



Request for Information

Request for Information (RFI) on behalf of the Natural Environment Research Council

Subject UK SBS NERC Construction Partner

Sourcing reference number CON15007MC

UK Shared Business Services Ltd (UK SBS)
www.ukpbs.co.uk

Registered in England and Wales as a limited company. Company Number 6330639.
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UKSBS
Shared Business Services

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Section 1 – About UK Shared Business Services

Putting the business into shared services

UK Shared Business Services Ltd (UK SBS) brings a commercial attitude to the public sector; helping our customers improve efficiency, generate savings and modernise.

It is our vision to become the leading provider for our customers of shared business services in the UK public sector, continuously reducing cost and improving quality of business services for Government and the public sector.

Our broad range of expert services is shared by our customers. This allows our customers the freedom to focus resources on core activities; innovating and transforming their own organisations.

Core services include Procurement, Finance, Grants Admissions, Human Resources, Payroll, ISS, and Property Asset Management all underpinned by our Service Delivery and Contact Centre teams.

UK SBS is a people rather than task focused business. It's what makes us different to the traditional transactional shared services centre. What is more, being a not-for-profit organisation owned by its customers, UK SBS' goals are aligned with the public sector and delivering best value for the UK taxpayer.

UK Shared Business Services Ltd changed its name from RCUK Shared Services Centre Ltd in March 2013.

Our Customers

Growing from a foundation of supporting the Research Councils, 2012/13 saw Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) transition their procurement to UK SBS and Crown Commercial Service (CCS – previously Government Procurement Service) agree a Memorandum of Understanding with UK SBS to deliver two major procurement categories (construction and research) across Government.

UK SBS currently manages £700m expenditure for its Customers.

Our Customers who have access to our services and Contracts are detailed [here](#).

Section 2 – About Our Customer

Natural Environment Research Council

NERC is the UK's main agency for funding and managing research, training and knowledge exchange in the environmental sciences.

NERC's work covers the full range of atmospheric, Earth, biological, terrestrial and aquatic science, from the deep oceans to the upper atmosphere and from the poles to the equator.

The organisation coordinates some of the world's most exciting research projects, tackling major issues such as climate change, environmental influences on human health, the genetic make-up of life on Earth, and much more.

Working internationally, NERC have bases at some of the most hostile places on the planet; running a fleet of research ships and aircraft and investing in satellite technology to monitor gradual environmental change on a global scale. NERC provide forewarning of, and solutions to, the key environmental challenges facing society.

Examples of funded research

- Showing the importance of mature tropical forests to the global climate.
- Developing a safer and cleaner way to mine gold by reducing the use of mercury.
- Studying the hole in the ozone layer - discovered by our British Antarctic Survey - and monitoring climate change.
- Playing a major role in the International Census of Marine Life that monitors our oceans.

NERC also runs six organisations of world renown:

- British Antarctic Survey, in Cambridge.
- British Geological Survey, in Nottingham.
- National Oceanography Centre, in Southampton.
- Centre for Ecology & Hydrolog, in Oxfordshire.
- National Centre for Atmospheric Science, in Leeds.
- National Centre for Earth Observation, Swindon.

www.nerc.ac.uk

Section 3 – Working with UK Shared Business Services Ltd.

Section 3 – Contact details		
3.1	Name of contracting Authority	Natural Environment Research Council, Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 1EU
3.2	Named Procurement Officer	Steve Parsons
3.3	Contact details	Email: fmprocurement@uksbs.co.uk Tel: 01793 867005
3.4	Estimated value of the Opportunity	£40 to £100 million
3.5	Process for the submission of clarifications and Bids	All correspondence shall be submitted within the Emptoris e-sourcing tool. Guidance Notes to support the use of Emptoris is available here. Please note submission of a Bid to any email address including the Buyer <u>will</u> result in the Bid <u>not</u> being considered.

Section 3 - Timescales		
3.6	Industry Day	06/06/2016
3.7	Date of posting of Contract advert to OJEU.	24/06/2016
3.8	Date RFI available to Bidders	27/06/2016
3.9	Latest date / time RFI clarifications should be received through Emptoris	22/07/2016 11.00
3.10	Latest date / time RFI clarification answers should be sent to all potential Bidders through Emptoris	25/07/2016 14.00

3.11	Closing date and time for Bidder to request RFI documents	25/07/2016 14.00
3.12	Closing date and time for Bidder to submit their response ('the deadline').	28/07/2016 14.00
3.13	Clarifications (if required)	29/07/2016 to 11/08/2016
3.14	Notification of proposed shortlist for Award stage to unsuccessful Bidders	12/08/2016
3.15	Issue of RFQ documents to successful Bidders	31/08/2016
3.16	Interviews	23/11/2016
3.17	Anticipated Contract Award Date	09/12/2016
3.18	Response Validity Period	90 Days

Section 4 – Specification and about this procurement

Following the commissioning of its New Polar Research Vessel (NPRV) in 2015, now officially named the RRS Sir David Attenborough, the UK Government is currently moving forward with its plans to up-date and modernise the scientific research stations in Antarctica and the South Atlantic region.

A key component of this activity is the appointment of a suitable construction partner. British Antarctic Survey (BAS) working very closely with its parent organisation, Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), are seeking to appoint capable and trusted construction partner that can help bring these modernisation plans into reality over the course of the next two to ten years.

Construction works will commence with extensive works to Briscoe Wharf at Rothera to accommodate the RRS Sir David Attenborough as it enters into service. The new polar vessel is scheduled to officially sail south to Antarctica in 2019.

In parallel, an overall plan of modernisation will commence and be rolled out from 2017-18 into subsequent years to improve the overall effectiveness of the stations in terms of science capability, operational effectiveness and sustainability.

The Government's preference is for the appointment of a construction partner that can work very closely with NERC/BAS over an extended period of time to proactively share and jointly manage the risks and challenges associated with construction in the Antarctic region. Also having the overall capability to deliver effective construction programmes that combine civils, buildings and related mechanical and electrical engineering both in the Antarctic region plus other potential regions of the world where NERC and BAS has a scientific research interest, including in the UK.

1. Introduction

Following the commissioning of its New Polar Research Vessel (NPRV) in 2015, now officially named the RRS Sir David Attenborough, the UK Government is currently moving forward with its plans to up-date and modernise the scientific research stations in Antarctica and the South Atlantic region.

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having the overall capability to deliver effective construction programmes that combine civils, buildings and related mechanical and electrical engineering both in the Antarctic region plus other potential regions of the world where NERC and BAS has a scientific research interest, including in the UK.

2. Scope of Works

Given the overall duration of the anticipated contract, the full scope of works cannot be confirmed at present. However the following provides a summary of the current known projects, or projects which are considered likely to be undertaken;

- Extension and up-grade to Rothera Wharf, comprising:
 - Extension and upgrade to the existing 60m sheet pile and rock infill wharf at Rothera to make it suitable for the 129m long new ship. New mooring bollards and fendering. Provision of safe access for small boats.
- Redevelopment of jetties at Island Stations (Signy and King Edward Point), comprising:
 - Complete station rebuild at Signy, including new jetty and slipway, new accommodation, storage and science buildings, fuel tanks, generator shed and workshops and other miscellaneous structures and access works. Appropriate energy efficiency, sustainability and renewables measures. Demolition and full removal of existing station also in scope.
 - Upgraded wharf at King Edward Point.
- Redevelopment of building assets and infrastructure at Bird Island (including new build works), comprising:
 - New jetty, storage building and energy efficiency measures at Bird Island. Demolition and full removal of existing jetty and store building also in scope.
- Redevelopment of building assets and infrastructure at Rothera including new build works. Works may include;
 - offices,
 - workshops,
 - accommodation
 - cargo handling & stores
 - hangar
- Works to Rothera airfield including surfacing works (compacted gravel), stabilisation of reclaimed land (rock fill) and improvements to lighting infrastructure.
- At present, UK based construction works are still to be defined but may include works at the BAS Cambridge office and other NERC estate projects including portside facilities.

3. Standards and Ways of Working

In order to be able to deliver the above, the successful contractor shall need to be able to deliver a wide range of capabilities to the highest standards in the challenging environment of the Antarctic and south Atlantic region. Works shall be undertaken in accordance with UK legislation and standards including;

- Health and Safety legislation,
- UK Building Regulations,
- Construction industry standards,
- UK Design codes and standards (including Eurocodes and UK National annexes).

It is anticipated that the majority of works shall be contracted as Design and Build wherein the successful contractor shall be required to incorporate a strong design team able to deliver the wide ranging capabilities required for the projects described above. Also for the

bespoke aspects resulting from the location of the works i.e. snow modelling.

Along with a strong proven capability for both design and construction elements, in order to be able to successfully delivery the projects, the Contractor will have to work closely with the Client teams and its Technical Advisors throughout all work stages; a strong collaborative approach to working, and willingness to learn from one another is essential.

4. Bidder Evaluations

To help select the right construction partner NERC/BAS will be publishing, at the Request for Quotation (RFQ) stage of a competitive tendering process, detailed criteria for award of the contract.

Within this criteria there will be a strong preference towards quality. Also during the selection process NERC/BAS will be very keen to meet with potential contractors to gain a clear insight into how the contractor and the various stakeholders and associated supply chain firms will work together.

Subject to completion and publication of the more detailed criteria and related questions, the overall evaluation scheme is anticipated to be as weighted as follows to reflect the importance on quality:

- Quality: 60% weighting
- Cost (Price): 25% weighting
- Presentations/Interviews: 15% weighting

The Contract duration shall be for a period of seven years with an optional extension of a three year period from commencement of the Contract.

Section 5 – Evaluation model

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The evaluation process will be conducted to ensure that Responses are evaluated fairly to ascertain the bidders who can demonstrate the required skills qualities, technical ability and capacity, commercial stability and experience to ensure successful performance of the Contract.
- 5.1.2 The evaluation team may comprise staff from UK SBS, the Customer and any specific external stakeholders UK SBS deem required

5.2 Evaluation of Responses

- 5.2.1 Evaluation of Responses shall be based on a Selection questionnaire defined in the e-sourcing tool.

5.3. Selection questionnaire

- 5.3.1 The Selection questionnaire shall be marked against the following Selection pass / fail and scoring criteria.
- 5.3.2 The selection questionnaire shall be marked against the following Mandatory or discretionary pass / fail criteria

Selection Pass/fail criteria		
Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject
Selection Part B	SEL2.2	Conviction for conspiracy
Selection Part B	SEL2.3	Conviction for corruption
Selection Part B	SEL2.4	Conviction for bribery
Selection Part B	SEL2.5	Conviction for fraud
Selection Part B	SEL2.6	Conviction for Terrorism/ Serious Crime
Selection Part B	SEL2.7	Conviction for Money Laundering
Selection Part B	SEL 2.8	Conviction for proceeds of crime
Selection Part B	SEL 2.9	Conviction for other offences
Selection Part B	SEL 2.10	Tax and social security breaches
Selection Part B	SEL 2.12	Cyber Essentials
Selection Part C	SEL3.2	Compliance with applicable obligations in the fields of environmental, social and labour law.
Selection Part C	SEL3.3	Bankruptcy, Insolvency or Winding up
Selection Part C	SEL3.4	Grave Professional misconduct
Selection Part C	SEL3.5	Agreements with other economic operators that create a distortion of Competition
Selection Part C	SEL3.6	Conflict of Interest within meaning of regulation 24

Selection Part C	SEL3.7	Distortion of competition within the meaning of regulation 41
Selection Part C	SEL3.8	Deficiencies in performance of prior public contract
Selection Part C	SEL3.9	Serious Misrepresentation
Selection Part C	SEL3.10	Tax Returns
Selection Part C	SEL3.11	Compliance to the Modern Slavery Act 2015
Selection Part D	SEL4.1	Economic and Financial standing assessment
Selection Part D	SEL4.2	Minimum Financial Threshold
Selection Part D	SEL4.3	Guarantee
Selection Part D	SEL4.4	Insurance
Selection Part E	SEL5.1	References
Selection Part E	SEL5.2	Health and Safety Policy
Selection Part E	SEL5.3	Remedial Orders relating to Health and Safety Executive (or equivalent)
Selection Part E	SEL5.4	Conviction of breaching environmental Legislation
Selection Part E	SEL5.5	Sub-contractors infringement of environmental Legislation
Selection Part E	SEL5.6	Unlawful Discrimination
Selection Part E	SEL5.7	Sub-contractor checks for unlawful discrimination
Selection Part E	FOI1.1	Freedom of information
	In the event of a Bidder failing to meet the requirements of a Mandatory pass / fail criteria, UK SBS reserves the right to disqualify the Bidder and not consider evaluation of the any of the selection stage scoring methodology, nor the Award stage scoring methodology or Mandatory pass / fail criteria.	

5.3.3 Each Mandatory pass / fail question includes a clear definition of the requirements of a successful response to the question.

5.3.4 The evaluation model below shall be used for this RFI which will be determined to two decimal places.

5.3.5 Questions marked 'for information only' do not contribute to the scoring model.

Selection Scoring criteria

Evaluation Justification Statement

In consideration of this particular requirement UK SBS has decided to evaluate Potential Providers by adopting the weightings/scoring mechanism detailed within this RFI. UK SBS considers these weightings to be in line with existing best practice for a requirement of this type.

Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject	Maximum Marks
Section 6 Part F	SEL6.1	Management of Works in remote locations	20%
Section 6 Part F	SEL6.2	Integration of challenging environmental requirements	20%

Section 6 Part F	SEL6.3	Skills, capabilities and experience of organisation	20%
Section 6 Part F	SEL6.4	Experience of long term partnering	20%
Section 6 Part F	SEL6.5	Adding value to development of design and methods	20%

A statement that a particular requirement will be met is not in itself sufficient. Such responses, or responses that are ambiguous, may be taken as failing to meet the Requirement. Detailed information regarding how, when and to what extent a Requirement can be met must be provided where appropriate – and, in evaluating a given requirement, scores will be awarded accordingly. Furthermore, if any requirement or part of a requirement cannot be met, this must be stated explicitly along with reason why.

Selection Evaluation of criteria

Each question will be judged on a score from 0 to 100, which shall be subjected to a multiplier to reflect the percentage of the evaluation criteria allocated to that question.

Where an evaluation criterion is worth 20% then the 0-100 score achieved will be multiplied by 20.

Example if a Bidder scores 60 from the available 100 points this will equate to 12% by using the following calculation: Score/Total Points available multiplied by 20 ($60/100 \times 20 = 12$)

Where an evaluation criterion is worth 10% then the 0-100 score achieved will be multiplied by 10.

Example if a Bidder scores 60 from the available 100 points this will equate to 6% by using the following calculation: Score/Total Points available multiplied by 10 ($60/100 \times 10 = 6$)

The same logic will be applied to groups of questions which equate to a single evaluation criterion.

The 0-100 score shall be based on (unless otherwise stated within the question):

0	The Question is not answered or the response is completely unacceptable.
10	Extremely poor response – they have completely missed the point of the question.
20	Very poor response and not wholly acceptable. Requires major revision to the response to make it acceptable. Only partially answers the requirement, with major deficiencies and little relevant detail proposed.
40	Poor response only partially satisfying the selection question requirements with deficiencies apparent. Some useful evidence provided but response falls well short of expectations. Low probability of being a capable supplier.
60	Response is acceptable but remains basic and could have been expanded upon. Response is sufficient but does not inspire.
80	Good response which describes their capabilities in detail which provides high levels of assurance consistent with a quality provider. The response includes a full description of techniques and measurements currently employed.
100	Response is exceptional and clearly demonstrates they are capable of meeting the requirement. No significant weaknesses noted. The response is compelling in its description of techniques and measurements currently employed, providing full assurance consistent with a quality provider.

All questions will be scored based on the above mechanism. Please be aware that there may be multiple evaluators. If so, their individual scores will be averaged (mean) to determine your final score as follows:

Example

Evaluator 1 scored your bid as 60

Evaluator 2 scored your bid as 40

Evaluator 3 scored your bid as 80

Evaluator 4 scored your bid as 60

Your final score will $(60+40+80+60) \div 4 = 60$

5.3.5 The process for shortlisting of Bidders for the award stage of the procurement shall be as follows.

5.3.6 During the Selection stage, the intention is to arrive at a short List of between five and eight qualified Bidders who will be considered for award stage evaluation. UK SBS at its discretion may only take forward sufficient Bidders as the intended minimum to maximum stated above. In those circumstances only the minimum to maximum number of qualified Bidders responses at award stage will be considered. To achieve this stated number of qualified Bidders, the selection questionnaires will be ranked.

5.4. Evaluation process

5.4.1 The evaluation process will feature some, if not all, the following phases

Stage	Summary of activity
Receipt and Opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RFI logged upon opening in alignment with UK SBS's procurement procedures.• Any RFI response received after the closing date will be rejected unless circumstances attributed to UK SBS or the e-sourcing tool beyond the bidder control are responsible for late submission.
Compliance check	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check all Mandatory requirements are acceptable to UK SBS.• Unacceptable responses maybe subject to clarification by UK SBS or rejection of the Response.
Scoring of the Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluation team will independently score the Response and provide a commentary of their scoring justification against the Selection criteria. During this phase, moderation may be undertaken as part of the overall scoring process.

Clarifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Evaluation team may require written clarification of Responses.
Re - scoring of the Response and Clarifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where relevant, the Evaluation team will independently re-score the Response following receipt of replies to Clarifications and provide a commentary of their re-scoring justification against the Selection criteria. During this phase, moderation may be undertaken as part of the overall scoring process.
Shortlisting of Bidders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK SBS will shortlist the Bidders based on the Responses received and the Evaluation Model detailed in Section 5 of the RFI.
Validation of unsuccessful Bidders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To confirm contents of the letters to provide details of scoring and relative feedback on the unsuccessful Bidders response in comparison with the successful Bidders response.

Section 6 – Selection questionnaire

6.1 Introduction

The Selection questionnaires are located in the within the e-sourcing tool.

Guidance on completion of the questions is available at

<http://www.ukpbs.co.uk/services/procure/Pages/supplier.aspx>

PLEASE NOTE THE QUESTIONS ARE NOT NUMBERED SEQUENTIALLY

Section 7 – General information

7.1. Introduction

- 7.1.1 UK SBS wishes to establish a Contract for the provision of a construction partner. UK SBS is managing this procurement process in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as may be amended from time to time) (the “Regulations”). This is a works Contract being procured under the OJEU Restricted Procedure
- 7.1.2 UK SBS is procuring the Contract for the Natural Environment Research Council (OPB).
- 7.1.3 UK SBS logo, trademarks and other identifying marks are proprietary and may not be incorporated in the Companies response without UK SBS’s written permission.
- 7.1.4 The Bidder shall indemnify and keep indemnified UK SBS against all actions, claims, demands, proceedings, damages, costs, losses, charges and expenses whatsoever in respect of any breach by the Bidder of this document.
- 7.1.5 If there is any doubt with regard to the ambiguity of any question or content contained in this questionnaire then PLEASE ASK a clarification question, but please ensure that your question is via the formal clarification process in writing to the UK SBS representative nominated. No approach of any kind in connection with this opportunity should be made to any other person within, or associated with UK SBS. All information secured outside of this named contact shall have no legal standing or worth and should not be relied upon.
- 7.1.6 It remains the responsibility of the Bidder to keep UK SBS informed of any matter that may affect continued qualification
- 7.1.7 Prior to commencing formal evaluation, Submitted Responses will be checked to ensure they are fully compliant with the Pass / Fail criteria within the Evaluation model. Non-compliant Submitted Responses may be rejected by UK SBS. Submitted Responses which are deemed by UK SBS to be fully compliant will proceed to evaluation. These will be evaluated using the criteria and scores detailed in the matrix set out in [Section 5](#).
- 7.1.8 Following evaluation of the submitted Responses and approval of the outcome UK SBS intends to select a short list of Bidders to proceed to Award stage of this Procurement.
- 7.1.9 Whilst it is UK SBS’s [and any relevant Other Public Bodies] intention to purchase the majority of its works under this Contract Arrangement from the Supplier(s) appointed this does not confer any exclusivity on the appointed Suppliers. UK SBS and any relevant Other Public Bodies reserve the right to purchase any works (including those similar to the works covered by this procurement) from any Supplier outside of this Contract..
- 7.1.10 UK SBS reserves the right not to conclude a Contract as a result of the current procurement process. Bidders should review the contents of Section 7 paragraph 7.8.1 when considering submitting their Response.

- 7.1.11 The works covered by this procurement exercise have NOT been sub-divided into Lots.
- 7.1.12 UK SBS shall utilise the Crown Commercial Service (CCS – previously Government Procurement Service) Emptoris e-sourcing tool url <https://gpsesourcing.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sso/jsp/login.jsp> to conduct this procurement. There will be no electronic auction following the conclusion of the evaluation of the Request for Information (RFI) responses. Bidders will be specifically advised where attachments are permissible to support a question response within the e-sourcing tool. All enquiries with respect to access to the e-sourcing tool and problems with functionality within the tool may be submitted to Crown Commercial Service, Telephone 0345 010 3503.
- 7.1.13 Please utilise the messaging system within the e-sourcing tool located at <https://gpsesourcing.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sso/jsp/login.jsp> within the timescales detailed in Section 3. if you have any doubt as to what is required or will have difficulty in providing the information requested. Bidders should note that any requests for clarifications may not be considered by UK SBS if they are not articulated by the Bidder within the discussion forum within the e-sourcing tool.
- 7.1.14 Bidders should read this document, RFx attachments, messages and the evaluation questionnaires carefully before completing the Response submission. Failure to comply with any of these instructions for completion and submission of the Submitted Response may result in the rejection of the Response. Bidders are advised therefore to acquaint themselves fully with the extent and nature of the goods/services/goods and services and contractual obligations. These instructions constitute the Conditions of Response. Participation in the RFI process automatically signals that the Bidder accepts these Conditions.
- 7.1.15 All material issued in connection with this RFI shall remain the property of UK SBS and/or as applicable relevant OPB and shall be used only for the purpose of this procurement. All Due Diligence Information shall be either returned to UK SBS or securely destroyed by the Bidder (at UK SBS's option) at the conclusion of the procurement
- 7.1.16 The Bidder shall ensure that each and every sub-contractor, consortium member and adviser abides by the terms of these instructions and the Conditions of Response.
- 7.1.17 The Bidder shall not make contact with any other employee, agent or consultant of UK SBS or any relevant OPB or Customer who are in any way connected with this procurement during the period of this procurement, unless instructed otherwise by UK SBS.
- 7.1.18 UK SBS shall not be committed to any course of action as a result of:
- 7.1.18.1 issuing this RFI or any invitation to participate in this procurement ;
 - 7.1.18.2 an invitation to submit any Response in respect of this procurement;
 - 7.1.18.3 communicating with a Bidder or a Bidder's representatives or agents in respect of this procurement; or
 - 7.1.18.4 any other communication between UK SBS and/or any relevant OPB (whether directly or by its agents or representatives) and any other party.

- 7.1.19 Bidders shall accept and acknowledge that by issuing this RFI UK SBS shall not be bound to accept any Response and reserves the right not to conclude a Contract for some or all of the works for which Responses are invited.
- 7.1.20 UK SBS reserves the right to amend, add to or withdraw all or any part of this RFI at any time during the procurement.
- 7.1.21 Bidders should not include in the Response any extraneous information which has not been specifically requested in the RFI including, for example, any sales literature, standard terms of trading etc. Any such information not requested but provided by the Bidder shall not be considered by UK SBS.
- 7.1.22 If the Bidder is a consortium, the following information must be provided: full details of the consortium; and the information sought in this RFI in respect of each of the consortium's constituent members as part of a single composite response. Potential Providers should provide details of the actual or proposed percentage shareholding of the constituent members within the consortium as indicated in the relevant section of the selection questionnaire SEL1.9 specifically refers. If a consortium is not proposing to form a corporate entity, full details of alternative proposed arrangements should be provided as indicated in the relevant section of the RFI. However, please note UK SBS reserves the right to require a successful consortium to form a single legal entity in accordance with regulation 19(6) of the Regulations. UK SBS recognises that arrangements in relation to consortia may (within limits) be subject to future change. Potential Providers should therefore respond in the light of the arrangements as currently envisaged. Potential Providers are reminded that any future proposed change in relation to consortia must be notified to UK SBS so that it can make a further assessment by applying the selection criteria to the new information provided and consider rejection of the Response if UK SBS reasonably consider the change to have a material impact of the delivery of the viability of the Response.

7.2. Bidder conference

- 7.2.1 A Bidders' Conference may be held in conjunction with this procurement. Details will be advised via a clarification of sourcing documents as soon as they are known.

7.3. Confidentiality

- 7.3.1 Subject to the exceptions referred to in paragraph 7.3.2, the contents of this RFI are being made available by UK SBS on condition that:
- 7.3.1.1 Bidders shall at all times treat the contents of the RFI and any related documents (together called the 'Information') as confidential, save in so far as they are already in the public domain;
 - 7.3.1.2 Bidders shall not disclose, copy, reproduce, distribute or pass any of the Information to any other person at any time or allow any of these things to happen;
 - 7.3.1.3 Bidders shall not use any of the Information for any purpose other than for the purposes of submitting (or deciding whether to submit) a Response; and
 - 7.3.1.4 Bidders shall not undertake any publicity activity within any section of the media in relation to this procurement

- 7.3.2 Bidders may disclose, distribute or pass any of the Information to the Bidder's advisers, sub-contractors or to another person provided that either:
- 7.3.2.1 This is done for the sole purpose of enabling a Response to be submitted and the person receiving the Information undertakes in writing to keep the Information confidential on the same terms as if that person were the Bidder; or
 - 7.3.2.2 The disclosure is made for the sole purpose of obtaining legal advice from external lawyers in relation to the procurement or to any Contract arising from it; or
 - 7.3.2.3 The Bidder is legally required to make such a disclosure
- 7.3.3 In paragraphs 7.3.1 and 7.3.2 above the term 'person' includes but is not limited to any person, firm, body or association, corporate or incorporate.
- 7.3.4 UK SBS may disclose detailed information relating to Responses to its employees, agents or advisers and UK SBS may make any of the Contract documents available for private inspection by its officers, employees, agents or advisers. UK SBS also reserves the right to disseminate information that is materially relevant to the procurement to all Bidders, even if the information has only been requested by one Bidder, subject to the duty to protect each Bidder's commercial confidentiality in relation to its Response (unless there is a requirement for disclosure as explained in paragraphs 7.4.1 to 7.4.3 below).
- 7.3.5 All Central Government Departments and their Executive Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies are subject to control and reporting within Government. In particular, they report to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury for all expenditure. Further, the Cabinet Office has a cross-Government role delivering overall Government policy on public procurement - including ensuring value for money and related aspects of good procurement practice.
- For these purposes, UK SBS may disclose within Government any of the Bidders documentation/information (including any that the Bidder considers to be confidential and/or commercially sensitive such as specific bid information) submitted by the Bidder to UK SBS during this Procurement. Subject to section 7.4 below, the information will not be disclosed outside Government. Bidders taking part in this RFI consent to these terms as part of the competition process.
- 7.3.6 From 2nd April 2014 the Government is introducing its new Government Security Classifications ("GSC") classification scheme to replace the current Government Protective Marking System ("GPMS"). A key aspect of this is the reduction in the number of security classifications used. All Bidders are encouraged to make themselves aware of the changes and identify any potential impacts in their Bid, as the protective marking and applicable protection of any material passed to, or generated by, you during the procurement process or pursuant to any Contract awarded to you as a result of this tender process will be subject to the new GSC from 2nd April 2014. The link below to the Gov.uk website provides information on the new GSC: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-security-classifications>
- 7.3.7 UK SBS reserves the right to amend any security related term or condition of the draft contract accompanying this RFI to reflect any changes introduced by the GSC. In particular where this RFI is accompanied by any instructions on safeguarding classified information (e.g. a Security Aspects Letter) as a result of any changes

stemming from the new GSC, whether in respect of the applicable protective marking scheme, specific protective markings given, the aspects to which any protective marking applies or otherwise. This may relate to the instructions on safeguarding classified information (e.g. a Security Aspects Letter) as they apply to the procurement as they apply to the procurement process and/or any contracts awarded to you as a result of the procurement process.

7.4 Freedom of information

- 7.4.1 In accordance with the obligations and duties placed upon public authorities by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the 'FoIA') and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (the 'EIR') (each as amended from time to time), UK SBS may be required to disclose information submitted by the Bidder to the to UK SBS.
- 7.4.2 In respect of any information submitted by a Bidder that it considers to be commercially sensitive the Bidder should complete the Freedom of Information declaration question defined in the Question FOI1.2.
- 7.4.3 Where a Bidder identifies information as commercially sensitive, UK SBS will endeavour to maintain confidentiality. Bidders should note, however, that, even where information is identified as commercially sensitive, UK SBS may be required to disclose such information in accordance with the FoIA or the Environmental Information Regulations. In particular, UK SBS is required to form an independent judgment concerning whether the information is exempt from disclosure under the FoIA or the EIR and whether the public interest favours disclosure or not. Accordingly, UK SBS cannot guarantee that any information marked 'confidential' or "commercially sensitive" will not be disclosed.
- 7.4.4 Where a Bidder receives a request for information under the FoIA or the EIR during the procurement, this should be immediately passed on to UK SBS and the Bidder should not attempt to answer the request without first consulting with UK SBS.
- 7.4.5 Bidders are reminded that the Government's transparency agenda requires that sourcing documents, including RFI templates such as this, are published on a designated, publicly searchable web site, and, that the same applies to other sourcing documents issued by UK SBS, and any contract entered into by UK SBS with its preferred supplier once the procurement is complete. By submitting a response to this RFI Bidders are agreeing that their participation and contents of their Response may be made public.

7.5. Response Validity

- 7.5.1 Your Response should remain open for consideration for a period of 90 days. A Response valid for a shorter period may be rejected.

7.6. Timescales

- 7.6.1 [Section 3](#) of the RFI sets out the proposed procurement timetable. UK SBS reserves the right to extend the dates and will advise potential Bidders of any change to the dates.

7.7. UK SBS's Contact Details

- 7.7.1 Unless stated otherwise in these Instructions or in writing from UK SBS, all communications from Bidders (including their sub-contractors, consortium members, consultants and advisers) during the period of this procurement must be directed through the e-sourcing tool to the designated UK SBS contact.

7.7.2 All enquiries with respect to access to the e-sourcing tool may be submitted to Crown Commercial Service, Telephone 0345 010 3503.

7.7.3 Bidders should be mindful that the designated Contact should not under any circumstances be sent a copy of their Response outside of the e-sourcing tool. Failure to follow this requirement will result in disqualification of the Response.

7.8. Preparation of a Response

7.8.1 Bidders must obtain for themselves at their own responsibility and expense all information necessary for the preparation of Responses. Bidders are solely responsible for all costs, expenses and other liabilities arising in connection with the preparation and submission of their Response and all other stages of the selection and evaluation process. Under no circumstances will UK SBS, or any of their advisers, be liable for any such costs, expenses or liabilities borne by Bidders or their sub-contractors, suppliers or advisers in this process.

7.8.2 Bidders are required to complete and provide all information required by UK SBS in accordance with the Conditions of Response and the Request for Information. Failure to comply with the Conditions and the Request for Information may lead UK SBS to reject a Response.

7.8.3 UK SBS relies on Bidders' own analysis and review of information provided. Consequently, Bidders are solely responsible for obtaining the information which they consider is necessary in order to make decisions regarding the content of their Responses and to undertake any investigations they consider necessary in order to verify any information provided to them during the procurement.

7.8.4 Bidders must form their own opinions, making such investigations and taking such advice (including professional advice) as is appropriate, regarding their Responses, without reliance upon any opinion or other information provided by UK SBS or their advisers and representatives. Bidders should notify UK SBS promptly of any perceived ambiguity, inconsistency or omission in this RFI, any of its associated documents and/or any other information issued to them during the procurement.

7.8.5 Bidders must ensure that each response to a question is within any specified word count. Any responses with words in excess of the word count will only be considered up to the point where they meet the word count, any additional words beyond the volume defined in the word count will not be considered by the evaluation panel.

7.8.6 Bidders must ensure that each response to a question is not cross referenced to a response to another question. In the event of a Bidder adding a cross reference it will not be considered in evaluation.

7.9. Submission of Responses

7.9.1 The Response must be submitted as instructed in this document through the e-sourcing tool. Failure to follow the instruction within each Section of this document, to omit responses to any of the questions or to present your response in alignment with any guidance notes provided may render the Response non-compliant and it may be rejected.

7.9.2 UK SBS may at its own absolute discretion extend the closing date and the time for receipt of Responses specified [Section 3](#).

7.9.3 Any extension to the RFI response period will apply to all Bidders.

- 7.9.4 Any financial data provided must be submitted in or converted into pounds sterling. Where official documents include financial data in a foreign currency, a sterling equivalent must be provided. Failure to adhere to this requirement will result in the Response not being considered.
- 7.9.5 UK SBS does not accept responsibility for the premature opening or mishandling of Responses that are not submitted in accordance with the instructions of this document.
- 7.9.6 The Response and any documents accompanying it must be in the English language
- 7.9.7 Bidders must submit their response through the e-sourcing tool:
- 7.9.8 Responses will be submitted any time up to the date indicated in [Section 3](#). Responses received before this deadline will be retained in a secure environment, unopened until this deadline has passed.
- 7.9.9 Responses received after the date indicated in [Section 3](#) shall not be considered by UK SBS unless the Bidder can justify the reason for the delay.
 - 7.9.9.1 The Bidder must demonstrate irrefutable evidence in writing they have made best endeavours to ensure the Response was received on time and that the issue was beyond their control.
 - 7.9.9.2 Any request for a late Response to be considered must be emailed to bids@uksbs.co.uk in advance of 'the deadline' if a bidder believes their Response will be received late.
 - 7.9.9.3 UK SBS reserves the right to accept or reject any late Response without justification to the affected Bidder and make no guarantee it will consider any request for a late Response to be considered.

7.10. Canvassing

- 7.10.1 Any Bidder who directly or indirectly canvasses any employee, or agent of UK SBS or its members or any relevant OPB or any of its employees concerning the establishment of the Contract or who directly or indirectly obtains or attempts to obtain information from any such officer, member, employee or agent or concerning any other Bidder, Response or proposed Response will be disqualified.

7.11. Disclaimers

- 7.11.1 Whilst the information in this RFI, Due Diligence Information and supporting documents has been prepared in good faith, it does not purport to be comprehensive nor has it been independently verified.
- 7.11.2 Neither UK SBS, nor any relevant OPB's nor their advisors, nor their respective directors, officers, members, partners, employees, other staff or agents:
 - 7.11.2.1 makes any representation or warranty (express or implied) as to the accuracy, reasonableness or completeness of the RFI; or
 - 7.11.2.2 accepts any responsibility for the information contained in the RFI or for their fairness, accuracy or completeness of that information nor shall any of them be liable for any loss or damage (other than in respect of fraudulent misrepresentation) arising as a result of reliance on such information or any subsequent communication.

7.11.3 Any persons considering making a decision to enter into contractual relationships with UK SBS and/or, as applicable, relevant OPB following receipt of the RFI should make their own investigations and their own independent assessment of UK SBS and/or, as applicable, relevant OPB and its requirements for the goods/services/goods and services and should seek their own professional financial and legal advice. For the avoidance of doubt the provision of clarification or further information in relation to the RFI or any other associated documents (including the Schedules) is only authorised to be provided following a query made in accordance with Paragraph 7.15 of this RFI.

7.12. Collusive behaviour

7.12.1 Any Bidder who:

- 7.12.1.1 fixes or adjusts the amount of its Response by or in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other party; or
- 7.12.1.2 communicates to any party other than UK SBS or, as applicable, relevant OPB the amount or approximate amount of its proposed Response or information which would enable the amount or approximate amount to be calculated (except where such disclosure is made in confidence in order to obtain quotations necessary for the preparation of the Response or insurance or any necessary security); or
- 7.12.1.3 enters into any agreement or arrangement with any other party that such other party shall refrain from submitting a Response; or
- 7.12.1.4 enters into any agreement or arrangement with any other party as to the amount of any Response submitted; or
- 7.12.1.5 offers or agrees to pay or give or does pay or give any sum or sums of money, inducement or valuable consideration directly or indirectly to any party for doing or having done or causing or having caused to be done in relation to any other Response or proposed Response, any act or omission,

shall (without prejudice to any other civil remedies available to UK SBS and without prejudice to any criminal liability which such conduct by a Bidder may attract) be disqualified.

7.13. No inducement or incentive

7.13.1 The RFI is issued on the basis that nothing contained in it shall constitute an inducement or incentive nor shall have in any other way persuaded a Bidder to submit a Response or enter into the Contract or any other contractual agreement.

7.14. Acceptance of the Contract

7.14.1 The Bidder in submitting the Response undertakes that in the event of the Response being accepted by UK SBS and UK SBS confirming in writing such acceptance to the Bidder, the Bidder will within 90 days of being called upon to do so by UK SBS execute the Contract in the form set out in the Contract Terms or in such amended form as may subsequently be agreed.

7.14.2 UK SBS shall be under no obligation to accept the lowest priced or any Response.

7.15. Queries relating to the Response

- 7.15.1 All requests for clarification about the requirements or the process of this procurement shall be made in through the e-sourcing tool unless where the e-sourcing tool is unavailable due to Emptoris or Crown Commercial Service system maintenance or failure when a clarification by email to the contact defined in [Section 3](#).
- 7.15.2 UK SBS will endeavour to answer all questions as quickly as possible, but cannot guarantee a minimum response time.
- 7.15.3 In the event of a Bidder requiring assistance uploading a clarification to the e-sourcing portal they should use the contact details defined in [Section 3](#).
- 7.15.4 No further requests for clarifications will be accepted after 5 days prior to the date for submission of Responses.
- 7.15.5 In order to ensure equality of treatment of Bidders, UK SBS intends to publish the questions and clarifications raised by Bidders together with UK SBS's responses (but not the source of the questions) to all participants on a regular basis.
- 7.15.6 Bidders should indicate if a query is of a commercially sensitive nature – where disclosure of such query and the answer would or would be likely to prejudice its commercial interests. However, if UK SBS at its sole discretion does not either; consider the query to be of a commercially confidential nature or one which all Bidders would potentially benefit from seeing both the query and UK SBS's response, UK SBS will:
- 7.15.6.1 invite the Bidder submitting the query to either declassify the query and allow the query along with UK SBS's response to be circulated to all Bidders; or
 - 7.15.6.2 request the Bidder, if it still considers the query to be of a commercially confidential nature, to withdraw the query prior to the end of the closing date and time for Bidder clarifications.
- 7.15.7 UK SBS reserves the right not to respond to a request for clarification or to circulate such a request where it considers that the answer to that request would or would be likely to prejudice its commercial interests.

7.16. Amendments to Response Documents

- 7.16.1 At any time prior to the deadline for the receipt of Responses, UK SBS may modify the RFI by amendment. Any such amendment will be numbered and dated and issued by UK SBS to all prospective Bidders. In order to give prospective Bidders reasonable time in which to take the amendment into account in preparing their Responses, UK SBS may, at its discretion, extend the time and/or date for receipt of Responses.

7.17. Modification and withdrawal

- 7.17.1 Bidders may modify their Response where allowable within the e-sourcing tool. No Response may be modified after the deadline for submission of Responses.
- 7.17.2 Bidders may withdraw their Response at any time prior the deadline for submission of Responses [or any other time prior to accepting the offer of a Contract]. The notice to withdraw the Response must be in writing and sent to UK SBS by recorded delivery

or equivalent service and delivered to UK SBS at UK Shared Business Services Ltd, Procurement Policy Manager, Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN2 1ET

7.18. Right to disqualify or reject

7.18.1 UK SBS reserves the right to reject or disqualify a Bidder where

- 7.18.1.1 the Bidder fails to comply fully with the requirements of this Request for Information or presents the response in a format contrary to the requirements of this document; and/or
- 7.18.1.2 the Bidder is guilty of serious misrepresentation in relation to its Response; expression of interest; or the Response process; and/or
- 7.18.1.3 there is a change in identity, control, financial standing or other factor impacting on the selection and/or evaluation process affecting the Bidder.

7.19. Right to cancel, clarify or vary the process

7.19.1 UK SBS reserves the right to:

- 7.19.1.1 cancel the evaluation process at any stage; and/or
- 7.19.1.2 require the Bidder to clarify its Response in writing and/or provide additional information. (Failure to respond adequately may result in the Bidder not being selected),

7.20.. Notification of award

7.20.1 UK SBS will notify the successful Bidder of the Contract award in writing and will publish an Award Notice in the Official Journal of the European Union in accordance with the Regulations within 30 days of the award of the contract.

7.20.2 As required by the Regulations all unsuccessful Bidders will be provided with an email advising the outcome of the submission of their RFI response.

Appendix ‘A’ Glossary of Terms

TERM	MEANING
“UK SBS”	means UK Shared Business Services Ltd herein after referred to as UK SBS.
“Bid”, “Response”, “Submitted Bid”, or “RFI Response”	means the Bidders formal offer in response to this Request for Information
“Bidders”	means the organisations being invited to respond to this Request for Information
“Central Purchasing Body”	means a duly constituted public sector organisation which procures goods/services for and on behalf of contracting authorities
“Conditions of Bid”	means the terms and conditions set out in this RFI relating to the submission of a Response
“Contract”	means the agreement to be entered by UK SBS and the Supplier following any award under the procurement
“Contracting Bodies”	means UK SBS and any other contracting authorities described in the OJEU Contract Notice
“Customer”	means the legal entity (or entities) for which any Contract agreed will be made accessible to.
“Due Diligence Information”	means the background and supporting documents and information provided by UK SBS for the purpose of better informing the Bidders responses to this Request for Information
"EIR"	mean the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 together with any guidance and/or codes of practice issued by the Information Commissioner or relevant Government department in relation to such regulations
“FoIA”	means the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and any subordinate legislation made under such Act from time to time together with any guidance and/or codes of practice issued by the Information Commissioner or relevant Government department in relation to such legislation
“Lot”	means a discrete sub-division of the requirements
“Mandatory”	means a pass / fail criteria which must be met in order for a Bid to be considered, unless otherwise specified.
“OJEU Contract Notice”	means the advertisement issued in the Official Journal of the European Union
“Order”	means an order for served by any Contracting Body on the Supplier
“Other Public Bodies” or “OPB”	means all Contracting Bodies except UK SBS
“Request for Information” or “RFI”	means the document completed by Bidders at an earlier stage in the procurement used to shortlist Bidders under the Restricted procedure. This document is often referenced within other organisations as a Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ)
“Supplier”	means the organisation awarded the Contract
“Standard Goods /Services”	means any goods/services set out at within Section 4 Specification

Appendix 'B'

Timber Procurement Policy Glossary of Terms

1.1 Timber and wood-derived products: means any product that contains wood or wood fibre, with the exception of 'recycled' materials (see below). Such products range from solid wood to those where the manufacturing processes obscure the wood element (e.g. paper). Timber and wood-derived products supplied or used in performance of the contract that have been recycled or reclaimed are referred to as 'recycled' timber, which is defined below. Timber and wood-derived products supplied or used in performance of the contract that are not recycled are referred to as 'virgin' timber when the distinction needs to be made for clarity.

Short-rotation coppice is exempt from the requirements for timber and wood-derived products and falls under agricultural regulation and supervision rather than forestry.

1.2 Legal and Sustainable: means production and process methods, also referred to as timber production standards, and in the context of social criteria, contract performance conditions (only), as defined by the document titled 'UK Government Timber Procurement Policy, Definition of Legal and Sustainable for Timber Procurement', (available from the Contracting Authority on request and from the CPET website www.cpet.org.uk/uk-government-timber-procurement-policy/definitions/defining-legality-and-sustainability). The edition current on the day the contract is awarded shall apply.

1.3 FLEGT: means Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade, and is a reference to the EU FLEGT Action Plan, which aims to help tackle the urgent issue of illegal logging and associated trade.

1.4 FLEGT-licensed: means production and process methods, also referred to as timber production standards, and in the context of social criteria, contract performance conditions (only), as defined by a bilateral Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) between the European Union and a timber-producing country under the FLEGT scheme, where both parties have agreed to establish a system under which timber that has been produced in accordance with the relevant laws of the producing country, and other criteria stipulated by the VPA, are licensed for export by the producing country government.

1.5 Recycled: means recovered wood that prior to being supplied to the Contracting Authority had an end use as a standalone object or as part of a structure and which has completed its lifecycle and would otherwise be disposed of as waste. The term 'recycled' is used to cover the following categories: pre-consumer recycled wood and wood fibre or industrial by products but excluding sawmill co-products (sawmill co-products are deemed to fall within the category of virgin timber), post-consumer recycled wood and wood fibre, and drift wood. It also covers reclaimed timber which was abandoned or confiscated at least ten years previously. Documentary evidence and independent verification also apply to recycled materials, but will focus on the use to which the timber was previously put rather than the forest source.

1.6 Short-rotation coppice: means a specific management regime whereby the poles of trees are cut every one to two years and which is aimed at producing biomass for energy. It is exempt from the UK government TPP requirements and falls under agricultural regulation and supervision rather than forestry. The exemption only refers to short-rotation coppice, and not 'conventional' coppice which is forest management and therefore subject to the UK government TPP.

1.7 CPET: means the UK government's Central Point of Expertise on Timber, which provides a free telephone helpline and website to support implementation of the UK government Timber Procurement Policy.