Market Sounding Questionnaire

Stations Transfer & Trains Forecasting Application

Introduction

This Market Sounding Questionnaire (MSQ) seeks to obtain market feedback from Suppliers who may be interested in our forthcoming project to procure a Stations Transfer & Trains Forecasting Application as part of our ERP transformation programme.

The purpose of this MSQ is to enable interested Enterprise Integration Specialists to outline their expertise and experience in delivering a solution for the problem outlined below. This will allow us to evaluate responses and refine our statement of requirements accordingly. There are several options available to us and this MSQ will help inform these options including assessing feasibility.

This MSQ is not part of the formal procurement process, and additional supplier engagement may be required before any future formal procurement is launched.

Following receipt of MSQ responses from Suppliers a statement of detailed and extensive requirements will be produced for the development of the solution to be issued as part of the Invitation to Tender (ITT).

We also need to select the optimum Route to Market to use for launching the formal ITT.

We are looking to replace our current system – as part of this MSQ exercise we intend to demonstrate how the current system works to those Suppliers who may be interested in bidding.

The primary focus of this MSQ is to better understand Supply Market interest, capacity and capability, as well as any perceived risks and opportunities.

This builds on our commitment to engage with the Supply Market, by sharing information and seeking input to inform, develop and optimise the final procurement documentation in a fair, open, and transparent manner. Consequently, this should also help reduce the number of clarification questions that may arise during the formal procurement process itself.

Once published, the procurement documentation will contain the final requirements for this procurement project - all previous versions, including any documents published at this stage should then be disregarded. It is within our gift to decide how we use the information gathered from Supplier responses and any subsequent Supplier discussions that may be held.

Provisional Timetable

What?	When, where, how?
MSQ issued to interested Suppliers	By 29th September 2023
Suppliers express interest in responding to MSQ and confirm attendees for system demonstration	By 13th October 2023
TfL demonstration of current system to interested Suppliers	TBC… TfL, 14 Pier Walk, London, SE10 0ES (nearest tube station North Greenwich) Reception will alert Project Team of your arrival for you to be escorted to the meeting room
Suppliers submit completed MSQ responses	By 20th October 2023 By email to: v_garyboatright@tfl.gov.uk
TfL Project Team review Supplier responses and raise any clarification queries and arrange follow-up Supplier meetings (if required)	By 3rd November 2023
Supplier follow-up meetings	TBC…
TfL finalise technical specification and evaluation criteria	TBC…
TfL Procurement Strategy drafted and approved	TBC…
TfL issue ITT	TBC…

Explanatory notes

- This MSQ forms part of our early market engagement process in respect of our Stations Transfer & Trains Forecasting Application procurement project.

- We would greatly appreciate your feedback in the form of a full set of responses to the enclosed questionnaire, providing examples where appropriate.

- Feedback is requested in relation to the High-Level Requirements and attached documentation when responding to this MSQ. Your feedback is important, as it will allow views from the market to inform the development and finalisation of our procurement strategy and technical specification.

- Supplier responses are not mandatory. Participation, or non-participation, in this MSQ, will not disadvantage or advantage any Supplier's ability to participate in any future procurement activity (unless they do not feature on a chosen framework agreement should we decide on this Route to Market).

- Responses may be provided in a different format to the table below if it helps with their composition and improves their presentation (e.g. by providing a separate Word document). Please show the wording of the questions and use the same numbering should you choose to do this.

- Provide responses to as many questions as possible (if you are unwilling or unable to answer certain questions just state 'N/A' in the relevant response section).

- Please try and keep your responses concise and to the point while still being expressive and informative (we are not looking for 'full blown' detailed tender type responses at this stage).

- Should you wish to share other relevant information (e.g. company profile, case studies etc.) these may be provided as attachments to your email response message.

- Following our analysis of responses received we will finalise our Statement of Requirements, Evaluation Criteria etc. for the ITT and will decide upon our chosen Route to Market.

- The MSQ and attendance at the System Demonstration Event do not form part of the formal procurement process (in terms of Supplier pre-qualification, shortlisting, tender evaluation etc.) and we reserve the right to decide whether to proceed with any tendering procedures in relation to

this opportunity. Any information received or discussions held will not contribute to or influence the evaluation of any potential future tender submissions.

- Following our assessment of the responses received from the MSQ and output from the System Demonstration Event we may hold further market engagement sessions (e.g. 1-2-1 sessions) to help us finalise our specification and procurement approach.

- All responses will be carefully considered but will not bind us to any particular approach to the procurement, nor will responses be treated as conveying any promise or commitment on the part of the respondent.

- Potential Suppliers shall be solely responsible for any costs incurred participating in any aspect of this MSQ and System Demonstration Event.

- When the formal procurement project commences all Supplier tender submissions will be evaluated on the same basis, subject to meeting any minimum mandatory requirements set.

- Following completion of the MSQ stage, we will recommend our proposed Route to Market and Procurement Strategy for internal approval prior to launching a formal Invitation To Tender (ITT). A more detailed timeline for this will be available in due course.

- All parties shall respect the confidentiality of any information provided and subsequent discussions and shall not disclose any commercially confidential matters without the other party's prior written agreement (see FOIA section below). We shall decide which matters are of a confidential nature at our sole discretion.

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

- The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) applies to TfL. You should be aware of our obligations and responsibilities under the FOIA to disclose, on written request, recorded information held. Information provided by you in connection with this procurement exercise, or with any contract that may be awarded as a result of this exercise, may therefore have to be disclosed in response to such a request, unless we decide that one of the statutory exemptions under the FOIA applies. We may also include certain information in the publication scheme which it maintains under the FOIA.

- In certain circumstances, and in accordance with the code of practice issued under section 45 of the FOIA, we may consider it appropriate to ask you for your views as to the release of any information before a decision on how to respond to a request is made. In dealing with requests for information under the FOIA, we must comply with a strict timetable and we, therefore, expect a timely response to any consultation within two working days.

- You may provide information which is confidential in nature and which you may wish to be held in confidence. You must give a clear indication which type of material is to be considered confidential and why it is considered to be so, along with the time period for which it will remain confidential in nature. The use of blanket protective markings such as "Commercial in confidence" will not be appropriate. In addition, marking any material as confidential or equivalent should not be taken to mean that we accept any duty of confidentiality by virtue of such marking. N.B. Even where you have indicated that information is confidential, we may be required to disclose it under the FOIA if a request is received.

- We cannot accept that trivial information or information which by its very nature cannot be regarded as confidential should be subject to any obligation of confidence.

- In certain circumstances where information has not been provided in confidence, we may still wish to consult with you about the application of any other exemption such as that relating to disclosure that will prejudice the commercial interests of any party.

- The decision as to which information will be disclosed is reserved to us, notwithstanding any consultation with you.

We would like to thank you for taking the time to respond to this questionnaire.

We hope that everything is clear but if not please do not hesitate to contact us using the following email address:

V_garyboatright@tfl.gov.uk

We look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Kind regards,

Gary Boatright
Commercial Manager – ERP
Procurement & Commercial – IT
07894 994334

Problem/Opportunity statement

Station Nominations is an application currently being used by approximately 6000 London Underground (LU) staff with a front-end recently developed by WM Reply as a PowerApps and back-end that was built on an outdated Visual Basic Application (VBA) technology over seven years ago by an external contractor who no longer works for TfL and this is now unsupported.

The Station Nominations Application allows the Stations Team and the application admins to process mass updates to the data to run the Nominations Model and handle large updates to staff, station and trains data.

The Excel based Trains Forecasting Tool provides the ability to create the current, historical and future requirement for Train Operators and Instructor Operators based on establishment, extra cover and upgrade requirements. It compares qualified and non-qualified headcount against a maximum and minimum buffer and produces forecast reports to show where there will be vacancies in the future, which supports business and financial decision making. In addition to predicting future vacancies, the model also creates a recruitment / transfer strategy to fill those vacancies.

Although both tools are being used, a number of issues and gaps have been identified with the back-end logic from the outset of the support contract. This has consumed a larger than anticipated amount of effort from the front-end support contract and has impacted the number of new apps that could be brought into support. There is a reliance on the SAP interface which leads to regular data discrepancies. In addition to this, there is currently little knowledge of how the current backend system works and the reasons issues persist.

When problems arise from model runs and security flaws, there is no support contract to call on, the transfers and moves data is not accurate which raises a risk that Stations may not be adequately covered, and Trains forecasting is potentially inaccurate. For Trains, the severity of this risk is high due to the potential for under resourcing which could affect services, over resourcing which would result in an overspend or industrial relations issues due to not maintaining the headcount at the agreed levels.

It is understood that the Stations and Trains applications currently have different purposes however, there are similarities. For example, both use unsupported VBA code, use business rules and either real or simulated staff data to move staff into relevant positions. The analytics and resource planning capabilities in a new system would therefore be similar and provides the justification for considering them together in the initial feasibility and concept design phase.

There is a critical need to complete regular monthly station model runs to ensure stations are correctly resourced to avoid station closures.

To date, we have undertaken Discovery work to document the business process and how they link technically to the VBA code. We have created a set of Non-functional requirements which will assist the supplier to understand the As-is and to come up with options for the future state solution during the feasibility work. We have also introduced mitigation measures to alleviate the severity of issues in the very short term.

This initiative aims to explore support options to ensure reliability, longevity of business-critical processes and will promote self-service for business rule changes by the resourcing teams. It will address the current limited functionality where the application cannot be developed because it is written in VBA code. Currently, it does not align to our ERP strategy, and we cannot fully integrate it with SAP details. Early market engagement, research and discovery is required to identify solutions on the market including T&D, SAP Business Technology Platform (BTP), Microsoft and other known suppliers on the TfL estate.

High-Level Requirements

Current 'pain points' of these current applications include the following:

- Difficult troubleshooting of errors due to the lack of support available to the back-end of the application
- Frequent errors resulting from an unmaintained codebase with no in-house expertise
- Extensive manual work required for users due to the lack of automation in the solution

The new application must deliver the following benefits:

- A reduction in errors due to a more stable code base
- A documented process
- A maintainable and supported process due to both a stable code base and a documented process
- An improved user experience due to fewer errors and availability of support
- Improved security due to an up-to-date code base with security considerations

The following requirements apply to both applications:

1. Access into the applications must be by log in (Users must be authenticated and authorised)
2. There must be at least two roles in the application (admin and normal user) with different privileges

3. Staff must be able to nominate themselves to transfer to a different role by entering details and choosing an area to transfer to (Options must only be available based on the User's details)
4. It must be possible to edit and delete nominations
5. Nominations must have a status and once they are processed, it must not be possible to edit or delete them
6. The applications must be able to integrate with SAP - they must be able to both read and write to SAP
7. The applications must be able to integrate with SAP Success Factors, S/4HANA and ARIBA
8. Single Sign On (SSO) must be possible for the applications (i.e., users can use the same credentials to log into the application as they do for their current applications)
9. The interface for the applications must be usable for data entry (there must be as few clicks as possible required when entering data)
10. Support must be available for the applications through a single point of contact service desk. Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm
11. Ad-hoc support must be available for TfL (e.g., unplanned deployment)
12. The applications must be backed up and the backups must be encrypted. Backups solution must maintain data availability
13. The applications must have an availability of 99.74%
14. Monitoring and alerting capabilities, including auditing, reporting and log file retention must be present in the applications
15. The applications must have data integrity, meaning the data cannot be inadvertently altered at rest or in transit
16. Development, migration and support applications in a cloud environment. The applications must be hosted on cloud and ideally optimise the capability of the SAP Analytics Cloud
17. The application must be compliant with data protection legislation (including but not limited to Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR, Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003)
18. The application must be compliant with Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR), i.e., it must enable searching and extracting relevant data relating to a specific event, data type or date range
19. Data retention and deletion must be in line with TfL policies and must allow for ad-hoc requests from TfL
20. The application must not use any personal data for testing purposes without prior authorisation from TfL
21. Data must be migrated securely into the new application
22. The application must adhere to best practices and industry standards such as ISO27001/2 or similar
23. The application must have patch management, malware protection and vulnerability management to ensure security updates are in place and malware and vulnerabilities are prevented and detected
24. Training for the applications must be available for TfL staff (4 TfL admin staff, 6000 non-admin users)
25. The application must support up to 6000 concurrent users
26. There must be support for making configuration changes based on changes in TfL business rules

Stations transfer specific requirements

1. Users of the Stations Transfer functions must not be able to access the Train Forecasting specific functions
2. Staff must be able to see a queue that indicates their position for the role that they have nominated themselves for
3. The application must integrate with Outlook to allow sending of emails
4. The application must allow users to accept declarations at various points based on business rules. E.g., if a nomination results in a change of hours, a declaration needs to be accepted by the user
5. It must be possible for admin staff to make nominations on behalf of normal users
6. Admin users must be able to view a history of nominations and waiting lists based on historic dates

Trains forecasting specific requirements

1. Users of the Trains Forecasting functions must not be able to access the Stations Transfer specific functions
2. Admin users must be able to see a variety of reports based on formulas e.g. an attrition list
3. Admin users must be able to see a forecast report for all roles
4. It must be possible for admin staff to do scenario planning, i.e., preview of future resource allocation without applying it
5. The forecast report can be visualised using a graph. An illustration example is shown below:

Central Line

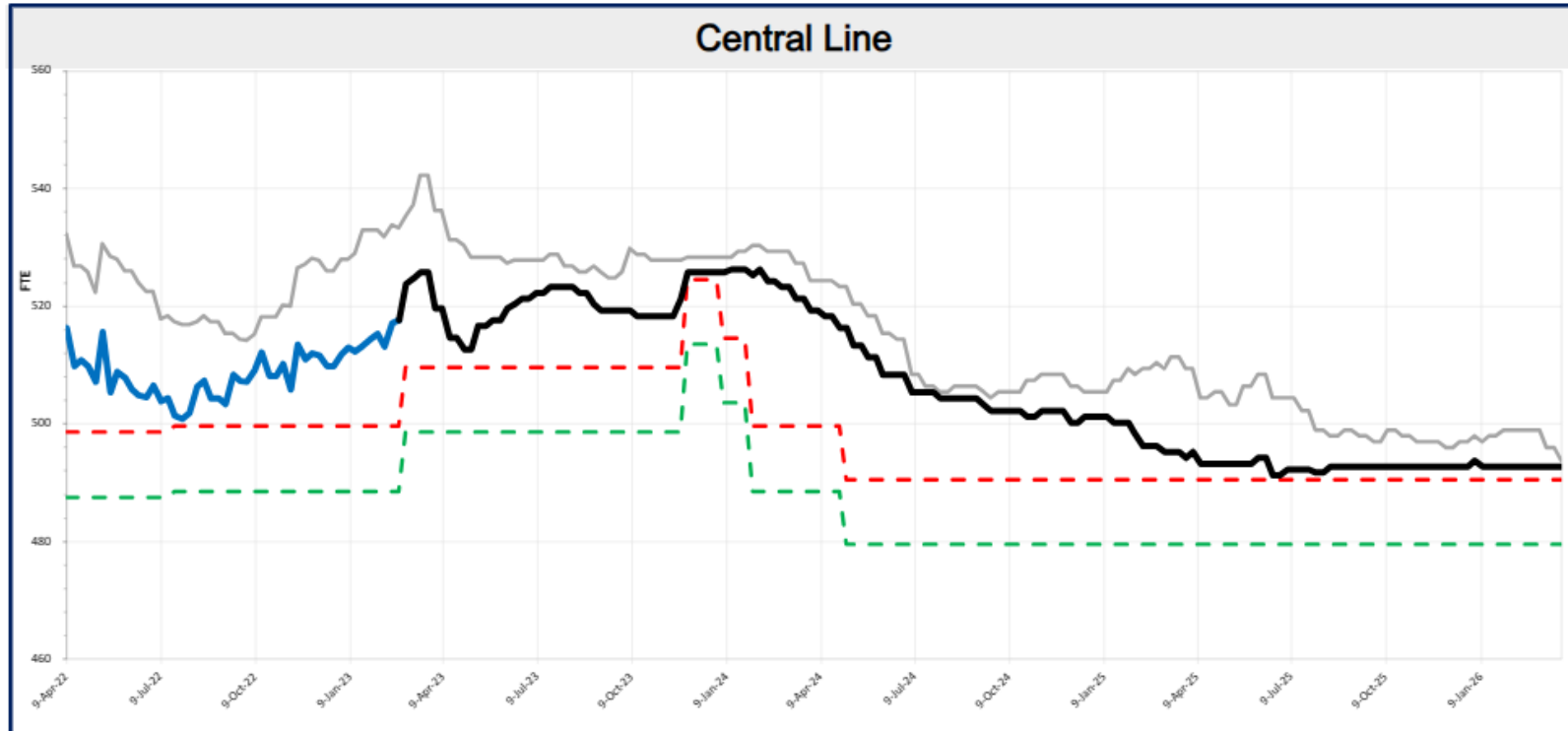| Line | Central | | Start | 09/04/22 | | Display 09? | Yes |
| Type | | | End | 28/03/26 | | Include TU? | No |

Legend: Buffer Max, Buffer Min, Actuals, Forecast Operatonal Train Operators, Roster, Total Train Operators

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Stations Transfer & Trains Forecasting Application
– Market Sounding Questionnaire

Organisation name	
Company registration number	
Key contact name	
Key contact job title	
Email address	
Telephone Number(s)	

#	Question	Response
I	High Level Requirements Do the above high- level requirements adequately describe what we are looking for? Typically what additional information would be required in a detailed Specification for tendering purposes?	

2	Can you provide a solution to meet the requirements outlined above?	
3	Will the solution you provide be Commercial Off The Shelf (COTS) and configurable?	
4	Can you meet both the stations transfer and the trains forecasting requirements with a single application or two separate applications?	
5	Will the solution you provide require any customisation? If so, to what extent and who would undertake such customisation (in-house or sub-contracted to another party)?	
6	Do you use a waterfall or agile software delivery approach?	
7	Project timetable - How long do you think we should plan for implementation of the solution across all functional areas – from contract award to final 'go live'?	
8	Has your company ever interfaced this solution with SAP ERP systems?	

9	Please highlight any requirements mentioned above that you are unable to meet and any limitations to your application/solution.	
10	Please outline your product lifecycle and / or product roadmap for the proposed application/solution.	
11	Innovation - Having reviewed our high-level requirements, what additional innovation would you recommend to improve the system design, processes and value for money?	
12	Provide summary details where you have delivered your solution to similar sized / complexity projects over the last few years (across either public, utilities or private sectors) stating the Customer name and approximate total project value (if permitted your Customer).	
13	Client-side obligations - If your company were successful what would be your high-level expectation of resources (roles and responsibilities) required from our side?	
14	Please outline what pre-requisite activities you would expect a Customer to have completed before you would	

	consider starting any design or development activity?	
15	Risks, Issues & Constraints - From your experience of delivering similar projects, what do you consider to be the top five Risks / Issues / Constraints associated with this type of project? What are the major barriers to the success of the project? What mitigation actions would you recommend we and our Suppliers take?	
16	Indicative costs – please provide indicative costs to design and implement the solution plus also ongoing annual running costs	
	Suitable Public Sector Framework Agreements - Which UK Public Sector framework agreements do you consider best suited to the procurement of our requirements? Which relevant Public Sector framework agreement(s) feature your company? Please state framework title and reference number e.g. Crown Commercial Services (CCS).	
17	Procurement Timescales - From receipt of our formal ITT, how many working days would you need to review our	

		procurement documentation (service specification etc.) and provide any clarification queries? Do you consider it would be necessary / beneficial to run Supplier clarification sessions once the final documentation has been issued? How many working days would you need from resolution of any clarification queries to prepare and submit your fully detailed technical and commercial tender proposal?	
18	General comments - Is there anything else you think we should consider within the scope of this procurement project? Do you have any other comments regarding this procurement project?	

EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS

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