**Background**

Defra is currently considering options for the procurement of expert consultancy services to support the assessment of industry applications for Regulatory Justification of new nuclear technologies. This will enable Defra to fulfil its obligations as Justifying Authority under the [Justification of Practices Involving Ionising Radiation Regulations 2004 (1769/2004),](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1769/contents) which require functional separation between DESNZ (Department of Energy Security and Net Zero) as the department promoting nuclear technology and the Justifying Authority.

The option to approach the market with a tender for a dedicated multi-supplier framework is being considered alongside other potential routes to market.

**Technical Requirement**

Examples of the type of services expected to be required include ongoing technical advisory, analytical and consultancy support throughout the multi-month assessment of a Justification application, and/or shorter projects which may involve written advice and assessments of the appropriacy of the definition(s) of a class or type of practice of new nuclear technologies, analysis of specific issues raised by consultation respondents or comparison of specific aspects of current and previous applications.

Contractors will need to assess applications in respect of their important economic, energy security, carbon reduction and other benefits and on a wide range of detriments, which include radiological detriment to health, safety and security and environmental impacts, covering operation, waste disposal and decommissioning.

Contractors will therefore need to have expertise in the following areas:

1. Economic analysis and appropriate knowledge of the energy sector, to enable effective assessment of how the class or type of practice contributes to the energy mix in UK policy.
2. Broad and deep knowledge of nuclear energy sector, to enable effective assessment based on fully informed understanding of technologies.
3. Expert formal consultancy advice, with a view to working in close partnership with Defra’s Nuclear Justification team.

Defra anticipate the services will be required from late 2024 or early 2025. Based on current information, it is anticipated that at least five industry Justification applications will be received for review over a five-year period, but this figure may increase or decrease as interest in nuclear energy generation evolves. The timing for the receipt of applications is not currently known but expected to be in the order of one or two applications per year. The duration of assessments will depend on the nature of the applications, but it is anticipated that external technical support may last for up to a period of approximately 19 months for each application, and within this timeframe Defra would set response deadlines to meet during the process.

**Market Engagement Exercise**

The engagement exercise aims to help Defra better understand the interest, capability and capacity of the supply market to provide these services in a future invitation to tender. To inform our decision making, we are inviting interested suppliers to respond to a short questionnaire.

This engagement does not constitute a formal notice to tender and there is no guarantee Defra will proceed with an external tendering exercise to create a framework or other form of contract. By replying to the questionnaire, you are not committing to any future tender submission and replies will not form part of any subsequent tender process or evaluation.

In addition to assessing the technical capacity of the market. the engagement exercise is intended to help to inform the following:

* How Contractors may deliver the services, for example in-house, via sub-contractors, via a consortium or other operational structure.
* The potential structure of a framework – whether you consider a lot structure or capability matrix structure or similar would be beneficial to break services down into discreet areas of specialism or work types as opposed to a single lot arrangement that would require contractors to be able to provide all the services in the specification to be eligible?
* Suitable pricing mechanism – it is anticipated that a schedule of day rates will be the most suitable pricing mechanism to apply. It would be helpful if you could provide an indication of the roles that you would expect to be required to undertake the services, for example Director, Senior Consultant, Technical Specialist, Graduate Consultant, Project Manager etc, to include in a pricing schedule.
* The level of conflict of interest that currently exists or may develop within the market and how this may be managed.

Please download the P33774 Nuclear Justification Framework Market Engagement Questionnaire to [carol.caddick@defra.gov.uk](carol.caddick@defra.gov.uk%20) no later than 16:00 on 15 March 2024.