



Invitation to Quote

Invitation to Quote (ITQ) on behalf of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)

Subject: Review of the STEM Ambassador Programme

Sourcing Reference Number: CR21028

UK Shared Business Services Ltd (UK SBS)
www.uksbs.co.uk

Registered in England and Wales as a limited company. Company Number 6330639.
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Version 5.0

UKSBS
Shared Business Services

Table of Contents

Section	Content
1	<u>About UK Shared Business Services Ltd.</u>
2	<u>About the Contracting Authority</u>
3	<u>Working with the Contracting Authority.</u>
4	<u>Specification</u>
5	<u>Evaluation model</u>
6	<u>Evaluation questionnaire</u>
7	<u>General Information</u>
Appendix	Annex 1 - STEM Ambassadors: Impact on Ambassadors and Educators 2020 Annex 2 - STEM Ambassadors Impact report 2016_WEB Annex 3 - An evaluation of the impact of STEMNET's services on pupils and teachers Annex 4 - UKRI-1610202-Vision-for-public-engagement

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 Contracting Authorities improve efficiency, generate savings and modernise.

It is our vision to become the leading service provider for the Contracting Authorities 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 Contracting Authorities. This allows Contracting Authorities 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 the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), 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, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) 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 Contracting Authorities. Our Contracting Authorities who have access to our services and Contracts are detailed [here](#).

Privacy Statement

At UK Shared Business Services (UK SBS) we recognise and understand that your privacy is extremely important, and we want you to know exactly what kind of information we collect about you and how we use it.

This privacy notice link below details what you can expect from UK SBS when we collect your personal information.

- We will keep your data safe and private.
- We will not sell your data to anyone.
- We will only share your data with those you give us permission to share with and only for legitimate service delivery reasons.

<https://www.uksbs.co.uk/use/pages/privacy.aspx>

For details on how the Contracting Authority protect and process your personal data please follow the link below:

<https://www.ukri.org/privacy-notice/>

Section 2 – About the Contracting Authority

UK Research and Innovation

Operating across the whole of the UK and with a combined budget of more than £6 billion, UK Research and Innovation represents the largest reform of the research and innovation funding landscape in the last 50 years.

As an independent non-departmental public body UK Research and Innovation brings together the seven Research Councils (AHRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, ESRC, MRC, NERC, STFC) plus Innovate UK and a new organisation, Research England.

UK Research and Innovation ensures the UK maintains its world-leading position in research and innovation. This is done by creating the best environment for research and innovation to flourish.

For more information, please visit: www.ukri.org

Section 3 - Working with the Contracting Authority.

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.	Contracting Authority Name and address	UK Research and Innovation, Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN2 1FL
3.2.	Buyer name	Matthew Alonso
3.3.	Buyer contact details	ProfessionalServices@uksbs.co.uk
3.4.	Maximum value of the Opportunity	£62,500.00 excluding VAT
3.5.	Process for the submission of clarifications and Bids	All correspondence shall be submitted within the Messaging Centre of the e-sourcing. Guidance Notes to support the use of Delta eSourcing is available here. 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.

Section 3 - Timescales		
3.6.	Date of Issue of Contract Advert on Contracts Finder	Monday, 24 th May 2021 Contracts Finder
3.7.	Latest date / time ITQ clarification questions shall be received through Delta eSourcing messaging system	Tuesday 1 st June 2021 11:00am
3.8.	Latest date / time ITQ clarification answers should be sent to all Bidders by the Buyer through Delta eSourcing Portal	Thursday, 3 rd June 2021
3.9.	Latest date and time ITQ Bid shall be submitted through Delta eSourcing	Wednesday, 9 th June 2021 11:00am
3.10.	Clarifications if required	w/c Monday, 14 th June 2021
3.11.	Anticipated notification date of successful and unsuccessful Bids	Wednesday, 16 th June 2021
3.12.	Anticipated Contract Award date	Wednesday, 16 th June 2021
3.13.	Anticipated Contract Start date	Monday, 21 st June 2021
3.14.	Anticipated Contract End date	Sunday, 17 th October 2021
3.15.	Bid Validity Period	90 Days

Section 4 – Specification

Background

About UKRI

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) works in partnership with universities, research organisations, businesses, charities, and Government to create the best possible environment for research and innovation to flourish. We aim to maximise the contribution of each of our component parts, working individually and collectively. UKRI brings together the seven Councils, Innovate UK and Research England. We work with our many partners to benefit everyone through knowledge, talent and ideas. Our Public Engagement Vision outlines our commitment to empower young people to pursue careers and take part in research and innovation across the arts, humanities, STEM subjects and social sciences.

About STEM Ambassadors

The STEM Ambassador programme, launched in 2002, is a UK-wide network of over 30,000 volunteers from a wide range of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) related jobs and disciplines across the UK.

STEM Ambassadors are role models who are able to challenge perceptions of who works in STEM, broadening knowledge about the diversity of STEM jobs and career pathways available. They offer talks, clubs, mentoring and workplace visits, which help illustrate the relevance and real-world context of STEM in everyday life through their personal experiences. Activities and events take place in primary and secondary schools, sixth form colleges, youth groups and other educational settings, as well as in public spaces such as libraries and museums. Through providing engaging informal learning opportunities the STEM Ambassador programme aims to encourage young people of all backgrounds to consider that STEM might be 'for them'.

STEM Learning manage UKRI's STEM Ambassador programme nationally, and coordinate and deliver through 19 STEM Ambassador Hubs at a regional level. This network of hubs provides an infrastructure to bridge the gap between education settings and regional employers, enabling STEM skills and expertise to be accessed UK-wide. The hubs engage with STEM professionals and oversee the allocation of STEM Ambassadors to activities and events within their region.

The STEM Ambassador programme also provides an infrastructure to contribute to other activities in the STEM engagement sector, for example in an advisory role, or as a mentor for students undertaking the CREST Awards.

The aims and objectives of the STEM Ambassador programme are:

1. To increase young peoples' engagement with STEM subjects, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
2. To raise awareness amongst young people of the wide range of careers opened up to them by studying STEM at school.
3. To build and strengthen relationships with employers to support increased engagement with the Programme.
4. To recruit and deploy STEM Ambassadors from a diverse range of employers, ensuring a wide range of STEM sectors and careers are represented.

Background

Responsibility for BEIS's Public Engagement budget and programmes, including the STEM Ambassador programme, transferred to UKRI in 2019. With the move to UKRI, it is now an

opportune time to consider how the transferred programmes align with UKRI's are aligned to UKRI's vision (Annex 4) and deliver our ambitions for outstanding UK research and innovation system to which everyone has the opportunity to contribute and from which everyone can benefit. To this end, we wish to commission a review of the STEM Ambassador programme to help UKRI understand:

1. The overall effectiveness of the programme against its aims and objectives
2. The ways in which the programme has impacted on policy, process and activity within the STEM engagement sector
3. The effectiveness of the governance and management of the Programme at local and national levels, including the oversight of the funders

This review will be a core part of the strategic planning process which UKRI will use when deciding how to implement the STEM Ambassadors programme in 2022 and beyond.

This review will take place alongside a more in-depth review of UKRI's approach to youth engagement to provide recommendations that help us to ensure our work has continued relevance and impact.

Aims and Objectives of the Project

Aims and overview of the research

UKRI is seeking to commission a supplier who is able to provide a rigorous and fast paced review of the STEM Ambassador programme. We see this as being conducted via a blend of desk research, interviews and any other suitable methods. The research should also acknowledge and build upon lessons learned from previous evaluations such as STEM Ambassadors: Impact on Ambassadors and Educators 2020 ([Annex 1](#)), STEM Ambassadors: Making an Impact ([Annex 2](#)), and An evaluation of the impact of STEMNET's services on pupils and teachers (Annex 3).

We would look to scope the exact research questions during the inception meeting, but we expect the specific research objectives to include:

Purpose

1. How successful is the programme in achieving its aims and objectives and UKRI's vision? We are interested to understand:
 - a. How effective is the STEM Ambassador programme assessed against its own aims and objectives?
 - b. Are the Key Performance Indicators for the programme fit for purpose?
 - c. Do the aims of the STEM Ambassador programme align with UKRI public engagement vision?
 - d. How well does the programme reach underserved groups?
 - e. How does the programme impact on young people's science knowledge and skills, including academic attainment/progress, attitudes and motivation for STEM learning, uptake of STEM subjects post-16, career aspirations and active citizenship?
 - f. How does the programme impact on teachers and employers and wider STEM sector?

Programme set up and delivery

2. Are there structures that provide strong and effective oversight, challenge and direction?
3. How effective is the relationship between UKRI, the delivery partner, the regional hubs and regional employers?
4. How well do the suggested STEM Ambassador activities recognise and serve the interests and needs of young people?

5. What do various stakeholders including STEM Ambassadors, teachers, young people and policymakers think about the programme?
6. How does the programme fit into and impact the STEM engagement sector?
7. Is the programme making effective use of digital engagement?
8. How effective is the operating model of the programme?
 - a. Are mechanisms in place to deliver the intended outcomes and respond to change?
 - b. Are regional hubs effective, is there consistency and quality across the board?
 - i. How effective is the engagement with/for regional employers?
 - ii. How effective is the engagement with schools?
9. How does the programme measure success? Is this the right approach to evidence that the programme is achieving its aims and outcomes? How well does the programme incorporate lessons from evaluation?
10. How well does the programme share lessons with the sector and support sector wide learning?

We also require an overview of similar models of volunteering from elsewhere that have shaped STEM inspiration, for example, the STEM Ambassador Program (STEMAP) approach in America. We are interested in understanding the stated goals of similar programmes, different delivery mechanisms of volunteering programmes and approaches to evaluation. We are particularly interested in discovering innovative examples from either the UK or abroad to ensure the programme is aligned with the current best practice in the sector about effective engagement with STEM role models. This should include in person and online models of delivery.

Based on the evidence gathered above, UKRI will then require a suite of options for the best delivery model for the programme that delivers innovation and impact aligned to the UKRI public engagement vision. We would like the analysis to help identify opportunities for innovation in response to issues identified.

The intended outcomes for UKRI from the research include:

1. A clear understanding of what the STEM Ambassador programme is doing successfully and areas for improvement.
2. Practical recommendations for improving the operating model of the STEM Ambassador programme in ways that enhance the relevance and impact of the programme.

Suggested Methodology

To investigate the effectiveness of the delivery model of the STEM Ambassador programme we anticipate suppliers would use a mixed method approach including desk research of existing literature such as reviews and evaluations, combined with interviews and focus groups of those involved in the management and delivery of the programmes, for example programme leads, regional and hub leads, employers, STEM Ambassadors and teachers or school leaders. We would anticipate young people's experience of the programme being investigated via focus group, survey or through interview with teachers.

To understand how effective the programme is assessed against its own goals and how this is currently evidenced we anticipate suppliers would use a mixed method approach including desk research of existing literature such as reviews and evaluations, combined with interviews of those involved in the management of the programme and its evaluation.

To understand similar models of volunteering from elsewhere that have shaped STEM inspiration programme We anticipate suppliers would use a mixed method approach to investigate 3-5 different programmes.

Total Number of Interviews (Qualitative)	20
Total Number of Focus Groups	9
Total Number of Case Studies	5

Deliverables

We anticipate the following deliverables:

- Regular updates throughout the project on progress and emerging findings.
- Inception meeting to take place during the week beginning 21 June.
- Interim report in August summarising findings from the data and insight collection, including findings from the interviews and focus groups.
- A final report. The report should cover the research objectives above, including:
 - o Critical review of the programme.
 - o Practical recommendations to enhance the relevance and impact of the programme.
- A visual presentation summarising the research findings in an engaging way.

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 and the Contracting Authority and any specific external stakeholders the Contracting Authority deems required.

The evaluation and if required team may comprise staff from UK SBS and the Contracting Authority and any specific external stakeholders the Contracting Authority deems required. After evaluation and if required moderation 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	SEL1.2	Employment breaches/ Equality
Commercial	SEL1.3	Compliance to Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act
Commercial	SEL2.10	Cyber Essentials
Commercial	SEL2.12	General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Act and the Data Protection Act 2018
Commercial	FOI1.1	Freedom of Information
Commercial	AW1.1	Form of Bid
Commercial	AW1.3	Certificate of Bona Fide Bid
Commercial	AW3.1	Validation check
Commercial	AW4.1	Compliance to the Contract Terms
Commercial	AW4.2	Changes to the Contract Terms
Commercial	AW6.3	Non-Disclosure Agreement
Price	AW5.1	Maximum Budget
Price	AW5.4	E Invoicing
Quality	AW6.1	Compliance to the Specification
Quality	AW6.2	Variable Bids
-	-	Invitation to Quote – received on time within e-sourcing tool
In the event of a Bidder failing to meet the requirements of a Mandatory pass / fail criteria, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to disqualify the Bidder and not consider evaluation of any of the Award stage scoring methodology or Mandatory pass / fail criteria.		

Scoring criteria

Evaluation Justification Statement

In consideration of this particular requirement the Contracting Authority has decided to evaluate Potential Providers by adopting the weightings/scoring mechanism detailed within this ITQ. The Contracting Authority 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	10%
Quality	PROJ1.1	Approach	25%
Quality	PROJ1.2	Staff to Deliver	25%
Quality	PROJ1.3	Understanding the Environment	25%
Quality	PROJ1.4	Project Plan and Timescales	15%

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:

$$\text{Score} = \{\text{weighting percentage}\} \times \{\text{bidder's score}\} = 20\% \times 60 = 12$$

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.
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All questions will be scored based on the above mechanism. Please be aware that there may be multiple evaluators. If so, their individual scores will be averaged (mean) to determine your final score as follows:

Example
 Evaluator 1 scored your bid as 60
 Evaluator 2 scored your bid as 60
 Evaluator 3 scored your bid as 40
 Evaluator 4 scored your bid as 40
 Your final score will $(60+60+40+40) \div 4 = 50$

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 how to register and use the e-sourcing portal 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. 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 Delta eSourcing messaging system to raise any clarifications to our ITQ. You should note that 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 the Contracting Authority is and what they want – a generic answer does not necessarily meet every Contracting Authority'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, concise and ideally generic 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

- 7.13 Do not cut and paste from a previous document and forget to change the previous details such as the previous buyer's name.
- 7.14 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.
- 7.15 Do not share the Procurement documents, they are confidential and should not be shared with anyone without the Buyers written permission.
- 7.16 Do not seek to influence the procurement process by requesting meetings or contacting UK SBS or the Contracting Authority to discuss your Bid. If your Bid requires clarification the Buyer will contact you. All information secured outside of formal Buyer communications shall have no Legal standing or worth and should not be relied upon.
- 7.17 Do not contact any UK SBS staff or the Contracting Authority staff without the Buyers written permission or we may reject your Bid.
- 7.18 Do not collude to fix or adjust the price or withdraw your Bid with another Party as we will reject your Bid.
- 7.19 Do not offer UK SBS or the Contracting Authority staff any inducement or we will reject your Bid.
- 7.20 Do not seek changes to the Bid after responses have been submitted and the deadline for Bids to be submitted has passed.
- 7.21 Do not cross reference answers to external websites or other parts of your Bid, the cross references and website links will not be considered.
- 7.22 Do not exceed word counts, the additional words will not be considered.
- 7.23 Do not make your Bid conditional on acceptance of your own Terms of Contract, as your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.24 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

- 7.25 All enquiries with respect to access to the e-sourcing tool and problems with functionality within the tool must be submitted to Delta eSourcing, Telephone 0845 270 7050
- 7.26 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 as part of the evaluation process.
- 7.27 Question numbering is not sequential and all questions which require submission are included in the Section 6 Evaluation Questionnaire.
- 7.28 Any Contract offered may not guarantee any volume of work or any exclusivity of supply.
- 7.29 We do not guarantee to award any Contract as a result of this procurement
- 7.30 All documents issued or received in relation to this procurement shall be the property of the Contracting Authority / UKSBS.
- 7.31 We can amend any part of the procurement documents at any time prior to the latest date / time Bids shall be submitted through the Delta eSourcing Portal.
- 7.32 If you are a Consortium you must provide details of the Consortiums structure.
- 7.33 Bidders will be expected to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, or your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.34 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
- 7.35 Your bid will be valid for 90 days or your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.36 Bidders may only amend the contract terms during the clarification period only, only if you can demonstrate there is a legal or statutory reason why you cannot accept them. If you request changes to the Contract terms without such grounds and the Contracting Authority fail to accept your legal or statutory reason is reasonably justified, we may reject your Bid.
- 7.37 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.
- 7.38 If you fail mandatory pass / fail criteria we will reject your Bid.
- 7.39 Bidders are required to use IE8, IE9, Chrome or Firefox in order to access the functionality of the Delta eSourcing Portal.
- 7.40 Bidders should note that if they are successful with their proposal the Contracting Authority 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 the Contracting Authority may decline to proceed with the award of the Contract to the successful Bidder.

- 7.41 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 the Delta eSourcing Portal.
- 7.42 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, the Contracting Authority 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 the Contracting Authority 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.

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

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

The Contracting Authority 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

- [Contracts Finder](#)
- [Equalities Act introduction](#)
- [Bribery Act introduction](#)
- [Freedom of information Act](#)

8.0 Freedom of information

8.4.1 In accordance with the obligations and duties placed upon public authorities by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the 'FoIA') and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (the 'EIR') (each as amended from time to time), UK SBS or the Contracting Authority may be required to disclose information submitted by the Bidder to the to the Contracting Authority.

8.4.2 In respect of any information submitted by a Bidder that it considers to be commercially sensitive the Bidder should complete the Freedom of Information declaration question defined in the Question FOI1.2.

8.4.3 Where a Bidder identifies information as commercially sensitive, the Contracting Authority will endeavour to maintain confidentiality. Bidders should note, however, that, even where information is identified as commercially sensitive, the Contracting Authority may be required to disclose such information in accordance with the FoIA or the Environmental Information Regulations. In particular, the Contracting Authority is required to form an independent judgment concerning whether the information is exempt from disclosure under the FoIA or the EIR and whether the public interest favours disclosure or not. Accordingly, the Contracting Authority cannot guarantee that any information marked 'confidential' or "commercially sensitive" will not be disclosed.

8.4.4 Where a Bidder receives a request for information under the FoIA or the EIR during the procurement, this should be immediately passed on to UK SBS or the Contracting Authority and the Bidder should not attempt to answer the request without first consulting with the Contracting Authority.

8.4.5 Bidders are reminded that the Government's transparency agenda requires that sourcing documents, including ITQ templates such as this, are published on a designated, publicly searchable web site, and, that the same applies to other sourcing documents issued by UK SBS or the Contracting Authority, and any contract entered into by the Contracting Authority with its preferred supplier once the procurement is complete. By submitting a response to this ITQ Bidders are agreeing that their participation and contents of their Response may be made public.

8.5. Response Validity

8.5.1 Your Response should remain open for consideration for a period of 90 days. A Response valid for a shorter period may be rejected.

8.6. Timescales

8.6.1 [Section 3](#) of the ITQ sets out the proposed procurement timetable. the Contracting Authority reserves the right to extend the dates and will advise potential Bidders of any change to the dates.

8.7. The Contracting Authority's Contact Details

8.7.1 Unless stated otherwise in these Instructions or in writing from UK SBS or the Contracting Authority, all communications from Bidders (including their sub-contractors, consortium members, consultants and advisers) during the period of this procurement must be directed through the e-sourcing tool to the designated UK SBS contact.

8.7.2

All enquiries with respect to access to the e-sourcing tool may be submitted to Delta eSourcing on 0845 270 7050 please note this is a free self-registration website and this can be done by completing the online questionnaire at <https://uksbs.delta-esourcing.com/>

8.7.3 Bidders should be mindful that the designated Contact should not under any circumstances be sent a copy of their Response outside of the e-sourcing tool. Failure to follow this requirement will result in disqualification of the Response.