

Invitation to Quote

**Invitation to Quote (ITQ) on behalf of Department for Business,
Energy and Industrial Strategy**

**Subject: Qualitative research to support the evaluation of Shared
Parental Leave and Pay scheme and the review of the right to
request flexible working**

Sourcing Reference Number: CR18158

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

Registered in England and Wales as a limited company. Company Number 6330639.
Registered Office Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 1FF
VAT registration GB618 3673 25
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Version 3.3

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 Contracting Authorities improve efficiency, generate savings and modernise.

It is our vision to become the leading service provider for the Contracting Authorities of shared business services in the UK public sector, continuously reducing cost and improving quality of business services for Government and the public sector.

Our broad range of expert services is shared by our Contracting Authorities. This allows Contracting Authorities the freedom to focus resources on core activities; innovating and transforming their own organisations.

Core services include Procurement, Finance, Grants Admissions, Human Resources, Payroll, ISS, and Property Asset Management all underpinned by our Service Delivery and Contact Centre teams.

UK SBS is a people rather than task focused business. It's what makes us different to the traditional transactional shared services centre. What is more, being a not-for-profit organisation owned by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), UK SBS' goals are aligned with the public sector and delivering best value for the UK taxpayer.

UK Shared Business Services Ltd changed its name from RCUK Shared Services Centre Ltd in March 2013.

Our Customers

Growing from a foundation of supporting the Research Councils, 2012/13 saw Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) transition their procurement to UK SBS and Crown Commercial Services (CCS – previously Government Procurement Service) agree a Memorandum of Understanding with UK SBS to deliver two major procurement categories (construction and research) across Government.

UK SBS currently manages £700m expenditure for its Contracting Authorities. Our Contracting Authorities who have access to our services and Contracts are detailed [here](#).

Section 2 – About the Contracting Authority

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) was created as a result of a merger between the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), as part of the Machinery of Government (MoG) changes in July 2016.

The Department is responsible for:

- developing and delivering a comprehensive industrial strategy and leading the government's relationship with business;
- ensuring that the country has secure energy supplies that are reliable, affordable and clean;
- ensuring the UK remains at the leading edge of science, research and innovation; and
- tackling climate change.

BEIS is a ministerial department, supported by 46 agencies and public bodies.

We have around 2,500 staff working for BEIS. Our partner organisations include 9 executive agencies employing around 14,500 staff.

<http://www.beis.gov.uk>

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	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy of 1 Victoria St, London SW1H0ET
3.2	Buyer name	Declan Ward
3.3	Buyer contact details	01793 867005 research@uksbs.co.uk
3.4	Maximum value of the Opportunity	The maximum value of this contract is £60,000.00 ex VAT
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	Contracts Finder 19/11/2018
3.7	Latest date/time ITQ clarification questions shall be received through Emptoris messaging system	27/11/2018 at 14.00
3.8	Latest date/time ITQ clarification answers should be sent to all Bidders by the Buyer through Emptoris	29/11/2018 at 14.00
3.9	Latest date/time ITQ Bid shall be submitted through Emptoris	05/12/2018 at 14.00
3.11	Anticipated notification date of successful and unsuccessful Bids	12/12/2018
3.12	Anticipated Award date	17/12/2018
3.13	Anticipated Contract Start date	02/01/2019
3.14	Anticipated Contract End date	29/03/2019
3.15	Bid Validity Period	60 Days

Section 4 – Specification

1. Background

The Government is committed to tackling the under-representation of women in the labour market and to reducing the gender pay gap. It is also helping families achieve a balance between their home and work lives; seeking to improve take-up of shared parental leave and helping companies provide more flexible work environments that help mothers and fathers share parenting. The provision and take-up of parental leave and flexible working forms an important part of this work. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is responsible in particular for Government policy on parental leave and pay, including Maternity, Paternity and Adoption leave, and more recently, Shared Parental Leave and Pay. Introduced in 2015, Shared Parental Leave and Pay allows parents to share up to 50 weeks of leave and up to 37 weeks of pay and take the leave and pay in a more flexible way than has previously been the case (each parent can take up to 3 blocks of leave, more if their employer allows, interspersed with periods of work).

The Department is also responsible for the legislation in relation to 'unpaid parental leave' (which entitles parents to up to 18 weeks' leave for each child and adopted child, up to their 18th birthday), adoption leave and pay reform, and the Right to Request Flexible Working, extended to all employees in 2014.

The Department has made public commitments to review/evaluate:

- The 2015 introduction of the Shared Parental Leave and Pay scheme;
- Unpaid parental leave legislative changes ([The Parental Leave \(EU Directive\) Regulations 2013](#));
- Adoption leave and pay reforms;
- The extension of the Right to Request Flexible Working to all employees with 26 weeks continuous service.

BEIS is currently undertaking surveys of employers and working parents to collect robust data on the recent legislative changes. Qualitative research will support survey evidence to feed into the evaluation of Shared Parental Leave and Pay, Adoption Leave and Pay and Post-Implementation Reviews for Unpaid Parental Leave and Extension of the right to request flexible working.

Gathering qualitative evidence among employers and employees will enable BEIS to develop a better understanding of the effectiveness of family-related leave and work-life balance policies in British workplaces. Qualitative research forms an essential component of the evaluation programme, enabling a comprehensive exploration of the contexts, processes, motivations and behaviours in relation to the above policies.

Qualitative evidence is also required to explore more complex or sensitive topics in relation to the aforementioned policies, for example understanding employee decision-making around the Shared Parental Leave and Pay scheme, employer decisions around enhancing pay, or whether employees feel empowered to ask their employers for flexible working using the right to request.

2. Aims and Objectives of the Project

Understanding experiences of employees and employers in relation to family leave-taking, return to work and flexible working is crucial to establish the extent to which these labour market policies are achieving their policy aims.

The overarching aim of this study is to develop a better understanding of the effectiveness of recent reforms to family-related leave and work-life balance policies among employees and employers in Britain.

Specifically, the project objectives are:

- To assess the effectiveness of Shared Parental Leave and Pay/unpaid parental leave/adoption leave and pay and the right to request flexible working on individual and employer outcomes;
- To establish whether recent regulatory changes in these areas have made a difference. Would these outcomes have occurred in the absence of the legislation?

This includes exploring decision-making and motivations around Shared Parental Leave and Pay/unpaid parental leave/adoption leave and pay and the right to request flexible working; enablers and barriers to participation; and experiences of employers and employees in relation to these policies;

- To examine the implementation of the regulations in practice to learn what works and inform future policy-making.

Typical research questions should include, but not be limited to the following:

Among employees:

- Decision-making around working flexibly/taking shared parental leave and pay/unpaid parental leave/adoption leave and pay;
- Experiences of working flexibly and using the Shared Parental Leave and Pay scheme; unpaid parental leave; adoption leave and pay (from initial recruitment);
- What are the barriers and enablers of working flexibly; taking Shared Parental Leave and Pay; unpaid parental leave; adoption leave and pay.
- Effects of Shared Parental Leave and Pay scheme on employees and their partners. Specifically on: attitudes towards sharing childcare responsibilities with their partner; perceived effects on child welfare; flexibility about taking leave and balancing work and care; ease of return to work; any perceptions of consequences on employment, career and earnings.

- Effects of flexible working extension on: whether employees using flexible working are satisfied with their working arrangements; perceptions of work-life balance; perceptions of consequences on employment, career and earnings;
- Overall employee satisfaction with policies. Have experiences and perceptions changed since the reforms? Any room for improvement to the policies?
- Any unintended effects of the legislation?

Among employers:

- Organisational policies, support and training provided for staff/managers in the area of family-related leave and pay and work-life balance regulations;
- Whether employers pay enhancements for Shared Parental Leave and Pay, unpaid parental leave, adoption leave and why;
- Use of flexible working, Shared Parental Leave and Pay, unpaid parental leave, adoption leave and pay among employees.
- Line manager and senior manager attitudes towards accommodating flexible working, Shared Parental Leave and Pay, unpaid parental leave and adoption leave and pay. What are the enablers and barriers of accommodating these policies?
- Workplace effects of employees working flexibly and taking Shared Parental Leave and Pay, specifically on staff motivation and commitment, absenteeism, staff turnover, recruitment, individual effectiveness and performance; level of complaints around work-life balance/acas involvement/Employment Tribunal cases etc;
- Employer satisfaction with the Shared Parental Leave and Pay, unpaid parental leave, adoption leave and pay and the right to request flexible working code of practice. Have experiences and perceptions changed since the reforms? Any room for improvement to the policies?
- How are discussions of flexible working and parental leave offer managed in the recruitment process?
- Have there been any costs or savings associated with Shared Parental Leave and Pay and Flexible Working regulations? Any unintended consequences? Any perceived wider benefits among employers in offering family-related leave and work-life balance policies (for example the opportunity to close the gender pay gap).

3. Suggested Methodology

Total number of Interviews (qualitative)	60 qualitative interviews
Total number of Case Studies	Up to 15 case studies (inclusive of qualitative interviews)

Methodology

The evaluation requires an in-depth exploration of the effectiveness of family-related leave and work-life balance policies in workplaces in Britain. We anticipate 60 semi-structured qualitative interviews will be carried out to form around 15 case studies for this research project.

Within an organisational case study, we are interested in speaking with:

- Employers that have employees taking Shared Parental Leave and Pay in the past 2 years, unpaid parental leave and adoption leave and pay in the past 2 years; employers that have employees undertaking flexible working in the last 12 months;
- Employers that have not recently had employees taking family-related leave and pay or working flexibly;
- Shared parental leave and pay recipients in the past 2 years;
- Employees that have been undertaking flexible working in the last 12 months;
- Employees that have taken unpaid parental leave in the past 2 years;
- Adoption leave and pay recipients in the past 2 years.
- Line managers, HR manager or director and Senior managers;
- Employee partners/household perspective;
- Some co-workers.

We are also interested in obtaining a couples perspective and any household-level effects in relation to Shared Parental Leave and Pay policy. Tenderers are invited to put forward suggestions of incorporating the perspective of employee partners within the research design.

Within the limitations of qualitative research, it is hoped that there may be scope to draw some meaningful comparisons, for example, between organisations which are similar in terms of size/sector and employees using family-related leave/flexible working in terms of their experiences.

Sampling design

The research is qualitative and is therefore not designed to collect data that is representative of the population of interest. This project will use a purposive (non-probability) sampling approach to gather a range of views across the wider employee and employer population.

Selection criteria of employer respondents can include:

- Employees using family-related leave and work-life balance policies (or not);
- Size of employer;
- Sector;
- Male/female-dominated workplaces.

Selection criteria of employee respondents can include:

- Use of family-related leave and work-life balance policies;
- Gender;
- Age;
- Whether responsible for dependent adults (not as paid employment);
- Occupation;
- Ethnicity.

Employers (of 5 or more employees) responding to the Management and Wellbeing Practices Survey who are willing to be re-contacted will be used as a

sampling frame for this project. This will enable tenderers to target a range of employers more systematically, whilst also attempting to reduce bias in case study selection. Fieldwork for the employer survey is currently taking place and is due to be completed around December 2018/January 2019. We will set up a data sharing agreement between survey contractors, BEIS and the successful tenderer to facilitate sharing of the sampling frame.

This project has the potential to capture workplace dynamics by using a case study approach. In this way interviewers can gain access to the organisation, interviewing the HR/manager, employees (including co-workers), line managers and senior managers where available.

Developing the topic guides

Tenderers are invited to state how they intend to develop the research instruments to address the aims and objectives of this research and elicit open and honest responses.

We anticipate cognitive testing and piloting among around 5-10 employers/employees and plans for this should be included. Cognitive testing will ensure content is understood, that the length of the research instrument is suitable and that the questions are well ordered throughout. It is envisaged that at least five cognitive interviews are completed, and any revisions will be made to the materials prior to the main pilot exercise.

Tenderers should demonstrate that their interviewers have the necessary training, skills and experience to conduct interviews of this type. Tenderers should also provide an explanation of their interviewer briefing procedures and quality assurance processes in relation to fieldwork.

Data collection and analysis

Due to the open and in-depth nature of questioning, this project lends itself to a face-to-face interviewing mode. This will enable interviewers to explore more complex or sensitive topics, for example decision-making around Shared parental leave and pay.

It is envisaged that 60 face-to-face interviews will be completed, comprising:

Employee interviews (25 parents; 10 among non-parents and co-workers)

Employer interviews (25 interviews including with HR managers and directors, line managers and senior managers).

It is expected that interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Tenderers are asked to provide the detail of their approach to this, alongside the management

and storage of data collected and their approach to data analysis. This should include details of any software package used for qualitative data analysis.

Tenderers should provide suggestions for how study findings will be analysed and reported to ensure research objectives are met.

4. Deliverables

A sampling strategy will be required, outlining the sampling techniques and method for recruiting interviews among case study respondents.

A report on interview recruitment and cognitive testing will be required. Reflections on the process of obtaining interviews, progress made, and an analysis of interviews achieved should also be included.

Detail on the cognitive testing and piloting phase should be provided on:

- the extent to which interviewees understood the questions and the flow of the topics;
- the relevance and appropriateness of questions;
- questions that are difficult to answer and why.

Tenderers will need to provide recommendations for revisions to the research instruments. Final versions of the research materials/topic guides should also be included in this report.

A main report should be delivered, including background and aims of the study, full methodological details including the pilot exercise and research findings. The main audience for this report will be Ministers, BEIS policy officials and other stakeholders. The report and executive summary should be written in a clear and logical way for a non-technical audience. Tenderers should allow for producing two drafts of the main report, subject to the quality of the first draft.

The successful tenderer should be prepared to attend an inception meeting, provide weekly project updates and give a PowerPoint presentation of interim results at BEIS head office in London on completion of the project.

We propose the following timetable:

Stage 1: Inception meeting, development of the sampling strategy, development of the topic guides. Piloting/cognitive testing of the research, submission of pilot report.	January 2019
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Stage 2: Receive sampling frame. Recruitment of employers and employees and interviews.	January 2019-February 2019
Stage 3: Interviews	From February 2019 onwards
Stage 4: Initial findings presented, submission of first and final draft reports. Delivery of transcripts.	From March 2019

Section 5 – Evaluation model

The evaluation model below shall be used for this ITQ, which will be determined to two decimal places.

Where a question is 'for information only' it will not be scored.

The evaluation team may comprise staff from UK SBS and the Contracting Authority and any specific external stakeholders the Contracting Authority deems required. 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	SEL1.2	Employment breaches/ Equality
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	SEL3.11	Compliance to Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act
Commercial	SEL3.13	General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
Commercial	AW4.1	Contract Terms Part 1
Commercial	AW4.2	Contract Terms Part 2
Price	AW5.1	Maximum price
Price	AW5.5	E Invoicing
Price	AW5.6	Implementation of E-Invoicing
Quality	AW6.1	Compliance to the Specification
Quality	AW6.2	Variable Bids
-	-	Invitation to Quote – received on time within e-sourcing tool

Scoring criteria

Evaluation Justification Statement

In consideration of this particular requirement the Contracting Authority has decided to evaluate Potential Providers by adopting the weightings/scoring mechanism detailed within this ITQ. The Contracting Authority considers these weightings to be in line with existing best practice for a requirement of this type.

Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject	Maximum Marks
Price	AW5.2	Price	20%
Quality	PROJ1.1	Approach	40%
Quality	PROJ1.2	Staff to Deliver	10%
Quality	PROJ1.3	Understanding the Environment	20%
Quality	PROJ1.4	Project Plan and Timescales	10%

Evaluation of criteria

Non-Price elements

Each question will be judged on a score from 0 to 100, which shall be subjected to a multiplier to reflect the percentage of the evaluation criteria allocated to that question.

Where an evaluation criterion is worth 20% then the 0-100 score achieved will be multiplied by 20%

Example if a Bidder scores 60 from the available 100 points this will equate to 12% by using the following calculation:

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

The same logic will be applied to groups of questions which equate to a single evaluation criterion.

The 0-100 score shall be based on (unless otherwise stated within the question):

0	The Question is not answered, or the response is completely unacceptable.
10	Extremely poor response – they have completely missed the point of the question.
20	Very poor response and not wholly acceptable. Requires major revision to the response to make it acceptable. Only partially answers the requirement, with major deficiencies and little relevant detail proposed.
40	Poor response only partially satisfying the selection question requirements with deficiencies apparent. Some useful evidence provided but response falls well short of expectations. Low probability of being a capable supplier.
60	Response is acceptable but remains basic and could have been expanded upon. Response is sufficient but does not inspire.
80	Good response which describes their capabilities in detail which provides high levels of assurance consistent with a quality provider. The response includes a full description of techniques and measurements currently employed.
100	Response is exceptional and clearly demonstrates they are capable of meeting the requirement. No significant weaknesses noted. The response is compelling in its description of techniques and measurements currently employed, providing full assurance consistent with a quality provider.

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 40

Evaluator 4 scored your bid as 40

Your final score will $(60+60+40+40) \div 4 = 50$

Price elements will be judged on the following criteria.

The lowest price for a response which meets the pass criteria shall score 100.

All other bids shall be scored on a pro rata basis in relation to the lowest price. The score is then subject to a multiplier to reflect the percentage value of the price criterion.

For example - Bid 1 £100,000 scores 100.

Bid 2 £120,000 differential of £20,000 or 20% remove 20% from price scores 80

Bid 3 £150,000 differential £50,000 remove 50% from price scores 50.

Bid 4 £175,000 differential £75,000 remove 75% from price scores 25.

Bid 5 £200,000 differential £100,000 remove 100% from price scores 0.

Bid 6 £300,000 differential £200,000 remove 100% from price scores 0.

Where the scoring criterion is worth 50% then the 0-100 score achieved will be multiplied by 50.

In the example if a supplier scores 80 from the available 100 points this will equate to 40% by using the following calculation: $\text{Score}/\text{Total Points} \times 50$ ($80/100 \times 50 = 40$)

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

Section 6 – Evaluation questionnaire

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

Guidance on completion of the questionnaire is available at
<http://www.ukpbs.co.uk/services/procure/Pages/supplier.aspx>

PLEASE NOTE THE QUESTIONS ARE NOT NUMBERED SEQUENTIALLY

Section 7 – General Information

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

DO:

- 7.1 Do comply with Procurement document instructions. Failure to do so may lead to disqualification.
- 7.2 Do provide the Bid on time, and in the required format. Remember that the date/time given for a response is the last date that it can be accepted; we are legally bound to disqualify late submissions. Responses received after the date indicated in the ITQ shall not be considered by the Contracting Authority, unless the Bidder can justify that the reason for the delay, is solely attributable to the Contracting Authority
- 7.3 Do ensure you have read all the training materials to utilise e-sourcing tool prior to responding to this Bid. If you send your Bid by email or post it will be rejected.
- 7.4 Do use Microsoft Word, PowerPoint Excel 97-03 or compatible formats, or PDF unless agreed in writing by the Buyer. If you use another file format without our written permission, we may reject your Bid.
- 7.5 Do ensure you utilise the Emptoris messaging system to raise any clarifications to our ITQ. You should note that we will release the answer to the question to all Bidders and where we suspect the question contains confidential information we may modify the content of the question to protect the anonymity of the Bidder or their proposed solution
- 7.6 Do answer the question, it is not enough simply to cross-reference to a 'policy', web page or another part of your Bid, the evaluation team have limited time to assess bids and if they can't find the answer, they can't score it.
- 7.7 Do consider who the Contracting Authority is and what they want – a generic answer does not necessarily meet every Contracting Authority's needs.
- 7.8 Do reference your documents correctly, specifically where supporting documentation is requested e.g. referencing the question/s they apply to.
- 7.9 Do provide clear, concise and ideally generic contact details; telephone numbers, e-mails and fax details.
- 7.10 Do complete all questions in the questionnaire or we may reject your Bid.
- 7.11 Do ensure that the Response and any documents accompanying it are in the English Language, the Contracting Authority reserve the right to disqualify any full or part responses that are not in English.
- 7.12 Do check and recheck your Bid before dispatch.

What makes a good bid – some simple do not's ☹

DO NOT

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

Some additional guidance notes

- 7.25 All enquiries with respect to access to the e-sourcing tool and problems with functionality within the tool must be submitted to Crown Commercial Service (previously Government Procurement Service), Telephone 0345 010 3503.
- 7.26 Bidders will be specifically advised where attachments are permissible to support a question response within the e-sourcing tool. Where they are not permissible any attachments submitted will not be considered as part of the evaluation process.
- 7.27 Question numbering is not sequential and all questions which require submission are included in the Section 6 Evaluation Questionnaire.
- 7.28 Any Contract offered may not guarantee any volume of work or any exclusivity of supply.
- 7.29 We do not guarantee to award any Contract as a result of this procurement
- 7.30 All documents issued or received in relation to this procurement shall be the property of the Contracting Authority. / UKSBS.
- 7.31 We can amend any part of the procurement documents at any time prior to the latest date / time Bids shall be submitted through Emptoris.
- 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 60 days or your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.36 Bidders may only amend the contract terms during the clarification period only, only if you can demonstrate there is a legal or statutory reason why you cannot accept them. If you request changes to the Contract terms without such grounds and the Contracting Authority fail to accept your legal or statutory reason is reasonably justified, we may reject your Bid.
- 7.37 We will let you know the outcome of your Bid evaluation and where requested will provide a written debrief of the relative strengths and weaknesses of your Bid.
- 7.38 If you fail mandatory pass / fail criteria we will reject your Bid.
- 7.39 Bidders are required to use IE8, IE9, Chrome or Firefox in order to access the functionality of the Emptoris e-sourcing tool.
- 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 Emptoris.
- 7.42 All Central Government Departments and their Executive Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies are subject to control and reporting within Government. In particular, they report to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury for all expenditure. Further, the Cabinet Office has a cross-Government role delivering overall Government policy on public procurement - including ensuring value for money and related aspects of good procurement practice.

For these purposes, the Contracting Authority may disclose within Government any of the Bidders documentation/information (including any that the Bidder considers to be confidential and/or commercially sensitive such as specific bid information) submitted by the Bidder to the Contracting Authority during this Procurement. The information will not be disclosed outside Government. Bidders taking part in this ITQ consent to these terms as part of the competition process.

- 7.43 The Government introduced its new Government Security Classifications (GSC) classification scheme on the 2nd April 2014 to replace the current Government Protective Marking System (GPMS). A key aspect of this is the reduction in the number of security classifications used. All Bidders are encouraged to make themselves aware of the changes and identify any potential impacts in their Bid, as the protective marking and applicable protection of any material passed to, or generated by, you during the procurement process or pursuant to any Contract awarded to you as a result of this tender process will be subject to the new GSC. The link below to the Gov.uk website provides information on the new GSC:

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

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to amend any security related term or condition of the draft contract accompanying this ITQ to reflect any changes introduced by the GSC. In particular where this ITQ is accompanied by any instructions on safeguarding classified information (e.g. a Security Aspects Letter) as a result of any changes stemming from the new GSC, whether in respect of the applicable protective marking scheme, specific protective markings given, the aspects to which any protective marking applies or otherwise. This may relate to the instructions on safeguarding classified information (e.g. a Security Aspects Letter) as they apply to the procurement as they apply to the procurement process and/or any contracts awarded to you as a result of the procurement process.

USEFUL INFORMATION LINKS

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