

## **National Buildings Database Supplier Engagement Event Q&A**

- (1) **Question:** You mentioned you're looking for the database to be handed over at the end of the contract, so not to be managed by the successful supplier. What about managing the underlying technology? I.e., if it is a cloud based solution, who will manage the underlying infrastructure at the end of the initial contract period? Many thanks.

**Answer:** In terms of the underlying technology, the database that is handed over at the end of the project will be hosted on the Department's internal secure computing facility (cloud-based, Azure hosted). The hosting of the database post hand-over will be managed internally (within Central Government). The database and deliverables will have to ensure that the database can be managed without any further involvement of the contractor.

- (2) **Question:** What technology is the database running on and where is it/will it be hosted?

**Answer:** The database will be a PostgreSQL (pgSQL) relational database, and the final database will be hosted on the Department's internal secure computing service (cloud-based, Azure-hosted). Subject to the restrictions noted in question 5 below, during the project and during the development of the database the successful bidder may host this on their own secure computing facility, including use of cloud based services (e.g. AWS or Azure).

- (3) **Question:** You talked about (spatial) scope being Great Britain and then later it was labelled as United Kingdom (on the info-graphic). Can you be really clear and explicit about where you see both Scotland and Northern Ireland fitting into this work? Is it a significant bonus if a tender states that it could deliver UK?

**Answer:** The pilot study's scope was England and Wales, and we believe the method is replicable for Scotland (although there will be some different Scotland-specific versions of existing data required). Northern Ireland is a bit more difficult to roll out this methodology for as the availability of required existing data is more limited. So we primarily envisage this being a project focused on Great Britain.

**NOTE:** Clarification following on from the supplier engagement day to ensure ability to compare like-for-like bids the scope will be limited to Great Britain only (England, Scotland, Wales only).

- (4) **Question:** Do you have particular technology requirements for development or hosting of the model?

**Answer:** See answer to (2).

- (5) **Question:** Is there a requirement for the survey data and models to be held entirely within the UK? Does this requirement also relate to back up storage held outside of the UK?

**Answer (clarified post-event):** In short yes - some of the data will be restricted in terms of where it can be held or backed-up to given its sensitive nature. In particular some of the existing data which would be used contains personal identifiers and sensitive information, and any survey data would likely contain some personal information for a named individual. Both of these data would be subject to GDPR restrictions on the location of data storage limiting this to UK/EEA with some limited exceptions. This will be detailed in the ITT.

### **For guidance**

- (6) **Question:** Can you give some detail about what level of detail you want the domestic buildings to be modelled? Any indicative effort share of domestic vs non-domestic?

**Answers:** The level of detail expected for domestic buildings is limited to the information and variables available from matching existing datasets (Valuation Office Agency, EPC, Metered Consumption Data, OS data) only. This will provide basic information about the location, floor area, form, age, and energy consumption of the building. Notionally 90% of the effort on this project is likely to concern the non-domestic buildings (although this is a crude approximation).

- (7) **Question:** We are based out of the India. Can we take this project on in any location?

**Answer:** In principle yes, you do not necessarily have to be UK based to take on this project. That being said as noted in earlier response to question (5) there are likely to be GDPR concerns around storing and handling of data, as there will some sensitive data collected, storage of which may be subject to geographical restrictions.

- (8) **Question:** Are suppliers liable for the accuracy and integrity of the data in the previous surveys?

**Answer:** No, the successful bidder would not be liable for accuracy and integrity of any data gathered or processed as part of the pilot study. However, they will of course be liable for the accuracy and integrity of any analysis, modelling, or engineering they do with this existing data.

- (9) **Question:** Will you deploy and manage any front end application used to managed access and updates to data?

**Answer:** The department's internal computing facility team and analysts will manage ongoing access and updates to the database. The successful bidder will be required to produce and deliver the database only (likely as database backup file).

- (10) **Question:** Will the methodology of the pilot be shared at the tender stage to help bidders assess data options for Northern Ireland?

**Answer:** Yes – details of the methodology will be shared with bidders in the ITT outlining in detail key steps in the method, and all required input datatypes.

**NOTE:** Clarification following on from the supplier engagement day to ensure ability to compare like-for-like bids the scope will be limited to Great Britain (England, Scotland, Wales only).

(11) **Question:** Due to the sensitive nature of the data/information are there particular requirements regarding security of the people involved, storage of the data, etc?

**Answer:** Yes – bidders will be required to have adequate cyber security standards in place. In addition personal information contained in the data used will be subject to GDPR, and in addition some datasets will require restricted access with named individuals working for the successful bidder.

(12) **Question:** Could multiple bidders join up to supply the solution?

**Answer:** Yes – bids from consortiums are eligible.

(13) **Question:** Is there a requirement for the survey data to be collected by the bidder?

**Answer:** The bid will have to include a plan to collect survey data on the non-domestic building sectors in scope for this project. Bidders can however sub-contract this work although will still need to specify in the bid how surveys will be designed, recruited for and conducted.

(14) **Question:** Thanks that makes sense but quick follow up: is the domestic modelling just for mixed use buildings then, or for all 29 million homes?

**Answer:** All domestic premises are in scope not only those in mixed use buildings.

(15) **Question:** How is inflation to be addressed in the contract? Will prices have to be fixed or will they be adjusted?

**Answer:** The contract will be fixed price, so bidders will need to factor in impacts of inflation on their pricing and costs over the duration of the project.

(16) **Question:** Will the supplier own the Intellectual Property Rights?

**Answer:** Please see 'Option 1' of Schedule 36 of the Mid-Tier Contract terms: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-mid-tier-contract-schedule-36-intellectual-property-rights>

Buyers should be mindful that the terms of any input licence (that is the open source licence for any open source IP which has been used to create the New IPR) aligns with the 'output licence' (that is, the licence under which the Buyer will publish the New IPR as open source).

(17) **Question:** You say that it is "a database and not a model". The code will involve modelling assumptions, but do you not envisage any other modelling assumptions throughout? E.g. where there is no energy performance data for a building, the supplier may need to use SBEM to model the energy use of a particular building (and to ensure that this model flow can be followed as the datasets are updated). Is modelling approach not as important as database / architecture approach?

**Answer:** To be clear this is correct in that there will indeed be some modelling and assumptions involved in producing the database. Methods for updating, and maintaining the database will likely incorporate some modelling/assumptions too. Indeed

documentation and guidance will need to detail these assumptions and modelling steps. However, the emphasis on referring to this project's output as a database as opposed to a model reflects the importance of the final database as the key deliverable – useable as a fully-fledged data source to be queried and used as an input for internal analysis.

- (18) **Question:** Other than energy use / emissions, are there other buildings features that are important for you in terms of policymaking, e.g. health and safety, accessibility?

**Answer:** The database will need to include building location, geometry, floor area, construction (age, and form), as well as a break down of energy uses and consumption. Some additional specific features such as a flag variable to indicate an instance is a public building will be required too. However health and safety and accessibility are not within scope for this project.

- (19) **Question:** Will the procurement be restricted to suppliers who are owned, registered and services performed wholly in the UK or other NATO countries?

**Answer:** In principle the procurement is open to any prospective bidder operating/based within countries which are party to the Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA) [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/gproc\\_e/memobs\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/gproc_e/memobs_e.htm). That being said as noted in earlier response to question (5) there are likely to be GDPR concerns around storing and handling of data, as there will some sensitive data collected, storage of which may be subject to geographical restrictions (see answer to question (5)).

- (20) **Question:** Can you provide any indication of the weighting you expect to place on technical specification versus social value and price?

**Answer:** More detail on the assessment criteria and weightings for the bids will be made available in the ITT. The technical feasibility of the proposed resourcing, approach, and workplan laid out in the bid will be crucial to the successful delivery of this project, and realisation of benefits to the Department. This is not to say that other criteria such as price and social value won't be relevant but rather that the technical specification is likely to be one of the most important factors in assessment of bids.

- (21) **Question:** Will the contract contain liquidated and ascertained damages? If so at what level? Will these be capped and if so at what level?

**Answer:** The detailed terms and conditions for this contract will be made available with the ITT.

- (22) **Question:** Will suppliers be paid monthly, on completion of interim deliverables or at completion?

**Answer:** Suppliers will be paid for key interim and final deliverables as opposed to monthly payments. The majority of payments will be tied to satisfactory delivery of final outputs in the form of milestones.

- (23) **Question:** In the contract what will be the grounds for leading to termination of the contract?

**Answer:** See section 14 of the Mid-Tier Contract - Core Terms:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-mid-tier-contract-core-terms>

(24) **Question:** Will the contract be under the Laws of England and Wales? What happens when work is undertaken in other jurisdictions such as Northern Ireland?

**Answer:** The detailed terms and conditions for this contract will be made available with the ITT.

(25) **Question:** Is there going to be a recording of this session made available?

**Answer:** No – but slides and Q&A are being shared and will be available with the ITT.