Invitation to Quote

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

Subject: Addressing Research Misconduct in the UK

Sourcing Reference Number: PS24037

Version 8.0

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Section 1 – About UK Shared Business Services

Putting the business into shared services

UK Shared Business Services Ltd (UKSBS) 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.

UKSBS 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), UKSBS' 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 UKSBS and Crown Commercial Services (CCS – previously Government Procurement Service) agree a Memorandum of Understanding with UKSBS to deliver two major procurement categories (construction and research) across Government.

UKSBS 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 (UKSBS) 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 UKSBS when we collect your personal information.

- We will keep your data safe and private.
- We will not sell your data to anyone.

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- 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/

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Section 2 – About the Contracting Authority

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)

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

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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 (UKRI)** Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1FF
3.2.	Buyer name	Maria Znaiko
3.3.	Buyer contact details	professionalservices@uksbs.co.uk
3.4.	Maximum value of the Opportunity	£115.000,00 Excluding VAT
3.5.	Process for the submission of clarifications and Bids	**All correspondence shall be submitted within the Messaging Centre of the Jaggaer eSourcing portal. Guidance on how to obtain support on using the Jaggaer eSourcing portal can be found in Section 7.25.** **Please note submission of a Bid to any email address including the Buyer will result in the Bid not being considered, unless formally advised to do so by UKSBS.**

Section 3 - Timescales		
3.6.	Date of Issue of Contract Advert on Contracts Finder	Thursday, 6th June 2024
3.7.	Latest date / time ITQ clarification questions shall be received through the Jaggaer eSourcing Portal	Monday, 24th June 2024 11:00
3.8.	Latest date / time ITQ clarification answers should be sent to all Bidders by the Buyer through the Jaggaer eSourcing Portal	Wednesday, 26th June 2024
3.9.	Latest date and time ITQ Bid shall be submitted through the Jaggaer eSourcing Portal (**the Deadline**)	Thursday, 4th July 2024 11:00
3.10.	Anticipated notification date of successful and unsuccessful Bids	Thursday, 11th July 2024
3.11.	Anticipated Contract Award date	Wednesday, 17th July 2024
3.12.	Anticipated Contract Start date	Thursday, 1st August 2024
3.13.	Anticipated Contract End date	Thursday, 31st July 2025
3.14.	Bid Validity Period	90 Days

Section 4 – Specification

1. Introduction

The UK Committee on Research Integrity (a national independent committee hosted and funded by UKRI) is interested in the UK research landscape and the infrastructure needed to support and govern research integrity. As part of this work, the committee has drawn together a cross-sector working group looking specifically at the way that research misconduct is addressed in the UK. The working group is considering how current practice could be strengthened to provide confidence to government, research funders, the research community and the general public, that cases of research misconduct are dealt with appropriately and effectively in higher education institutions (HEIs).

The working group has designed this requirement to build an evidence base on how assurance of good research practice and management of research misconduct is currently provided in the UK and how similar assurance is provided elsewhere, to inform thinking on future governance options for research integrity in the UK HEI research sector. This will include consideration of potential implications for the sector that might be created either by amendments to the current system or by introducing a new system for managing research misconduct.

2. Aims & Objectives

Aim

The overall aim of this project is to generate evidence about methods for effective governance of research misconduct in the UK HEI research sector. This includes how the system manages individual behaviour that constitutes misconduct as well as how incidents of misconduct are managed and reported by the HEI sector. This evidence will be used to inform the UK Committee on Research Integrity's cross-sector working group on addressing poor research practice and misconduct. In addition to exploring the current UK model which is supported by the research system, both within and outside of HEIs, the project is expected to identify opportunities to strengthen or amend current practice. The project will draw on international models for the governance of research misconduct within HEIs, and practice in UK governance systems from comparable sectors outside of, or adjacent to, the HEI research sector.

Objectives

The project has three workstreams
i) providing evidence on the UK HEI research sector's governance of research misconduct,
ii) exploring international models for managing research misconduct in HEI's, and
 iii) exploring models that include assurance and regulation in UK sectors outside of HEI's.
It is expected that these workstreams may overlap or run concurrently.

Overall objectives for this project and its workstreams are:

1. Develop the evidence base regarding how research misconduct is currently managed in UK higher education institutions. This should include information on where there is variance from expected or required processes, and system level influences on how processes are being conducted and adhered to.
2. Identify and draw insights from UK governance systems on managing misconduct in non-research sectors.

3. Identify and draw insights from governance systems for managing research misconduct in international HEI research systems.
4. Provide recommendations on how research misconduct governance in the UK could be amended or strengthened, and the impact this might be expected to have on the UK research system.

Across the three workstreams outputs will include:

1. Insights for the cross-sector working group to consider opportunities for amending or strengthening the UK HEI system for governing research misconduct.
2. Series of interviews and roundtables with individuals working in or impacted by these systems.
3. Interim and final reporting on the evidence gathered, including insights and tables that enable comparisons between findings from different workstreams. A slide deck that highlights key points from the report will also be expected.

3. Background to the requirement

The UK Committee on Research Integrity

The UK Committee on Research Integrity (the committee) was formed by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) following a recommendation from a 2018 House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee (STC) report on research integrity. Following wide engagement across the research sector in 2020 to 2021, plans for the committee were confirmed and the UK Committee on Research Integrity held its first meeting in May 2022.

UKRI supports the committee by providing a secretariat team.

Although this committee was established by UKRI on behalf of the research sector, ownership of research integrity ultimately resides with everyone working in and associated with the research system. The committee has formal responsibility for promoting research integrity across the UK and building consensus and co-ownership across the system.

The research system includes HEIs, research institutes, public, private, and third sector organisations. The system encompasses all stages of the research process, from conception to publication and use.

The committee is working with the sector to:
- maintain and support high integrity in all research environments and across all disciplines
- support good governance of research conduct

As part of its work, the committee has convened a working group to understand and strengthen the evidence base about 'what works' in relation to governance of research misconduct in HEIs and to assess the efficacy of the current UK system of self-regulation.

This project will help the committee to fulfil its responsibility for promoting research integrity, providing evidence, analysis, and insight to inform UK discussions and actions related to research integrity.

Further details about the committee, including membership and terms of reference, can be found on the [committee's website](#).

The working group

The committee convened a cross-sector working group to address poor research practice and research misconduct. This commission has been developed on their behalf. The working group's Terms of Reference and membership are available [here](#).

The UK research sector and concerns about the system of self-regulation

There is cross-sector concern that the current system for managing research misconduct in UK HEIs may not be robust enough, however there is limited formal evidence to support this concern, and little evidence on what works well and in what context.

The UK HEI research system is based on a system of self-governance (also referred to as self-regulation). For instance, research uses peer-review processes at various points in the research lifecycle. Researcher expertise and experience is part of the process to recommend research for funding and informs decisions about publication of research through peer-review processes. When misconduct is alleged to have occurred, panels must be convened to investigate the allegations and researchers have an important role to play in determining if there is a case to be investigated and whether the allegation should be upheld or not.

In 2012 the first Concordat to Support Research Integrity was published with a particular focus on HEIs. A revised concordat was published in 2018 and is the framework used by major funders and university representative organisations to promote integrity and to mitigate against, and manage, research misconduct. The concordat is currently being reviewed and is expected to be updated during 2024.

The government has also indicated an interest in this area. The challenges and issues were discussed in an influential [POSTNOTE](#) published in 2017.

Additionally, the House of Commons Science Innovation and Technology Select Committee held enquiries and published reports into research integrity in 2011, 2018, and 2023. The 2018 report was specific in describing the issue of misconduct (see below). The government's description of what was needed within the system has changed over time, reflecting new information and some new challenges impacting the research system. There have been and are ongoing discussions about how best to measure the scale and shape of misconduct in the research sector. However, there is a consistent view that system reinforcement is needed to underpin confidence in research.

The House of Commons Science and Technology Committee (as they were known in 2018) describes the issue below (excerpts from section 6 of [their 2018 report](#)):

110.UK research has an enviable record of excellence and public trust, but this should not be taken for granted. There is a risk that public trust in science could be eroded in the future through high-profile examples of research misconduct, and a risk that this could lead to demands for knee-jerk and ill-advised changes to the research system in the UK. There is a need for the research community—including funders, publishers, and employers of researchers—to stay ahead of research integrity issues and how they are dealt with in

public policy. The UK's position of international high regard and public trust in researchers is strengthened if the community has the confidence to admit that no area of human endeavour is immune to misconduct and error at some scale.

112.However, we also heard that current arrangements of institutions "policing their own conduct" could represent a conflict of interests. 203 Retraction Watch observed that "given many cases we have covered in which universities cleared their scientists of misconduct, only to later be forced to acknowledge such misconduct, it is obvious that institutions have a conflict of interest in investigating their own employees".204 Professor Dorothy Bishop called for an ombudsman to be created in the UK in order to manage this conflict of interest, and argued that this would be a benefit to the community in being able to defend itself against accusations of impropriety:

It would be sensible to have an independent arbiter, who has to be independent from Government and from the universities. They would be more like an ombudsman, but would need expertise in statistics and methods so that they could examine data, and they should have teeth so that they could take steps. Obviously, that would not be non-trivial to set up, but it would benefit the scientists who sometimes come under attack from people with vested interests, the people who are concerned about fraud, and the institutions themselves, who otherwise have to deal with those very messy cases.205 Q21

113.In contrast, Professor Sir Ian Diamond (on behalf of UUK) argued that it was already in a university's interest to investigate misconduct properly:

It is easy to say that there is a conflict of interest, but […] universities have an enormous interest in their own reputation and maintaining it. Universities have a long history of being able to co-regulate in an effective way. […] It is in everybody's interest to get to the bottom of the problem.206 Q54

115.Our predecessor committee concluded in 2011 that the general oversight of research integrity in the UK was "unsatisfactory", and recommended that an external regulator for research integrity should be established. The Government declined to act on this recommendation, stating:

the Government does not agree that there is a case for setting up an external regulator to oversee the employers [of researchers]. There are already a number of regulatory and licensing bodies in key areas of research, and therefore any new regulatory body would increase regulatory burden on employers, and risks causing unnecessary overlap and uncertainty. Through the Research Integrity Concordat the Government will expect employers of researchers to deal with research integrity in an open and transparent manner.210

4. Scope

The scope of this project is ambitious and we therefore encourage suppliers to outline how objectives will be met in the time available.

To meet the objectives outlined earlier, the successful supplier will need to be aware of and review the following documents and files. This list is not exhaustive; the successful supplier will be expected to seek out and review other pertinent sources of information. The documents in scope to be considered by the successful supplier are as follows:

- [The UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#)

- The 2017 [POSTNOTE](#) on research integrity
- The House of Commons Science and Technology Committee (as they were known in 2018) [report on research integrity](#) and their 2023 report on [Reproducibility and Research Integrity](#)
- An International Research Integrity Policy Scan [report](#) by KPMG for the Australian Research Council and the National Health and Medical Research Council
- The UK Research Integrity Office's [Barriers to Investigating and Reporting Research Misconduct](#)

- The UK Committee on Research Integrity's [Indicators of Research Integrity](#) project (report expected in summer 2024)

The focus of this project is on understanding governance systems and how elements of these systems could be adapted to fit the UK HEI sector, as well as identifying ways to strengthen how research misconduct is addressed in UK HEIs. To do so, the successful supplier is invited to look at practices and models used in other UK sectors as well as international research systems.

Although a large proportion of UK research takes place in a diversity of non-HEI settings, the cross-sector working group determined that the scope of this work should focus on HEIs to ensure it would lead to deliverable actions. In its 2018 and 2023 reports, the House of Commons Science, Innovation and Technology Select Committee had a recurring theme around assurance and response to research misconduct allegations within HEIs, linked to public spending. Working group members also highlighted that this focus would benefit industry, government and others that collaborate, commission or engage with research performed in HEIs.

Although not a primary focus of this work, findings may be applicable beyond UK HEIs and the working group will seek to ascertain what deliverables can be translated across to other UK research sectors. The successful supplier is not tasked with making recommendations for research conducted in other settings.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Bids should explain how the research and interview process will be inclusive and take appropriate consideration of the impact of recommendations on those with different protected characteristics. An equalities impact assessment that is proportionate to the scope and scale of the project should be undertaken as part of the initial project planning process and refreshed, where needed, throughout. Any final reports and slide decks should be accessible to enable all users to use the content regardless of their circumstances.

As such, they need to:

5. have a simple structure
6. use straightforward, inclusive language
7. avoid content that is only understood with one of our senses, for instance visual diagrams – you need to explain any visual elements using text
8. be formatted so they can be efficiently used by assistive technology such as screen readers
9. avoid creating barriers for those with cognitive differences, such as dyslexia or autism

10. comply with legal regulations, and the UK's Government Digital Service and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines from the World Wide Web Consortium

Data management

Bids should outline how the research and interview process will be conducted in accordance with relevant data protection and security standards (GDPR), including how they will safely store, use and destroy personal data and other information collected as part of the requirement. *The lawful basis for processing the data will be 'Public Task'.* Article 6(1)(e) gives you a lawful basis for processing where: "processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller".

This agreement will be in place up to but not after July 2025.

5.Requirement

As set out earlier, the overarching aim of this project is to better understand the UK HEI system for management of research misconduct and to build an evidence base that will provide insights as to how the UK might better address research misconduct in HEIs. This will include a review of international HEI research system processes for managing research misconduct as well as a review of processes for managing conduct in non-research UK sectors.

To achieve this, the project comprises three workstreams. It is expected that these workstreams will intersect and inform each other, and may need to run concurrently.

Monitoring will be performed by the working group; attendance at a minimum of six meetings (in person in London or virtually) will be required. Fortnightly to monthly progress meetings will be expected with the committee secretariat and working group co-chairs.

Workstream 1 - UK HEI research sector

This workstream will characterise the UK HEI research system's governance of research misconduct. There are two main components of this workstream: 1) define the current system, and 2), identify how well the current system is adhered to.

This workstream will:
- Describe the UK HEI research landscape relating to misconduct, including definitions of key roles and responsibilities, and covering policy, reporting and regulation. Using the definition of research misconduct in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, describe the overall governance mechanisms and processes used for queries, cases and investigation findings. Identify the organisations and their roles in relation to these processes and mechanisms. This should cover any limitations or conflicts resulting when one or more policies apply (e.g. international collaborations, complex cases involving allegations of bullying or harassment).
- Identify and describe what guidance, expectations and requirements are currently available, including a definition of the areas of research that are currently regulated in the UK and by whom (e.g. compliance with legislation governing the use of human tissue, etc.). This should also include information about appeals processes, how support is provided for those involved in processes, and how information is reported.

- Build an evidence base that explores how processes relating to misconduct are run and are adhered to.
  - Examine and describe research misconduct processes at a cross section of HEIs, representing a diversity of HEIs, to determine if process and practice differs from or adheres to expectations and requirements, and by how much (for example, comparing against funder policies).
  - Identify and describe any pressures, incentives, or disincentives in the research system that have an impact on processes and practices relating to research misconduct in HEIs.
  - Understand views of the current system, including impressions from the UK research community, on how the system manages potential and confirmed instances of research misconduct.

Workstream 2 – International models for managing research misconduct in HEIs

This workstream is about building on our understanding of models for managing potential and confirmed cases of misconduct in different countries, to support international collaborations and to inform the UK's approach to research misconduct. It is important that this workstream adds to, rather than duplicates, previous work. International collaborations are an important part of UK research so this workstream is also expected to gather information on how managing research misconduct crosses borders.

The workstream should include a review of relevant international research and policy documents. For example, the Australian International Research Integrity Policy Scan referenced earlier and the STC report published in 2018 described some differences between countries, but there is a need to consider international systems through the current UK funding and regulatory context.

This workstream will build on existing evidence about assurance models deployed in countries outside the UK (e.g., ombudsman, integrity office, oversight, regulatory) and offer an analysis of how different models, or parts of models might be suitable for the UK research system (including financial investment, legislative and regulatory changes). There is particular interest in identifying what data on misconduct are collected through models outside the UK and how such data are used by research systems as part of their management of research misconduct.

This work is expected to generate a longlist of potential countries for inclusion, reflecting a range of models and assurance mechanisms. The list will be discussed with the working group to support the decision for a shortlist. Where possible, the proposed longlist should build on or extend, rather than duplicate, the International Research Integrity Policy Scan.

Following identification of the shortlist, the work will include a more detailed characterisation of these countries, including information on each country's approach to governance and assurance. The shortlist is likely to be up to 10 countries but possibly fewer. Of specific interest is how the system operates, the infrastructure and costs required to maintain it, and whether the approach provides data on the scale and type of misconduct occurring in the country.

The final element of this workstream is an analysis of how the UK could adapt its research system to integrate some of the strengths from other research systems, and identify opportunities for improving international cross-border management of research misconduct.

Workstream 3 – assurance and regulation in UK sectors outside of research

This workstream seeks to understand models of assurance and governance (from regulatory to advisory) in UK sectors adjacent to, or independent from, the UK research system. As in workstream 2, this work will help identify learning and approaches that could potentially be of benefit if applied to the HEI research system in the UK.

There are three main expectations within this workstream:

- A rapid review and synthesis of the system of assurance used in other sectors, covering why each system exists, which key features need assurance, and the main mechanisms or approaches that have been implemented, as well as pertinent changes that have occurred over time.
- Identify a longlist and examine the systems of assurance to better understand the approaches and their effect on their sector. Ultimately a shortlist should include how the system operates, the infrastructure and costs required to maintain it, relevant evidence and data collected by it, and whether this is used to inform information about scale and type of misconduct/complaint, and whether this provides an accurate national picture.
- Building on the above, provide a a list of potential elements that could be adapted for use by the UK HEI research system to integrate strengths of these other systems.

We expect that this workstream should include information relating to at least five other sectors. It may be helpful to consider the diversity of systems existing outside of the one used in UK HEI research.
- regulatory bodies, for example Ofcom, Office for Students, the Independent Office for Police Conduct and The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)
- ombudsman service models like the Financial Ombudsman Service
- professional conduct regulators, for example the Financial Conduct Authority and the Health and Care Professions Council
- bodies that provide advice and mediation such as ACAS and Citizens Advice
- models of self-regulation, for example guilds, unions, concordats or of chartership such as those hosted by learned societies and professional associations
- models based on accreditation, for example, ISO or BSI, where organisations pay for auditing and receive accreditation.

Methodology

Bids should set out an approach to achieving the objectives set out earlier, demonstrating how they will embed and maintain high integrity throughout the project. For workstream 1, bidders should state how they will ensure that they engage with and gather perspectives from a range of individuals. For workstreams 2 and 3, it will be important for the methodology to include detail of how bidders will strategically review relevant information, develop a longlist of potential countries/sectors, and then narrow this to a relevant shortlist. We have suggested interviews and roundtables, however bidders are also encouraged to suggest additional means of engagement.

For all workstreams, the bidder should aim to ensure that reach and inclusion are maximised so that views broadly reflect different parts of the (research) system. Bidders should also design the work and approaches to ensure that the work is carried out

navigating impartiality, confidentiality, and with due attention paid to varying opinions and avoiding judgement or taking sides.

Project proposals should outline the activities suppliers will undertake during the course of the project, methodology, milestones, deliverables and timetable. This must include an equality impact assessment for this project, any necessary ethics approvals being sought, and sufficient detail on each of the three workstreams.

Project Deliverables

The successful supplier will be expected to deliver, at a minimum, the following deliverables according to the timetable outlined.

1. **Presentations to the cross-sector working group** – early presentation outlining the project plan and methodology, with further progress updates throughout the project. It is expected that there will be at a minimum of six meetings.
2. **Longlists of international systems and UK sectors** - Longlists of international systems and UK sectors and proposed criteria for narrowing longlists to shortlists.
3. **Interview and roundtables** – to gain the views of individuals working in or effected by current systems managing conduct and/or misconduct. Individuals to be identified in consultation with the working group.
4. **Interim report** – Early first draft of the final report including details of the outcomes of work completed. This should include context, methodology, key findings, and applicability to the UK system. It is expected that this early draft will inform the committee's 2025 annual statement and provide the working group with an opportunity to highlight any gaps or oversights in the gathered evidence that could be addressed before the delivery of the final reports.
5. **Insights document** - reflections and considerations for the cross-sector working group based on the project findings, for them to consider when developing recommendations on amending or strengthening the UK HEI system for governing research misconduct.
6. **Final report and slide deck** – an accessible (see description under Scope) final publicly facing report should include context, methodology, key details from other systems, and applicability to the UK system. The report should further include tables that enable comparisons between findings from different workstreams. A slide deck of key findings should sit alongside the report.

6.Timetable

Milestones 3-7 assumes workstreams will be delivered in succession with an equal length of time spent on each. However, the supplier is welcome to use discretion to choose to run workstreams in parallel, or allocate more time to one workstream over another.

Milestones 8-11 must be completed within the specified deadline.

#	Target / Milestone	Deadline
1	Kick off meeting with secretariat	August 2024
2	First meeting with working group to cover project plan and methodology focus for all workstreams	August 2024
3	WS1: List of proposed UK individuals to be invited to interview, interview questions and interview schedule, to be agreed in consultation with the working group	August 2024

4	WS2: Short paper and presentation of longlist of countries of interest with justified suggestions to the working group of which countries to shortlist	October 2024
5	WS2: List of proposed international individuals to be invited to interview, interview questions and interview schedule, to be agreed in consultation with the working group	October 2024
6	WS3: Short paper and presentation of longlist of systems of assurance of interest with justified suggestions to the working group of which countries to shortlist	December 2024
7	WS3: List of proposed individuals from other systems of assurance to be invited to interview, interview questions and interview schedule, to be agreed in consultation with the working group	December 2024
8	Interim report covering all workstreams	**March 2025**
9	Final externally facing report for all workstreams detailing the methods, findings and discussion, supported by raw data in annex(es)	**July 2025**
10	Presentation slide deck and visuals/graphics (covering all workstreams)	**July 2025**
11	Insights report for all workstreams, containing insights gathered from the project that may form suggestions to inform the working group's recommendations to the committee	**July 2025**

The project should be undertaken August 2024 – July 2025.

Note the following key dates:
- Deadline for tender submission: 11am on 3 July 2024
- Award tender to successful candidate: July 2024
- Contract commencement: August 2024
- Delivery of all work including final report by: July 2025 (all remaining funds paid on completion of deliverables 9-11)

Terms and Conditions

Bidders are to note that any requested modifications to the Contracting Authority Terms and Conditions on the grounds of statutory and legal matters only, shall be raised as a formal clarification during the permitted clarification period.

Section 5 – Evaluation of Bids

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

To maintain a high degree of rigour in the evaluation of your bid, a process of commercial moderation will be undertaken to ensure consistency by all evaluators.

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÷3 = 5.33).

Pass / Fail criteria		
Evaluation Envelope	**Q No.**	**Question subject**
Qualification	SEL1.2	Employment breaches/ Equality
Qualification	SEL1.3	Compliance to Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act
Qualification	SEL1.10	Information security requirements
Qualification	SEL2.12	General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Act and Data Protection Act 2018
Qualification	FOI1.1	Freedom of Information
Qualification	AW1.1	Form of Bid
Qualification	AW1.3	Certificate of Bona Fide Bid
Qualification	AW3.1	Validation check
Qualification	AW3.2	Conflict of Interest Declaration
Qualification	AW3.2.1	Conflict of Interest Declaration Supporting Information
Qualification	AW4.1	Compliance to the Contract Terms
Qualification	AW4.2	Changes to the Contract Terms
Qualification	AW4.3	Contracts with suppliers from Russia or Belarus
Commercial	AW5.3	Firm Price
Commercial	AW5.4	Maximum Budget
Commercial	AW5.5	E-Invoicing
Technical	AW6.1	Compliance to the Specification
Technical	AW6.2	Variable Bids
-	-	Invitation to Quote response received on time within the Jaggaer eSourcing Portal
	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.	

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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.

Evaluation Envelope	Q No.	Question subject	Maximum Marks	
			Overall	Breakdown
Commercial	AW5.1	Price	15%	15%
Technical	PROJ1.1	Understanding the Project Requirement	85%	20%
Technical	PROJ1.2	Approach and Methodology		25%
Technical	PROJ1.3	Project Plan, Timescales and Risk Management		20%
Technical	PROJ1.4	Project Team and Capability to Deliver		20%

Evaluation of criteria

Non-Commercial 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 = {weighting percentage} x {bidder's score} = 20% x 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 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 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) ÷ 4 = 50

Once the above evaluation process has been undertaken and the scores are apportioned by evaluator(s) this will then be subject to an independent commercial review and moderation meeting, if required by the commercial lead, any and all changes will be formally recorded relative to the regulatory obligations associated with this procurement, so as to ensure that the procurement has been undertaken in a robust and transparent way.

Commercial Elements will be evaluated 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 Commercial 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 x 50 = 40)

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

This evaluation criteria will therefore not be subject to any averaging, as this is a mathematical scoring criterion, but will still be subject to a commercial review.

Evaluation process

The evaluation process will feature some, if not all, the following phases.

Stage	Summary of activity
Receipt and Opening	• ITQ logged upon opening in alignment with UKSBS's procurement procedures. • Any ITQ Bid received after the closing date will be rejected unless circumstances attributed to UKSBS, the Contracting Authority or the eSourcing Portal beyond the bidder control are responsible for late submission.
Compliance check	• Check all Mandatory requirements are acceptable to the Contracting Authority. • Unacceptable Bids maybe subject to clarification by the Contracting Authority or rejection of the Bid.
Scoring of the Bid	• Evaluation team will independently score the Bid and provide a commentary of their scoring justification against the criteria.
Clarifications	• The Evaluation team may require written clarification to Bids
Re - scoring of the Bid and Clarifications	• Following Clarification responses, the Evaluation team reserve the right to independently re-score the Bid and Clarifications and provide a commentary of their re-scoring justification against the Evaluation criteria.
Moderation meeting (if required to reach an award decision)	• To review the outcomes of the Commercial review • To agree final scoring for each Bid, relative rankings of the Bids • To confirm contents of the feedback letters to provide details of scoring and relative and proportionate feedback on the unsuccessful Bidders response

Due diligence of the Bid	• the Contracting Authority may request the following requirements at any stage of the Procurement:
	    o Submission of insurance documents from the Bidder
	    o Request for evidence of documents / accreditations referenced in the / Invitation to Quote response / Bid and / or Clarifications from the Bidder
	    o Taking up of Bidder references from the Bidders Customers.
	    o Financial Credit check for the Bidder

Validation of unsuccessful Bidders	• To confirm contents of the letters to provide details of scoring and meaningful feedback on the unsuccessful Bidders Bid in comparison with the successful Bidders Bid.

Section 6 – Evaluation Response Questionnaire

Bidders should note that the evaluation response questionnaire is located within the **Jaggaer eSourcing Portal.**

Guidance on how to register and use the Jaggaer eSourcing portal is available at

https://beisgroup.ukp.app.jaggaer.com/

PLEASE NOTE THE QUESTIONS ARE NOT NUMBERED SEQUENTIALLY

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Section 7 – General Information

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What makes a good bid – some simple do's ☺

</div>

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 Section 3 of 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 the eSourcing portal 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 Jaggaer 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.

7.10   Do complete all questions in the evaluation response 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 UKSBS 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 UKSBS 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 UKSBS 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 the Jaggaer eSourcing portal. Responses received by any other method than requested will not be considered for the opportunity.

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Some additional guidance notes 📖

7.25   All enquiries with respect to access to the eSourcing portal and problems with functionality within the portal must be submitted to Jaggaer eSourcing Helpdesk

Phone 08000 698 632
Email customersupport@jaggaer.com

Please note; Jaggaer is a free self-registration portal. Bidders can complete the online registration at the following link:
https://beisgroup.ukp.app.jaggaer.com/

7.26   Bidders will be specifically advised where attachments are permissible to support a question response within the eSourcing portal. 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 Response 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 Jaggaer 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.

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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 Jaggaer 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 Jaggaer 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 revised its Government Security Classifications (GSC) classification scheme on the 2nd April 2014 to replace the previous 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

8.1   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), UKSBS or the Contracting Authority may be required to disclose information submitted by the Bidder to the to the Contracting Authority.

8.2   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.

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

8.5   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 UKSBS 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.

9.0.   Timescales

9.1   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.

10.0.   The Contracting Authority's Contact Details

10.1   Unless stated otherwise in these Instructions or in writing from UKSBS or the Contracting Authority, all communications from Bidders (including their sub-contractors, consortium members, consultants, and advisers) during the period of this

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procurement must be directed through the eSourcing tool to the designated UKSBS contact.

10.2 Bidders should be mindful that the designated Contact should <u>not under any circumstances</u> be sent a copy of their Response outside of the Jaggaer eSourcing portal. Failure to follow this requirement will result in disqualification of the Response.

Appendix A – Glossary of Terms

TERM	MEANING
"UKSBS"	means UK Shared Business Services Ltd herein after referred to as UKSBS.
"Bid", "Response", "Submitted Bid ", or "ITQ Response"	means the Bidders formal offer in response to this Invitation to Quote
"Bidder(s)"	means the organisations being invited to respond to this Invitation to Quote
"Call Off Contract"	means the document set out in Schedule 2 of the Contract
"Central Purchasing Body"	means a duly constituted public sector organisation which procures supplies / services / works for and on behalf of Contracting Authorities
"Conditions of Bid"	means the terms and conditions set out in this ITQ relating to the submission of a Bid
"Competed Supplies/Services	means the competed supplies / services which will be Ordered from the Contract following a Mini-Competition and are set out at Schedule 2 of the Contract
"Contract"	means the agreement to be entered by the Contracting Authority and the Supplier following any award under the procurement
"Contracting Bodies"	means the Contracting Authority and any other contracting authorities described in the Contracts Finder Notice
"Contracting Authority"	A public body regulated under the Public Procurement Regulations on whose behalf the procurement is being run
"Customer"	means the legal entity (or entities) for which any Contract agreed will be made accessible to.
"Due Diligence Information"	means the background and supporting documents and information provided by the Contracting Authority for the purpose of better informing the Bidders responses to this ITQ
"EIR"	mean the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 together with any guidance and / or codes of practice issued by the Information Commissioner or relevant Government department in relation to such regulations
"FoIA"	means the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and any subordinate legislation made under such Act from time to time together with any guidance and/or codes of practice issued by the Information Commissioner or relevant Government department in relation to such legislation
"Further Competition"	means re-opening competiton under a framework if applicable to this procurement
"Invitation to Quote" or "ITQ"	means this Invitation to Quote documentation and all related documents published by the Contracting Authority and made available to Bidders and includes the Due Diligence Information. **NOTE:** This document is often referred to as an Invitation to Tender within other organisations
"Mandatory"	Means a pass / fail criteria which must be met in order for a Bid to be considered, unless otherwise specified.
"Named Procurement person "	means the single point of contact for the Contracting Authority based in UKSBS that will be dealing with the procurement

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"Order"	means an order for served by any Contracting Body on the Supplier
"Supplier(s)"	means the organisation(s) awarded the Contract
"Supplies / Services / Works"	means any supplies/services and supplies or works set out at within Section 4 Specification

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