**Attachment 2 to OSCT/1718/053 – Specification and Evaluation Criteria**

Requirements: Tender for ‘Understanding how Terrorist/Extremist Groups share content and where it appears On-Line.

The Home Office is seeking to fund a number of small innovative research projects in order to better understand; where terrorist and extremist material appears online, how users are directed to it, and in what context it appears.

**Background**

The internet has transformed the way that terrorist and extremist organisations can spread their message, plan attacks, and influence and radicalise individuals across borders. It enables various groups to easily reach a global audience with compelling and tailored messaging, exposing people to illegal and dangerous content. We have also seen evidence of young and vulnerable people having online conversations with radicalisers, who draw them into closed online spaces. In these they can discuss issues such as how to carry out terrorist attacks in the UK.

Recently, there has been a marked increase in the development of new and diverse content hosting and sharing sites, news outlets, and social media platforms. This has enabled terrorist organisations to disseminate their propaganda at speed and in a variety of ways.The breadth of platforms that are easily accessible to the everyday user has allowed terrorist groups to reach an ever wider audience. This has also made it increasingly difficult for Government and Communication Service Providers (CSPs) to locate and remove extremist content in all its forms.

With such a breadth of platforms available, terrorist and extremist material can appear in a variety of contexts and direct users to a range of different content as a result. The routes by which individuals access terrorist and extremist content is not always clear, nor is it clear whether users are presented with appropriate counter narratives in response.

Recent research suggests that terrorist and extremist groups are also employing means other than their ‘official’ propaganda to reach and recruit followers. Groups appear to be signposting individuals to mainstream media channels which often feature graphic coverage of war zones, as well as the violent acts of the terrorist groups themselves. By directing individuals to this seemingly non-extreme content, terrorists and extremists may be able to proliferate their extreme views through legal routes which can be much more difficult to disrupt.

**Research Requirement**

The Home Office would like to invite proposals from research partners to meet our aim of this tender – To understand where and how terrorist materia appears online

Specifically we aim to establish a stronger evidence base on **how terrorist and extremist content is shared, where it appears, and how users are directed to it**. This includes building a deeper understanding of **how groups utilise non-extreme content e.g. that of the mainstream media, to deliver their message**.

To help guide your thinking, there are a number of questions that we are seeking to answer:

* What is the reach of content from different terrorist and extremist groups?
* How do search engines facilitate the process by which individuals locate terrorist and extremist content?
* What context can terrorist and extremist material be found in? i.e. on non-extreme websites, alongside counter-narratives
* What role, if any, does advertising play in the funding of terrorist and extremist propaganda?
* How do different terrorist and extremist groups use mainstream media channels to deliver their message?
* To what extent can social media platforms be described as ‘publishers’ of terrorist material, and does this have an impact on how they are able to operate?
* How does current legislation assist or hinder the activity of social media companies in removing terrorist and extremist content, and what legislative approaches could support social media companies in identifying and removing content?
* How has current legislation impacted on how terrorist and extremist groups are able to use the internet to disseminate propaganda?

We encourage research proposals not to limit their focus to a single terrorist or extremist group or social media platform.

**Your proposal(s) may cover more than one of these questions and please do not limit your research ideas to the examples provided.** We are keen for research proposals to be innovative and novel – however we will also consider research projects that employ more traditional methodologies (e.g. surveys or interviews).

Interested parties will be given four weeks to submit their bids detailing their research proposal in a maximum of six pages (see Attachment 5). ITTs will be evaluated by HO research and policy officials. These will be judged on the methodological approach, the estimated costs and timeline, how the research will expand the evidence base, and how it will be of use to policy-makers in this area. Further details on the assessment criteria can be found within this Attachment.

**Timeline**

Table 1 details an **estimated** timetable for the project.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **EXPECTED DATE** | **Activity** |
| **COMMISSIONING AND DELIVERY STAGE** | |
| W/C 18th September 17 | Project commences, including a commissioning meeting if necessary |
| Mid November 17 | Short report and discussion of interim findings |
| End of January 18 | Reporting of the project findings |
| 15th February 18 | Final written report submitted |

Bidders should also be aware that we reserve the right to fund several small projects if we receive multiple low cost proposals of a high quality.

It is expected that projects will need to be completed by the end of January 2018, and that final reports will be delivered mid-February. Outstanding proposals that require a greater length of time for completion may be considered if the benefits are sufficiently demonstrated and outlined.

**Deliverables, milestones and publication**

We would expect the following outputs by mid February 2018:

* Some form of interim findings at a suitable time during the project’s delivery. This would act as a milestone payment stage for the project and will be discussed on commissioning.
* A final presentation to be delivered at 2 Marsham Street, London
* A final written report, of approximately 15 pages, to be delivered no more than three weeks following the final presentation.

We expect the final report to include:

* A one page executive summary
* The main report body which will feature; the aims of the project, the methodology used, a summary of the key findings.
* Recommendations for policy makers based on the key findings and any other relevant literature.

Publication by the contractor of any research articles or other publications based on data and information collected in relation to this project will be subject to approval from the Home Office.

**Tender Criteria Evaluation**

Tenders will be evaluated by OSCT internal appraisers (research and policy), as well as Home Office commercial using the evaluation methodology detailed below. Total score available is 100% made up of Technical 70% and Commercial 30%. The table below shows the weightings that have been allocated to each section and will be used by the appraisers and moderation panel:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Evaluation Criteria** | |
| **Criterion** | **Weighting** |
| **Technical criteria** | **Total technical score available 70% made up of:** |
| **Methodology**  Proposed methodologies will be scored on:   1. The explanation of how the project will meet the research requirement as detailed in the Specification; 2. The innovative nature of the approach including the focus on different terrorist groups and platforms as detailed in the Specification; 3. The appropriateness and relevance of methods used in context of the Specification;   d) Identifying relevant ethical concerns and risks and how these would be addressed.  e) The feasibility of the proposed project timeline given the chosen methodology proposed, ,including a Gantt chart detailing your proposed timeline of the project. | 30% |
| **Experience**  Proposals will be scored on:   1. The relevance of the project team’s expertise to the topic area, including key individuals who will be working on the project team and their experience of working in the topic area, including relevant examples of specific projects delivered which are similar or applicable to our requirement, and for whom they were delivered (if possible).   b) Your availability and capacity to conduct research work throughout the proposed term of the Contract  c) The feasible of the proposed project timeline given the chosen methodology proposed, ,including a Gantt chart detailing the proposed timeline of the project. | 10% |
| **Outputs and utility to policy-makers**  Proposals will be scored on the outputs expected from this research, in particular;:   1. How the foreseen outputs of the project will expand the evidence base in the topic area.   b) How the research will be of relevance and useful to policy-makers, given the stated research requirement | 30% |

A numerical appraisal scoring system will be used to assess the information given in the Technical Criteria of the proposal. Tender evaluators will allocate a score of 0, 25, 50, 75 or 100 to each part of the Technical Criteria, depending on the quality and relevance of evidence provided. The scores will then be subjected to the % weightings outlined above. The criteria against which Technical Criteria shall be assessed will be as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Evaluation Scores | |
| Score (%) | Description for score of each criterion |
| **100%**  **Fully Meets requirement** | The response fully answers all of the points raised in the question and contains relevant evidence to support the answer, is unambiguous and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the requirement and provides details of how the requirements will be met in full. |
| **75%**  **Good** | The response answers all or most of the points raised in the question and/or the response contains some relevant evidence, but the response either fails to address all of the points/deliverables or lacks sufficient evidence |
| **50%**  **Acceptable** | The response answers some of the points raised in the question, but fails to address the majority of the points being raised.  The response contains some evidence to demonstrate an understanding of the requirement but the evidence does not indicate an understanding of the requirements. |
| **25%**  **Poor**  *(Non-Compliant Bid)* | Response fails to address the points in the question, contains insufficient evidence or information is irrelevant to the question. |
| **0%**  **Unacceptable** *(Non-Compliant Bid)* | Nil or inadequate response. Totally fails to address the points raised in the question and contains no supporting evidence. |

Tenderers’ responses must meet the minimum mandatory criteria and achieve a score of 50 or more in each question (the minimum mandatory criteria).

**Commercial Criteria Evaluation**

Tenderers should aim to demonstrate within the Commercial Tender that their overall Tender offersthe best mix of quality and effectiveness for the least outlay over the period of using the goods or services required.

**Table 1 – Commercial Evaluation Questionnaire weightings for Attachments 3 and 4**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Attachment** | **Section** | **Weighting** |
| Attachment 3 – Commercial Evaluation Questionnaire – Section A | Organisation and Contact Details | N/A |
| Attachment 3 – Commercial Evaluation Questionnaire – Section B | Grounds For Mandatory Rejection | Pass/Fail |
| Attachment 3 – Commercial Evaluation Questionnaire – Section C | Grounds For Discretionary Rejection | Pass/Fail |
| Attachment 3 – Commercial Evaluation Questionnaire – Section D | Economic And Financial Standing | Pass/Fail |
| Attachment 4 – Pricing Matrix | Provide a fully itemised total fixed price for the duration of the project commercial envelope. Scored on an inverse percentage e.g. lowest priced bid/price of bid x 100 x 3.00 | 30 |
| **Total Commercial Score Available** | | **30%** |

The pricing formula to be applied to allocating scores shall be on an inverse percentage – e.g: Lowest bid/price of bid x 100 x 0.30 (weighting 30%).

The Home Office shall be entitled to exclude Bidders from the procurement exercise who fail to meet any “Pass” criteria as identified within the ITT, irrespective of their scores in other areas.

The Home Office shall be entitled to exclude Bidders from the procurement exercise who fail to achieve any minimum mandatory criteria as identified within the ITT, irrespective of their scores in other areas.