detached houses), neighbourhood deprivation level (to represent consumer vulnerabilities).

2.   Tests the methodology using a range of survey methods

We think that a mix of postal, web, telephone and face to face surveys would be able to provide us with reliable ways to test which methodology works the best and will be able to provide us with reliable data, although we are open minded and will also let contractors give suggestions on the various survey methodologies that we may test. Suppliers should suggest a breakdown of different survey methodology options and the sample size for each option that is feasible given the budget (we are quite keen on doing some face to face surveys).

3. Repeatable over time

As this is a pilot project and we would like to achieve the best methodology as the survey will later be extended to include all products that fall within the remit of OPSS and the survey is expected to be repeated, hence the range of suggested methodologies should be chosen keeping in mind that the survey can replicated at another point in time.

4. Covers the following priority product categories

For the purposes of this pilot we aim to include the following product categories that are used by a typical household in the UK. This list should be sufficient to test data collection methods, which can later be scaled up to all product categories OPSS is responsible for. Within the following categories we have further narrowed down specific products for which we would collect data.

1. Electrical appliances (laptop, toaster, hairdryer, electric kettle, electric shavers, lights, vacuum cleaner, games console, smart home devices for example smart speaker, mobile phone chargers, laptop chargers, bluetooth headphone, e-scooter, iron)

2.Toys (board game, battery powered toys, dolls, action figure, building blocks, electric toys, stuffed toys)

3.Cosmetics (hair dye, foundation, lipstick, shampoo, soap, toothpaste, moisturiser, shaving cream)

4.Large domestic appliances (freezer, refrigerator, tumble dryers, washing machine, oven, stove, dish washer)

5.Furniture / furnishings (sofa, bed, dining table, curtains, cushions)

- **Covers the following priority evidence regarding the number of each product, description of the item, where and when purchased (including if a gift or second hand), replacement frequency, and frequency of use.**

The main research question that the survey would answer is 'how many of the items in the list are in people's homes?'. However, we are also interested in getting more detailed information on these product categories. Hence, we would like to get answers to the following questions. We expect the contractor to frame questions as deemed fit to get information on the following:

- (For all product categories) Where was the item bought? (Online market place vs High street, we are aware that it will necessary to explain the difference between buying online and from an online market place).

- (For electric appliances, large domestic appliances, and cosmetics) Description of the item? (Manufacturing details such as brand name and model number etc)
- (For electrical appliances, large domestic appliance and furniture) How often do consumers replace it?
- (For electrical appliances, large domestic appliance and furniture) How old is the item?
- (For electrical appliances, large domestic appliance, toys and furniture) Is it a second hand item or given as a gift?
- (For electrical appliances and furniture) How often is the item used? (frequency of use)

We encourage bidders to think about the evidence requirements set out in this specification and propose appropriate methods that can be tested in this pilot. Given that this is a pilot project, we are open to testing innovative methods where they are felt to be appropriate. We are also keen that a range of methods can be piloted so that conclusions can be drawn at the end of the pilot to identify the most feasible options for OPSS to consider going forward as the methodological findings should be such which can provide OPSS with a robust methodology that can be used for a full scale survey that will encompass the entire scope of products that fall under the remit of OPSS.

We propose that the project should include opportunities for OPSS and the appointed contractor to discuss and consider design options, therefore, contractors should consider structuring the project in line with the timeline below.

Project deliverables:

- **Setup and confirming evidence needs** – contractor to lead process of confirming the detailed scope, context and constraints for the project as well as a literature review **(April 2024)**
- **Pilot design and options proposal** – contractor to develop options for the pilot, including detailed methods and analysis plans. Further detail is provided in the deliverables section below (**April-May 2024)**
- **Contract break point** – OPSS reserve the right to close this contract following the design stage, this is only expected to be enacted where deliverable methods for the pilot cannot be identified **(May 2024**)
- **Deliver pilot** – contractor to lead delivery of the agreed pilot methods. OPSS would expect regular updates on progress and emerging risks **(May 2024)**
- **Data analysis** – contractor to conduct analysis on the data. Where possible, emerging findings should be shared with OPSS to provide early insights **(June-July 2024)**
- **Reporting –** contractor to produce a quality assured report that includes methodological learnings of the survey, a robust methodology that can be replicated over time and a final presentation **(July to end August 2024).**

In terms of outputs we expect the following:

Interim outputs

- Scoping document summarising the contractors detailed interpretation of the evidence needs, following the setup and scoping stage.

- Pilot options paper – setting out the proposed pilot options, including detailed methodology and analysis plans. Analysis plans should clearly state the success criteria that are being considered for each method, allowing OPSS to understand what each method would need to achieve in order for it to be considered for a fuller roll-out. Options proposed should include detail of what a post-pilot implementation of each method would look like, including expected timescales, costs and quality of evidence provided.

- Presentation of pilot options - a face to face (likely in London with an online option)

presentation to key OPSS colleagues to support decision making on methods to be applied in the pilot.

Final outputs

- raw data used to generate sample frame (where possible)

- A cleaned data set including completed survey responses, data dictionary and relevant documentation

- quality assured methodology and analysis report, of publication quality, that includes

    o detailed context and project purpose
    o methodologies for the pilot methods applied
    o detailed findings as they relate to the success of different methods.
    o conclusions and recommendations for methods to take forward for wider roll-out

- quality assured summary report, of publication quality, that provides an easy to engage with summary of the pilot including recommendations to take forward

- final presentation at the conclusion of the project – a face to face(likely in London with an online option) presentation to key OPSS colleagues to support wider dissemination across OPSS and decision making for next steps.

Project Management

- Regular project management meetings and updates, frequency to flex according to the nature of activity over time (e.g. during fieldwork face to face meetings may be reduced). OPSS welcome bids that include project updates or trackers that enable meetings to focus on substantive discussion points.

- OPSS support hybrid working and welcome a mix of online and face to face meetings and presentations.

Quality assurance evidence

All bids should set out how they will quality assure work delivered during the project. Relevant QA documentation should be included as a deliverable. This might include QA plans and logs or comments from peer reviewers.