



Invitation to Quote

Invitation to Quote (ITQ) on behalf of RCUK

Subject UK SBS Equality and Status of Women in Research

Sourcing reference number UK SBS BLOJEU-CR150072RCUK

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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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

Research Councils UK (RCUK) is the strategic partnership of the UK's seven Research Councils.

Each year the Research Councils invest around £3 billion in research covering the full spectrum of academic disciplines from the medical and biological sciences to astronomy, physics, chemistry and engineering, social sciences, economics, environmental sciences and the arts and humanities.

We support excellent research, as judged by peer review, which has an impact on the growth, prosperity and wellbeing of the UK. To maintain the UK's global research position we offer a diverse range of funding opportunities, foster international collaborations and provide access to the best facilities and infrastructure around the world. We also support the training and career development of researchers and work with them to inspire young people and engage the wider public with research. To maximise the impact of research on economic growth and societal wellbeing we work in partnership with other research funders including Innovate UK, the UK Higher Education Funding Councils, business, government, and charitable organisations.

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	RCUK, Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, Wilts, SN2 1ET
3.2	Buyer name	Laura Gawthorn
3.3	Buyer contact details	Research@uksbs.co.uk
3.4	Estimated value of the Opportunity	£15,000-£25,000
3.5	Process for the submission of clarifications and Bids	All correspondence shall be submitted within the Emptoris e-sourcing tool. Guidance Notes to support the use of Emptoris 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 and location of original Advert	21/08/2015 Location Contracts Finder
3.7	Latest date/time ITQ clarification questions should be received through Emptoris messaging system	01/09/2015 14.00
3.8	Latest date/time ITQ clarification answers should be sent to all potential Bidders by the Buyer through Emptoris	03/09/2015 11.00 or 14.00
3.9	Latest date/time ITQ Bid shall be submitted through Emptoris	09/09/2015 14.00
3.11	Anticipated rejection of unsuccessful Bids date	01/10/2015
3.12	Anticipated Award date	01/10/2015
3.13	Anticipated Contract Start date	05/10/2015
3.14	Anticipated Contract End date	27/05/2016
3.15	Bid Validity Period	60 Days

Section 4 – Specification

Introduction

This **report on the “Equality and Status of Women in Research”** is being commissioned by Research Councils UK (RCUK) on behalf of the Global Research Council (GRC), a virtual organisation comprised of the heads of research funding agencies from around the world, dedicated to promoting the sharing of data and best practices for high-quality collaboration among funding agencies worldwide. The GRC meets annually with each annual meeting co-hosted by two participants.

The co-hosts for the 2016 annual meeting, which will take place in Delhi, India, from 26-28 May 2016, are the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) of India and RCUK. RCUK will take the lead on this report.

- SERB was established through an Act of Parliament in 2008. SERB’s mission is to promote basic research in Science and Engineering and to provide financial assistance to persons engaged in such research, academic institutions, research and development laboratories, industrial concerns and other agencies.
- RCUK is the strategic partnership of the UK’s seven Research Councils. Our collective ambition is to ensure the UK remains the best place in the world to do research, innovate and grow business. The Research Councils are central to delivering research and innovation for economic growth and societal impact. Together, we invest £3 billion in research each year, covering all disciplines and sectors, to meet tomorrow’s challenges today. Our investments create new knowledge through: funding research excellence; responding to society’s challenges; developing skills, leadership and infrastructure; and leading the UK’s research direction. We drive innovation through: creating environments and brokering partnerships; co-delivering research and innovation with over 2,500 businesses, 1,000 of which are SMEs; and providing intelligence for policy making.

Aims

RCUK is undertaking the tender exercise to:

- identify and appoint the most suitable provider to carry out and author a report on the “Equality and Status of Women in Research”, taking into account quality, experience and price;
- ensure that the chosen provider demonstrates their ability to complete the work effectively and to schedule;
- enable a global pool of potential providers to tender for the contract; gather additional information on existing research and data in this area.

Objectives

The report on the “Equality and Status of Women in Research” will act as a discussion paper for the GRC 2016 Annual Meeting. It will consist of a combination of a desk-based data review, desk-based research on policy and a series of telephone interviews with selected

research funding agencies around the world.

The provider will also attend the European regional meeting (5-6 November 2015 tbc) as a key note speaker, present to the other four regional meetings via videolink or a short film, and present their final report in person at the GRC Annual Meeting in Delhi, taking place May 25-28 2016.

Further information is available under 'Scope'.

Background to the requirement

General background

The 2014 GRC *'Statement of Principles and Actions for Shaping the Future: Supporting the Next Generation of Researchers'*¹ includes the Principle of *'Attracting and retaining the best talents in all their diversity'* and the action that *'GRC participants should advance equal opportunity in research, and develop mechanisms that encourage people from all backgrounds to pursue scholarly and scientific careers, contributing to research excellence.'*

Why this topic?

The legislative environments in which GRC participants operate increasingly include expectations or requirements in relation to Equality and Diversity² often with a particular focus on gender. Gender is also often the dominant issue in addressing E&D in research as evidenced by the series of Gender Summits.³ Whereas governments are often concerned to ensure fair and open access throughout the economy, in a research context this may be expressed as the ability to attract and retain the best talent into research regardless of gender.

Supporting gender and equality

Gender issues in research have gained increased recognition on policy agendas at organisational, national, regional and international levels. For example the Science Europe Roadmap⁴ provides a useful exposition of diversity issues summarised as:

- Giving every current and future researcher, in particular female researchers at all levels, the chance to achieve their potential, free from prejudice and discrimination;
- Increased diversity in research teams correlates positively with the quality of research, partly because diverse teams produce a greater variety of ideas;
- Gender and diversity are interwoven with all aspects of research from peer review to the experimental design and content of the research itself;

GRC participants, as funders and/or performers of research have the opportunity to be influential within their own jurisdiction and remit, by adopting and implementing policies aimed at addressing gender balance in research.

¹ <http://www.globalresearchcouncil.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Statement%20of%20Principles%20and%20Actions%20for%20Shaping%20the%20Future.pdf>

² Defined Diversity Characteristics may include gender, age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, family or marital status, membership of particular communities and sexual orientation

³ <http://gender-summit.com/about-the-gs>

⁴ <http://www.scienceeurope.org/policy/policy-2/roadmap>

Issues addressed by GRC participants may be internal to the organisation, such as peer review processes, unconscious bias training or HR matters for their own researchers, or external such as influencing the composition of the research workforce (overall and at different ages levels of seniority) or the content of research or ensuring that the funding mechanisms are fair, transparent and sensitive to the needs and drivers of different communities. Ideally the identification of actions and monitoring of outcomes will be informed by evidence.

Additional activities in this area

This commissioned report is being prepared to provide input to discussion at the GRC in May 2016. In addition to this there are five regional meetings (Europe, Americas, MENA, Asia and Africa) which will be held in autumn 2015. Regional meetings are usually hosted by two countries from each region and are organised by the International Steering Committee consisting of a representative from each host agency, plus GRC Executive Support Group members and the annual meeting hosts. Regional meetings will be attended by representatives of the funding agencies with experts invited as key note speakers. The outputs of these regional meetings will also feed into the GRC annual meeting in May 2016.

Organisation, roles and responsibilities

The contract will be managed by RCUK and the successful provider will report directly to the RCUK Project Manager. A small reference group, acting as the Project Board, will oversee the progress of the contract and be available to offer direction, advice and feedback. This group is likely to consist of senior level experts from RCUK, SERB, the GRC Secretariat and external experts as appropriate.

Scope

The chosen provider will undertake a project to create a report, consisting of a combination of:

1. **Desk-based research on what data currently exists** regarding gender in relation to the activities of GRC participants. It is anticipated that this data will relate to the following non-exclusive list:
 - a) all aspects of participation in peer review e.g. applicants, awardees and grant-holders, reviewers/referees, panel members, staff supported on research project grants. It is anticipated that this will include published data on success rates and training e.g. in unconscious bias).
 - b) gender make-up of High-level governing Councils
 - c) funding schemes/actions with a specific gender focus where data is available separately
 - d) gender dimensions in career trajectories (both within and outside academia)

This research should also produce:

- an assessment of any gaps in the data.
- an understanding of the evidence for differences according to age (chronological

or academic) and career stage – the four stages R1-R4 of the European Framework for Research Careers published by the European Commission⁵ should be used as a reference.

- case studies with disciplinary trend information⁶. (The suggested disciplinary breakdown is: Humanities and Social sciences; Natural Sciences, Physical and Environmental sciences; Medicine and Life Sciences.)

Note that further related data may be identified during the telephone interviews in task three (below).

2. **Desk-based research on policies of GRC participants** for gender and for supporting women in research. This should include policies that include Gender as part of a wider Diversity strategy and should also identify policies in relation to the composition of research teams and the gender content of research,

3. **A series of telephone interviews with selected research funding agencies** around the world (ideally seven in each region) to:

- identify data related to task one (above) that is not or not yet publicly available
- understand the procedures for the implementation by GRC participants of policies for gender and for supporting women in research (looking at dedicated policy, where it exists, or policy which contributes to an environment which supports the equality and status of women in research);
- understand the success or otherwise of GRC participants implementation of policies - to include factors that inhibit progress and any specific schemes for the promotion of women's participation in research.
- understand the status and perceived importance of research and its funding in the country.

It is anticipated that these interviews will lead to the production of a regional summary for each of the five GRC regions of the world including best practice examples of agency policy in action.

The focus must be explicitly based on funder (GRC participants) data and policies only, not the national policy landscape (i.e. not government, universities or schools).

The Project Board will advise on the funding agencies to approach to ensure as balanced a selection as possible. RCUK, working with the GRC Secretariat, will provide initial introductions and support in setting up interview sessions.

It is recognised that the results presented to the GRC regional meetings will be of an interim nature.

⁵ The European Framework for Research Careers (European Commission, 2011) comprises four stages R1 - First Stage Researcher; R2 - Recognised Researcher; R3 - Established Researcher and R4 - Leading Researcher

http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research_policies/Towards_a_European_Framework_for_Research_Careers_final.pdf

⁶ According to figures put forward by EU Commissioner Carlos Moedas at the EU Informal Competitiveness Council on 21 July 2015 - 47 % of university graduates are women, but only 33 % of researchers, 20 % of university professors and 10 % of university chancellors are women. <http://www.eu2015lu.eu/en/actualites/articles-actualite/2015/07/info-compet-hansen/index.html>

The report should also include:

- an executive summary;
- a context-setting global overview of the equality and status of women in research
- a broad analysis of the global picture based on desk-based research and the interviews highlighting differences and similarities in priorities between the five GRC regions;
- **conclusions** creating a baseline to enable future progress to be measured covering data, trends in the data and the current state of policy and practice; plus **recommendations** for actions by GRC participants. These conclusions and recommendations will feed into a GRC position statement or action plan which will be one of the key outputs of the GRC 2016 annual meeting (proposed conclusions and recommendations can be discussed with the Project Board at the presentation of the draft report);
- list of interviewees;
- glossary (if appropriate).

The report will initially inform discussions at the GRC annual meeting in May 2016 but is intended for a wider public audience of research policy professionals around the world.

Requirement

The external contractor will be expected to deliver the following **mandatory** key deliverables:

- A final report, the main body of which must be no more than 20-30 pages in length although appendices for glossary, references, interviewee details can be in addition to this page limit. See 'Scope' for additional information.
- A presentation of findings by the report's author to the GRC 2016 Annual Meeting from May 25-28 2016, Delhi, India.
- Full draft report
- Attendance as a key note speaker at the European regional meeting (5-6 November 2015, Rome, Italy) to introduce the report's concept, methodology and approach to regional meeting attendees.
- Presentation via video link OR a short film (this can be discussed with the Project Board) to introduce the report's concept, methodology and approach to regional meeting attendees. There are four regional meetings (see 'Background' for more information) which will take place between November and December, dates tbc.
- Attendance at minimum 3 project board meetings (likely location Swindon or London) to coincide with key project milestones (to agree the statement of work, to deliver the draft report and to deliver the final report).
- Statement of work at commencement of the project outlining the work activities they will undertake, deliverables and timetable. This will be discussed and refined at the inception meeting with the Project Board
- Research instruments, e.g. interview discussion guide, introductory email to case study interviewees
- Weekly progress reports
- The contractor will be expected to be regular in communication with the RCUK Project Manager to ensure that contractual obligations are being fulfilled and that the project is progressing as expected in terms of scope and time and to ensure that any potential issues or risks are identified, monitored and managed appropriately.
- Attendance at the International Steering Committee meeting (see 'Background' for more information) in January 2016 in UK, likely London.

Note that travel and accommodation costs will be covered outside of the contract for this report, but the time requirement for attendance at meetings and the related travel time should be factored in.

Timetable

October 2015 – contract commences, preparatory work including inception meeting with Project Board. **NB** The inception meeting is very likely to take place week commencing 5th October in either Swindon or London in the UK; videoconferencing is also possible.

October-December 2015 – telephone interviews and desk research

5-6 November 2015 – presentation at European regional meeting in Rome

Nov-Dec 2015 – videolink/film presentations at four other regional meetings

January 2016 – attendance at International Steering Committee meeting in UK (likely London)

End January 2016 – draft report submitted

February 2016 – meeting with Project Board to discuss draft report

End March 2016 – final report submitted

25-27 May 2016 – presentation at GRC 2016 in Delhi

Payment will be in two stages, half at the start of the contract and half on submission of the completed report.

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 ($5+5+6=16 \div 3 = 5.33$))

Pass / fail criteria		
Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject
Commercial	FOI1.1	Freedom of Information Exemptions
Commercial	AW1.1	Form of Bid
Commercial	AW1.3	Certificate of Bona Fide Bid
Commercial	AW3.1	Validation check
Commercial	AW4.1	Contract Terms
Price	AW5.5	E Invoicing
Price	AW5.6	Implementation of E-Invoicing
Quality	AW6.1	Compliance to the Specification
Quality	PROJ1.5	Capacity
-	-	Invitation to Quote – received on time within e-sourcing tool

Scoring criteria

Evaluation Justification Statement

In consideration of this particular requirement UK SBS has decided to evaluate Potential Providers by adopting the weightings/scoring mechanism detailed within this 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	20.00%
Quality	PROJ1.1	Understanding	30.00%
Quality	PROJ1.2	Staff and Capability	10.00%
Quality	PROJ1.3	Project plan and timescales	20.00%
Quality	PROJ1.4	Method	20.00%

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: $\text{Score/Total Points multiplied by 50}$ $(80/100 \times 50 = 40)$

The lowest score possible is 0 even if the price submitted is more than 100% greater than the lowest price.

Section 6 – Evaluation questionnaire

Bidders should note that the evaluation questionnaire is located within the **e-sourcing questionnaire**.

Guidance on completion of the questionnaire is available at
<http://www.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](#)