**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **The timetable on page 4 says the confirmation of bidder will be 19th May etc – please can you reconfirm the timetable inc contract award?**

The last three dates of the activity description on page 4 of the invitation to tender should be in the month of October not May, i.e. ‘10’ not ‘05’. We have made relevant updates in the latest version of the ITT.

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| **Activity description** | **Date:** |
| ITT issued | 14/8/2015 |
| Last day for submission of queries (5pm) | 08/09/2015 |
| Last day for DfE to respond to queries | 15/09/2015 |
| Last day for submission of bids (midday) | 21/09/2015 |
| Tender evaluation and moderation panels | 22/09/2015 to 02/10/2015 |
| Supplier clarification meetings (if required) | 05/10/2015 to 16/10/2015  |
| Confirmation of successful bidder | w/c 19/10/2015 |
| Finalisation of contract | w/c 19/10/2015  |
| Contract award | w/c 26/10/2015 |

1. **When are the dates for face to face meetings?**

London – 4th September for a 1 hour session at 11am or 12.30pm

Sheffield – 8thSeptember for a 1 hour session at 11am or 12.30pm

If you are interested in attending an open session, please RSVP a seat including which session and time by Friday 28th August to 2015.AOS-PROCUREMENT@education.gsi.gov.uk and we will send you the full details. We may not be able to allocate you a seat due to capacity issues, so please indicate your interest at the earliest possible time to avoid disappointment.

1. **Will DfE provide IT equipment to contractors?**

The Contractor will be issued with a Departmental IT account, *Desktop to Go dongle/ laptop*, BlackBerry and memory stick, subject to use in compliance with the Department’s Security and Assurance arrangements. All departmental equipment is compatible with our requested cyber essentials requirements.

1. **If we use our own IT equipment will the bid need to provide evidence of a cyber-essentials certification?**

If you choose to use your own IT equipment a cyber-essentials certification is not essential if your organisation has equivalent evidence to support that you have appropriate technical and organisational measures to mitigate the risk from common internet based threats in respect to the following five technical areas:

1. Boundary firewalls and internet gateways - these are devices designed to prevent unauthorised access to or from private networks, but good setup of these devices either in hardware or software form is important for them to be fully effective.
2. Secure configuration – ensuring that systems are configured in the most secure way for the needs of the organisation
3. Access control – Ensuring only those who should have access to systems to have access and at the appropriate level.
4. Malware protection – ensuring that virus and malware protection is installed and is up to date
5. Patch management – ensuring the latest supported version of applications is used and all the necessary patches supplied by the vendor have been applied
6. **Can you confirm that expenses will be paid for any work carried out by contractors outside their allocated RSC area?**
Travel and subsistence costs will be paid to contractors for the work they undertake outside the region(s) answered in Requirement 7.
7. **On page 17 it says please indicate the number of days you are available for DfE work till until 31 April 2015 – please clarify?**

This is to gage the availability of the contractors over a certain time period and is not scored. We have updated the ITT to change the date from 31 April 2015 to October 31st 2016.

1. **Could you please clarify the scoring approach as described on page 29.**

The latest version of the ITT has updated this section. The total score of Requirements 1 - 5 will be calculated as a ratio of 80%. Requirement 6 will be calculated as a ratio of 20%. The two calculations will be added and the final score will be given as a percentage.

1. **Can organisations with multiple individuals being put forward for the work bid in this tender? How would it work for a company with a large amount of individuals offered in the bid?**
* Yes, organisations can apply however each bid should provide corporate information on how the organisation meets requirements 1-8 plus additional requirements, we also for require an average daily rate (mean) for all individuals offered.
* For each individual offered in the bid, we also require a CV clearing stating their individual daily rate (excluding VAT and inclusive of expenses), the region(s) they would be able to work in inclusive of travel costs, as well as contact details for 2 referees.
* We do not require each individual in a bid to submit information on requirements 1-8.
* By notification and agreement by the Department you will be able to put forward new individuals who were not originally put forward in the bid. We would expect all of suitable individuals to be offered to us initially.

1. **How many days would the Department aim to secure in each region for a contractors to work?**

There is no minimum amount of days guaranteed for any region. On average contractors may expect to work 40 days in the year.

1. **How much referees do you require?**

We require 2 referees contact details and the period of the reference for each individual offered in the bid. We do not require detailed references.

1. **Can I use a Department for Education official that I currently or previously worked for as my referee?**

You can use the Department for Education’s contract manager as a referee; however you must request this via the mailbox mike.reay@education.gsi.gov.uk , using the subject title ‘Reference Request’, clearly stating period you require a reference from.

1. **How many Education Specialists are you looking for?**

We are looking to contract up to 150 organisations to provide Education Specialists.

1. **How do you envisage the working pattern?**

Contractors will be asked for their availability and this will then be shared with colleagues when allocating to projects. There is never a guarantee that there will be work for the allocated dates as there are peaks and troughs in this line of work.

1. **What happens when I represent a few Contractors**?

It is perfectly acceptable for individuals to be included in a number of organisations submission to this tendering opportunity.

1. **Does the job role always require travel?**

Most visits require preparation before the visit and notes of the visit afterwards. Reports of recommendations are then compiled for RSCs and schools to implement. So there is various work that can be completed at home, Free Schools generally have more paperwork to be completed than Brokerage which requires more travelling. This should be incorporated into the daily rate and expenses are provided for work that is commissioned outside of designated regions.

1. **Can the wording on the contracts be changed?**

We will only accept minor alterations to the contract. Please detail this in tracked changes when sending the bid (this will not affect your maximum word count).

1. **Is 10 CVs acceptable for a sample?**

No, you will need to provide CVs for all the individuals offered in the bid.

1. **As it states in the guidance that an average of 40 days should be designated, current Head Teachers will struggle with this.**

All Contractors should state their availability and commitments; this will be taken into account. There is no minimum amount of working days required.

1. **What’s a clarification meeting?**

The panel who evaluates the bids has the discretion to invite any tender to clarify for a reasonably deemed reason. i.e. the tender contains inconsistent or contradictory information on specific issues; or not clear on describing what is offering; or contains minor mistakes on omission; or Is not compliant with non-mandatory technical specifications.

1. **What happens with my company accounts if I have recently set up a new company?**

If you do not have account for the last 2 years please provide the most recent statements for company accounts if any.

1. **Can I use my companies’ format for CVs?**

Yes, as long as it contains daily rates, regional availability.

1. **What happens with my company accounts if I am a small business?**

You don’t need submitted audited account; a letter from the accountant containing relevant information will suffice.

1. **What happens if I am a head teacher and retire?**

If the school is the contracting authority and as a current serving practitioner you decide to retire you may be able to work under the current contract should the school’s contract manager agree to this. If you are the contracting authority, then there is no change as you will remain as the contracting authority.

1. **Is it possible to bid through an agency and independently?**

The Department will allow potential contractors to bid via an agency and independently.

1. **Is there a preference to submit via as an individual under a SME or a large organisation?**

There is no preference for small or large organisations. Bids will be treated on equal merit regardless of the size of the company.

1. **Can I use my companies’ format for CVs?**

Yes, please include information on a daily rate, regional availability and contact details for referees.