Invitation to Quote

Invitation to Quote (ITQ) on behalf of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)

Subject: Provision of citation data services 2021

Sourcing Reference Number: CR18087

Shared Business Services

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

Registered in England and Wales as a limited company. Company Number 6330639.
Registered Office Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 1FF
VAT registration GB618 3673 25

Table of Contents

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 Contracting Authorities improve efficiency, generate savings and modernise.

It is our vision to become the leading service provider for the Contracting Authorities 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 Contracting Authorities. This allows Contracting Authorities 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 the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), 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, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) transition their procurement to UK SBS and Crown Commercial Services (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 Contracting Authorities.

Our Contracting Authorities who have access to our services and Contracts are detailed here.

Section 2 – About the Contracting Authority

UK Research and Innovation

Operating across the whole of the UK and with a combined budget of more than £6 billion, UK Research and Innovation represents the largest reform of the research and innovation funding landscape in the last 50 years.

As an independent non-departmental public body UK Research and Innovation brings together the seven Research Councils (AHRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, ESRC, MRC, NERC, STFC) plus Innovate UK and a new organisation, Research England.

UK Research and Innovation ensures the UK maintains its world-leading position in research and innovation. This is done by creating the best environment for research and innovation to flourish.

For more information, please visit: www.ukri.org

Section 3 - Working with the Contracting Authority.

In this section you will find details of your Procurement contact point and the timescales relating to this opportunity.

Section 3 – Contact details		
3.1	Contracting Authority Name and address	UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Polaris House Swindon SN2 1FL
3.2	Buyer name	Becky Eldridge
3.3	Buyer contact details	research@uksbs.co.uk
3.4	Maximum value of the Opportunity	£145,000.00 excluding VAT
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 will result in the Bid not being considered.**

Section 3 - Timescales		
3.6	Date of Issue of Contract Advert and location of original Advert	3rd August 2018
3.7	Latest date/time ITQ clarification questions shall be received through Emptoris messaging system	16rd August 2018 11:00
3.8	Latest date/time ITQ clarification answers should be sent to all Bidders by the Buyer through Emptoris	17th August 2018
3.9	Latest date/time ITQ Bid shall be submitted through Emptoris	28th August 2018 14:00
3.10	Date/time Bidders should be available for interview	4th September 2018
3.11	Anticipated notification date of successful and unsuccessful Bids	7th September 2018
3.12	Anticipated Award date	10th September 2018
3.13	Anticipated Contract Start date	1st November 2018
3.14	Anticipated Contract End date	31st March 2022
3.15	Bid Validity Period	60 Days

Section 4 – Specification

Introduction

The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 established Research England as a Council of UK Research and Innovation and, alongside the other existing Councils (the seven Research Councils and Innovate UK), Research England is responsible for funding, engaging with and understanding English higher education institutions (HEIs).

Research England has taken over the research and knowledge exchange functions of the former Higher Education Funding Council England (HEFCE). As part of its function, Research England carries out a periodic assessment of the quality of research in UK universities. The Research Excellence Framework is undertaken by Research England on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies: Research England, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), and the Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland (DfE). The exercise is managed by the REF team based at Research England and overseen by the REF Steering Group, consisting of representatives of the four funding bodies.

Aims

The REF team wishes to place a contract for the supply of bibliometric data services to inform and assist sub-panels' assessment of submitted research outputs in some of the UOAs covered by the REF.

We wish to provide those sub-panels that have indicated they wish to use bibliometric indicators in their assessments with a citation count for each output that was submitted to them, where available. Our preferred process to achieve this is described in the specification section of this document.

Background

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions (HEIs). The REF was first carried out in 2014, replacing the previous Research Assessment Exercise. The REF is undertaken by the four UK higher education funding bodies: Research England, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), and the Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland (DfE). The exercise is managed by the REF team based at UKRI - Research England and overseen by the REF Steering Group, consisting of representatives of the four funding bodies.

The funding bodies' shared policy aim for research assessment is to secure the continuation of a world-class, dynamic and responsive research base across the full academic spectrum within UK higher education. We expect that this will continue to be achieved through the threefold purpose of the REF:

a. To provide accountability for public investment in research and produce evidence of the benefits of this investment.
b. To provide benchmarking information and establish reputational yardsticks, for use within the HE sector and for public information.
c. To inform the selective allocation of funding for research.

The four funding bodies are committed to the responsible use of metrics in evaluating research and wish to draw the tenderers attention to the principles and recommendations set out in the Leiden Manifesto, the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and the 'Metric Tide' report. On the basis of the 'Metric Tide', the former HEFCE established an independent sector-wide group called the Forum for Responsible Research Metrics. This is a group of research funders, sector bodies and infrastructure experts working in partnership to promote the responsible use of research metrics. One key aim of the Forum for Responsible Research Metrics is to provide advice to UK HE funding bodies, via the REF team, on the use of metrics in REF2021 in the three elements of the assessment.

The use of citation data in REF 2021 will follow the principles set out in the ‘Metric Tide’ report:

- Robustness: basing metrics on the best possible data in terms of accuracy and scope
- Humility: recognising that quantitative evaluation should support – but not supplant – qualitative, expert assessment
- Transparency: keeping data collection and analytical processes open and transparent, so that those being evaluated can test and verify the results
- Diversity: accounting for variation by field, and using a range of indicators to reflect and support a plurality of research and researcher career paths across the system
- Reflexivity: recognising and anticipating the systemic and potential effects of indicators, and updating them in response.

In February 2017, the Forum for Responsible Research Metrics produced advice for the UK HE Funding Bodies on the use of quantitative indicators in the assessment of outputs in REF2021. Their key recommendations were:

- panels should be allowed to choose whether to adopt metrics/indicators
- all panels should have the same citation data in the same format
- panels may help decide between citation data providers in terms of their field coverage
- panels should help to decide whether to include conferences in the benchmarking data
- alternative web indicators (altmetrics, web metrics, download indicators, etc.) should not be used for the evaluation of outputs
- the approach of the provision of benchmarking data in REF 2014 was adequate in the context of supporting judgements about individual outputs.

Taking this advice into consideration, the four funding bodies set out their decision that quantitative data may be used to inform the assessment of outputs, where panels consider this appropriate for the discipline. This will be included according to the following process:

a. A framework of central guidance will be developed to ensure appropriate use of metrics. Panels will set out in the panel criteria whether or not they will use such data, and if so, how they will make use of it.
b. For those sub-panels that will be using it, we will provide citation data, in a standardised and simplified format, in respect of those outputs that can be matched to the relevant citation database (except for those published too recently to accumulate significant numbers of citations).
c. We will aim to procure the data and make it available to panels in a consistent and transparent way. As in the 2014 exercise, we will aim to make output-level data available in an appropriate form to institutions during the submission process, as well as any contextual data provided to the panels following the submission deadline, for information.

In September 2017 the UK funding bodies published initial decisions on REF 2021, setting out in broad terms the framework for assessment. The REF Team is developing more detailed operational guidance that will be published in late July 2018. This will include detailed guidance to institutions on preparing their submissions, setting out the data requirements and definitions that will apply.

The 2021 Research Excellence Framework

The REF will be a process of expert review, with discipline-based expert panels assessing submissions made by HEIs to 34 units of assessment (UOAs).

Institutions will make submissions by late November 2020, to each UOA they elect to submit to. Each submission will contain, in summary:

- Information on staff in post on the census date, 31 July 2020, selected by the institution to be included in the submission.
- Details of publications and other forms of assessable output which they have produced during the publication period (1 January 2014 to 31 December 2020). The number of outputs required for each UOA will be determined by the FTE of the submitted staff in that unit. A minimum of one and a maximum of five outputs must be listed against each member of staff included in the submission.
- Case studies detailing specific examples of non-academic impacts achieved during the period 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2020.
- Data about research doctoral degrees awarded and research income related to the period 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2020.
- A completed template describing the research and impact environment, related to the period 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2020.

An expert sub-panel for each of the 34 UOAs will conduct a detailed assessment of submissions in its UOA. The sub-panels will work under the leadership and guidance of four main panels, to ensure common procedures and consistent application of the overall assessment standards. Expert panels are made up of senior academics, international members, and non-academic research users. The membership of each panel is published at http://www.ref.ac.uk under 'Panel membership'. During 2020 we expect to appoint additional assessors to extend the depth and breadth of expertise on the panels, where this is required.

The assessment process is based on expert review. Each sub-panel will examine the submissions made in its UOA, taking into account all the evidence presented. They will use their professional judgement to form an overall view about each submission. In doing do, the sub-panels will assess three distinct elements of each submission, against the following generic criteria:

a. Outputs: The sub-panels will assess the submitted research outputs in terms of their 'rigour, originality and significance', with reference to international research quality standards. This element will carry a weighting of 60% in the overall outcomes. Some of the sub-panels will make use of citation data to inform their judgements about research outputs.
b. Impact: The sub-panels will assess economic, social and cultural impacts arising from the submitted unit's research in terms of their 'reach and significance'. This element will carry a weighting of 25%.

c. Environment: The sub-panels will assess the research and impact environment in terms of its 'vitality and sustainability'. This element will carry a weighting of 15%.

Further information about the REF, including the publications referred to above, can be found at http://www.ref.ac.uk.

Scope

Included:

- Facilities to match outputs entered by HEIs onto the submission system in relevant UOAs to the selected bibliometric database; and for HEIs to verify these matches.
- Provision of a citation count for each matched output to the submitting HEIs via the submission system.
- Provision of a citation count for each matched output, and some additional contextual data, to the relevant REF sub-panels via the Panel Members' Website.
- Associated project management and user support services.

We have provided a list of the UOAs where we expect bibliometrics to be used, and an indication of the volume of work we expect to be submitted in these areas in Appendix A. Tenders should be made on the basis that the data and services will be required for (and only for) the UOAs listed at Appendix A. However, final decisions on the UOAs for which the data and services will be required will not be made until January 2019 (after the panels have consulted on their criteria and working methods). It is possible that the list of UOAs may change at that point, although we do not anticipate that there would be many changes. If potential changes to the UOA coverage of the project would affect the delivery or cost of the contract, this must be stated clearly in the tender.

Excluded:

- Provision of any of the above services for UOAs not listed in Appendix A.

Requirement

Unless otherwise specified, all requirements are mandatory.

Background and data collection process

1. A submission to the REF consists of information about an institution's research activity in a particular UOA. This includes information about the outputs produced by eligible staff employed on the census date (31 July 2020) or former eligible staff, the research environment, impact case studies and quantitative information on research income and research doctoral degrees awarded. Institutions make their submissions to the REF via the submission system, which we are developing in-house.

2. Institutions can make submissions to the REF in a variety of formats, including manually entering individual items via web based forms and the bulk upload of data. Institutions can

create, amend and delete their submissions without limit prior to the submission deadline (27 November 2020).

3. The system will be open for submissions between January 2020 and 27 November 2020, with the test site made available in 2019. We will pilot the system with all institutions in autumn 2019. We would expect to include the provision of both citation counts and contextual data in this pilot phase and to work closely with the contractor to ensure robustness of the process.

4. Following the conclusion of the data collection process on 27 November 2020, we will make the submissions available to REF panel members to assess. We anticipate doing this via a secure website. We may also provide the contents of the submissions on encrypted memory sticks to allow panels to continue their assessment when internet access is not available. Panel members will have access to the submissions from early January 2021.

5. We will publish the contents of all submissions in early 2022 (with the exception of information that institutions identify as confidential). This will include the static citation counts that were used by the panels in the assessment process. We expect the snapshot data to be published under a Creative Commons CC0 license.

Matching of bibliographic information

6. We require a facility to match outputs entered into the submission system to a suitable bibliometric database used by the contractor. Institutions must be able to verify that the correct record in the contractor's database has been retrieved, and to correct this information if an incorrect match is returned (see paragraph 16).

7. As was the case in the 2014 REF, we anticipate sourcing PDF copies of journal articles submitted to the REF using their DOI and the CrossRef system. In 2014, when looking up DOIs the institutions were shown the bibliographic information returned by CrossRef which enabled institutions to verify the accuracy of the DOIs they supplied. The submission system in 2014 interfaced with the citation data supplier's system to match research outputs entered by HEIs onto the submission system to the supplier's database, using Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) and other metadata; and return the corresponding citation count for each matched output to institutions, via the submission system. Institutions could bulk-match outputs and bulk-retrieve citation counts, and export the data from the submission system throughout the period that the submission system was live. We would again expect to combine the functionality of the submission system with the ability for institutions to verify that submitting outputs have been correctly matched to the bibliometric database supplier's data.

8. The submission system will provide a number of validation reports which will allow institutions to verify that they have met the data requirements specified in the data collection system user guide. We expect to use this reporting functionality to bulk return information on the matching of outputs to the supplier's underlying data for institutional verification purposes.

9. We expect the contractor to deal with institutional queries regarding mismatches and non-matches outside of the submission system, as described at paragraph 17.

10. Our preference for matching submitted outputs to the bibliometric database used by the contractor would be via a REST-based API. We will require the ability to submit batches of items to the tenderer for matching.

11. We expect the vast majority of text-based outputs submitted to the UOAs listed in Appendix A to be journal articles (and, to a certain extent, conference proceedings in the computer science UOA). The performance of the contractor's processes for matching journal articles and conference proceedings is our primary concern; we believe that the interpretation of citation counts is better established for these output types compared with the other types of text based outputs that may be submitted. If the contractor is able to match other types of text based output via the same process we will return the citation count associated with the output, however we do not wish to develop special arrangements for output types besides journal articles and conference proceedings.

Provision of citation counts

12. We require a facility to return the number of times each matched item has been cited (by other items in the contractor's database). We wish to provide a (near) live citation count for each item returned to the data collection system during the submissions phase.

13. In REF 2014 some institutions chose to "clear down" their submissions at frequent intervals and bulk reload them from their local systems (i.e. to develop their submissions offline and use the submission system solely for data validation and submission purposes). In view of this, and to minimise the strain on the contractor's API we wish to cache citation counts and matching information for items that have been entered into the submission system. We would expect to refresh citation counts that had not been retrieved in the preceding month, for example (tenderers are invited to comment on whether this is an appropriate period, or whether counts should be refreshed more, or less, frequently). We expect to use the historical citation count information for verification purposes, as described in paragraph 30.

14. We expect to take a final update of counts shortly after the close of the submission system. This final set of counts and contextual data will be returned to panels for use in the assessment process, and will not be updated during the assessment phase. This is to ensure equality of treatment of items being assessed (since items assessed towards the end of the period will have had longer to acquire citations than those assessed at the start of the period). The final citation counts provided to sub-panels will also be available to institutions, for information, via the submission system after the submission deadline. Tenderers should note that we require the ability, in principle, to recreate the counts provided to panels, as described at paragraph 28.

Response times and service availability

15. We anticipate the vast majority of matches to be performed in an automated manner. Where an automated match is achieved this should take on average no longer than 2 seconds per item plus 10 seconds per batch. This includes “null” matches, where the data supplier is confident that the item submitted is not included in their database. Tenderers should indicate if they expect these time-scales to present difficulties, or if they expect to be able to improve on them significantly.

16. We expect institutions to be able to verify that a correct match has been obtained via the submission system. We will do this by returning the bibliographic metadata obtained from the tenderer’s database alongside the metadata submitted by the institution. We expect the process for dealing with mismatches to be outside of the submission system, as described below.

17. The tenderer should provide a process to handle items that cannot be automatically matched to the database, or that are matched to an incorrect item. We would expect this often to involve liaison with the submitting institution. The tenderer should explain how they will operate this service, being mindful of the need to minimise burden on institutions as much as possible. The tenderer must provide details of response times (both holding response and resolution times) to institutional matching queries. Tenderers should note that timely responses to institutional queries are particularly important towards the end of the submission period.

18. We would expect the contractor to provide advance notice of any scheduled downtime, so that we can inform users of the submission system. Where possible, downtime should be scheduled to coincide with downtime on the submission system. We would expect to work with the contractor in scheduling this. Tenderers should note that service availability will be particularly important towards the end of the submissions period.

19. Tenderers should confirm in their response that information about the outputs submitted to them via the submission system will not be used for any purpose outside of this contract. Tenderers should also confirm that they will abide by the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation. Tenderers should note that Research England is bound by the Freedom of Information Act, and that we may be required to disclose information obtained in this contract as a result.

20. Tenderers should indicate whether the final collection of citation counts for provision to the assessment panels will require any special handling, given the relatively short time period between the close of the submission system and the provision of data to panels, during which a substantial volume of data that will need to be collected via the contractor’s API. The funding bodies are open to receiving this data via a single bulk-transfer.

21. As noted in paragraph 4, we may provide submissions to panels via secured memory sticks, amongst other methods. We expect to include the static citation counts collected after the close of the submission system. The REF team will be responsible for including this

information on the memory sticks, but tenderers will need to confirm their agreement to our doing so. Tenderers may wish to note that panel members are bound by a confidentiality agreement.

22. Tenderers should also set out how the citation count is arrived at and the timescales between citations being made and appearing in the data.

Coverage, provision and accuracy of citation counts

23. We expect the contractor to provide an accurate matching service, with minimal false positive matches. Furthermore, we expect the contractor's bibliometric database to provide a very high level of coverage of journal articles submitted to the Units of Assessment listed at Appendix A.

24. Tenderers must include any evidence they have of the expected level of coverage in these UOAs and indicate whether they expect the level of coverage to change over the contract's lifetime.

25. In the interests of transparency we will allow submitting institutions to view the citation counts and contextual data of items they propose to submit to the REF (in the relevant UOAs). We wish to present this information within the submission system and it will be included when institutions export output data. We expect to provide "live" citation counts to institutions, though these may have been cached within the submission system for a period, as described at paragraph 13.

26. Tenderers should note that institutions will be able to enter outputs into the submission system throughout the submissions period (including items they may choose not to submit at the end of the period). Citation counts for items in all relevant UOAs will be made available to the institution that submitted them. Following the principle of transparency, we expect that institutions will be able to use the data beyond REF purposes. If this is not the case, tenderers should indicate whether they wish to restrict institutions' use of the data (beyond REF purposes), and how they would wish to enforce any such restrictions (for example, by a "click-through" agreement in the submission system).

27. Submitted outputs can be published between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2020. Although this period extends beyond the submission period[1], we do not propose to update the matches or citation counts with items published after the submission period (such publications would have had minimal time in which to become cited, in any case). However, we are keen that matched items have had greatest possible chance to be cited. Tenderers should therefore indicate the average time-lag between items being published and their being captured by the bibliometric database. Tenderers should also indicate how much variation there is in this time period.

[1] Institutions will need to flag such items as "pending" and provide full metadata once the submission system has closed.

28. When providing bibliometric indicators to panels, we wish to provide them with a static count taken from a snapshot of the underlying bibliometric database shortly after the close of the data collection system. We require the appointed tenderer to be able to recreate the database to its state when these counts were provided. The tenderer will need to preserve this snapshot for a period of two years after this date. Access to the database would only be required in the event of the funding bodies' being subject to legal challenge (or similar). We do not expect the tenderer to include the cost of *access* to the snapshot in their costing for this project, but they should confirm that such access, if required, would be on an actual incurred costs basis.

29. The accuracy of citation counts within the provider's bibliometric database is important. Tenderers should provide details of the procedures they have for ensuring the accuracy of citation counts (both under and over counting) within their database and for correcting any errors that are reported to them. This should include details of the response time for responding to and implementing error reports. Institutions taking part in the REF may report data errors during (and possibly after) the submissions phase. Tenders should outline the process by which institutions might review and correct the data, where necessary. Panel members may also raise queries about the accuracy of citation counts during the assessment phase. We would expect tenderers' existing error reporting processes to be sufficiently timely and robust to handle these reports. Tenderers should provide details of these processes in their response.

30. We may monitor differences in citation counts for submitted items each time they are retrieved. We will expect the contractor to provide explanations of any differences that fail these credibility checks. Tenderers may wish to pro-actively report on the volume and nature of corrections they have made as part of this assurance process.

31. To assist in this process tenderers may wish to consider providing access to a web-interface to their data.

Contextual Information

32. When reviewing individual research outputs, panel members will refer to the citation count as additional information about the academic significance of the output. The REF team will develop general guidance for the panels about the use and interpretation of citation counts for individual outputs, including the need for judgements to be based in all cases on reviewing the output, and treating citation data as additional information rather than as a substitute for peer review, in line with the recommendations in the 'Metric Tide'.

33. We also wish to provide the panels with some contextual data to assist their interpretation of the citation data. We do not intend to produce a 'benchmark' or 'normalised citation score' for each individual output, but to provide broader contextual data about citation rates in each field or subject over time.

34. In REF 2014, we provided HEIs a complete set of contextual data at the subject level used by the citation provider at the start of the submissions period (early 2020 for this assessment exercise). This used a snapshot of the citations database, taken as close as possible to the opening of the submissions system. We did not update this data during the submissions period. We did not provide contextual data constructed at the level of the UOA to HEIs during the submission period. This is because we did not know what work had been submitted to each UOA until after the submission period had ended. In this exercise, this data would be for the calendar years 2013-2018 (1 year earlier than the period covered by the contextual data we will provide to panels).

35. Tenders should propose what contextual information could be provided. We expect that existing categorisations of fields or subject will be used, and that these should be **at least as** granular as the UOAs listed in Appendix A, with a clear preference for more nuanced data. Tenderers should itemise the cost of this part of the tender separately.

36. Tenderers should also indicate how articles published in journals with multiple classifications are classified by subject for the purpose of citation comparison data, and whether authors are able to challenge a subject classification if they believe it to be incorrect.

Openness and transparency of the data

The funding bodies expect tenderers to adhere to the principles of openness and transparency as set out in the Metric Tide report. Tenderers should outline how underlying data will be collected and processed and the extent to which they will remain open to interrogation.

Timetable

- By September 2019: module integration, background data collection, contextual data collection, website building
- November 2019: initial meeting with REF team at Research England
- Autumn 2019: pilot with institutions and initial data correction
- January 2020: system fully functional and live for submissions
- November 2020: capture static data for archive purposes
- December 2020: transfer of final data to panels
- January 2021 - December 2021: provide support to panels throughout assessment phase
- Spring 2022: archive November 2020 static data; final reporting and debrief

Terms and Conditions

Bidders are to note that any requested modifications to the Contracting Authority Terms and Conditions on the grounds of statutory and legal matters only, shall be raised as a formal clarification during the permitted clarification period.

Section 5 – Evaluation model

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

Where a question is 'for information only' it will not be scored.

The evaluation team may comprise staff from UK SBS and the Contracting Authority and any specific external stakeholders the Contracting Authority deems required. After evaluation the scores will be finalised by performing a calculation to identify (at question level) the mean average of all evaluators (Example – a question is scored by three evaluators and judged as scoring 5, 5 and 6. These scores will be added together and divided by the number of evaluators to produce the final score of 5.33 (5+5+6 =16÷3 = 5.33)

Pass / fail criteria		
Questionnaire	**Q No.**	**Question subject**
Commercial	SEL1.2	Employment breaches/ Equality
Commercial	FOI1.1	Freedom of Information Exemptions
Commercial	AW1.1	Form of Bid
Commercial	AW1.3	Certificate of Bona Fide Bid
Commercial	AW3.1	Validation check
Commercial	SEL3.11	Compliance to Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act
Commercial	SEL3.12	Cyber Essentials
Commercial	SEL3.13	General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
Commercial	AW4.1	Contract Terms Part 1
Commercial	AW4.2	Contract Terms Part 2
Price	AW5.3	Maximum Budget
Price	AW5.5	E Invoicing
Price	AW5.6	Implementation of E-Invoicing
Quality	AW6.1	Compliance to the Specification
-	-	Invitation to Quote – received on time within e-sourcing tool

Scoring criteria			
Evaluation Justification Statement In consideration of this particular requirement the Contracting Authority has decided to evaluate Potential Providers by adopting the weightings/scoring mechanism detailed within this ITQ. The Contracting Authority considers these weightings to be in line with existing best practice for a requirement of this type.			
Questionnaire	**Q No.**	**Question subject**	**Maximum Marks**
Price	AW5.2	Price	20%
Quality	PROJ1.1	Approach/ Methodology	30%
Quality	PROJ1.2	Staff to Deliver	10%
Quality	PROJ1.3	Understanding the Project Environment	10%

Quality	PROJ1.4	Project Plan and Timescales	5%
Quality	PROJ1.5	Risk Management	10%
Interview	PROJ1.6	Interview	15%

Evaluation of criteria

Non-Price elements

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 = {weighting percentage} x {bidder's score} = 20% x 60 = 12

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 the final score returned may be different as there may be multiple evaluators and their individual scores will be averaged (mean) to determine your final score.

Example
Evaluator 1 scored your bid as 60
Evaluator 2 scored your bid as 60
Evaluator 3 scored your bid as 40
Evaluator 4 scored your bid as 40
Your final score will (60+60+40+40) ÷ 4 = 50

Price elements will be judged on the following criteria.

The lowest price for a response which meets the pass criteria shall score 100.
All other bids shall be scored on a pro rata basis in relation to the lowest price. The score is then subject to a multiplier to reflect the percentage value of the price criterion.

For example - Bid 1 £100,000 scores 100.
Bid 2 £120,000 differential of £20,000 or 20% remove 20% from price scores 80
Bid 3 £150,000 differential £50,000 remove 50% from price scores 50.
Bid 4 £175,000 differential £75,000 remove 75% from price scores 25.
Bid 5 £200,000 differential £100,000 remove 100% from price scores 0.
Bid 6 £300,000 differential £200,000 remove 100% from price scores 0.
Where the scoring criterion is worth 50% then the 0-100 score achieved will be multiplied by 50.

In the example if a supplier scores 80 from the available 100 points this will equate to 40% by using the following calculation: Score/Total Points multiplied by 50 (80/100 x 50 = 40)

The lowest score possible is 0 even if the price submitted is more than 100% greater than the lowest price.

Section 6 – Evaluation questionnaire

Bidders should note that the evaluation questionnaire is located within the **e-sourcing questionnaire.**

Guidance on completion of the questionnaire is available at http://www.uksbs.co.uk/services/procure/Pages/supplier.aspx

PLEASE NOTE THE QUESTIONS ARE NOT NUMBERED SEQUENTIALLY

Section 7 – General Information

What makes a good bid – some simple do's ☺

DO:

7.1 Do comply with Procurement document instructions. Failure to do so may lead to disqualification.

7.2 Do provide the Bid on time, and in the required format. Remember that the date/time given for a response is the last date that it can be accepted; we are legally bound to disqualify late submissions. Responses received after the date indicated in the ITQ shall not be considered by the Contracting Authority, unless the Bidder can justify that the reason for the delay, is solely attributable to the Contracting Authority

7.3 Do ensure you have read all the training materials to utilise e-sourcing tool prior to responding to this Bid. If you send your Bid by email or post it will be rejected.

7.4 Do use Microsoft Word, PowerPoint Excel 97-03 or compatible formats, or PDF unless agreed in writing by the Buyer. If you use another file format without our written permission we may reject your Bid.

7.5 Do ensure you utilise the Emptoris messaging system to raise any clarifications to our ITQ. You should note that we will release the answer to the question to all Bidders and where we suspect the question contains confidential information we may modify the content of the question to protect the anonymity of the Bidder or their proposed solution

7.6 Do answer the question, it is not enough simply to cross-reference to a 'policy', web page or another part of your Bid, the evaluation team have limited time to assess bids and if they can't find the answer, they can't score it.

7.7 Do consider who the Contracting Authority is and what they want – a generic answer does not necessarily meet every Contracting Authority's needs.

7.8 Do reference your documents correctly, specifically where supporting documentation is requested e.g. referencing the question/s they apply to.

7.9 Do provide clear, concise and ideally generic contact details; telephone numbers, e-mails and fax details.

7.10 Do complete all questions in the questionnaire or we may reject your Bid.

7.11 Do ensure that the Response and any documents accompanying it are in the English Language, the Contracting Authority reserve the right to disqualify any full or part responses that are not in English.

7.12 Do check and recheck your Bid before dispatch.

What makes a good bid – some simple do not's ☹

DO NOT

7.13 Do not cut and paste from a previous document and forget to change the previous details such as the previous buyer's name.

7.14 Do not attach 'glossy' brochures that have not been requested, they will not be read unless we have asked for them. Only send what has been requested and only send supplementary information if we have offered the opportunity so to do.

7.15 Do not share the Procurement documents, they are confidential and should not be shared with anyone without the Buyers written permission.

7.16 Do not seek to influence the procurement process by requesting meetings or contacting UK SBS or the Contracting Authority to discuss your Bid. If your Bid requires clarification the Buyer will contact you. All information secured outside of formal Buyer communications shall have no Legal standing or worth and should not be relied upon.

7.17 Do not contact any UK SBS staff or the Contracting Authority staff without the Buyers written permission or we may reject your Bid.

7.18 Do not collude to fix or adjust the price or withdraw your Bid with another Party as we will reject your Bid.

7.19 Do not offer UK SBS or the Contracting Authority staff any inducement or we will reject your Bid.

7.20 Do not seek changes to the Bid after responses have been submitted and the deadline for Bids to be submitted has passed.

7.21 Do not cross reference answers to external websites or other parts of your Bid, the cross references and website links will not be considered.

7.22 Do not exceed word counts, the additional words will not be considered.

7.23 Do not make your Bid conditional on acceptance of your own Terms of Contract, as your Bid will be rejected.

7.24 Do not unless explicitly requested by the Contracting Authority either in the procurement documents or via a formal clarification from the Contracting Authority send your response by any way other than via e-sourcing tool. Responses received by any other method than requested will not be considered for the opportunity.

Some additional guidance notes

7.25 All enquiries with respect to access to the e-sourcing tool and problems with functionality within the tool must be submitted to Crown Commercial Service (previously Government Procurement Service), Telephone 0345 010 3503.

7.26 Bidders will be specifically advised where attachments are permissible to support a question response within the e-sourcing tool. Where they are not permissible any attachments submitted will not be considered as part of the evaluation process.

7.27 Question numbering is not sequential and all questions which require submission are included in the Section 6 Evaluation Questionnaire.

7.28 Any Contract offered may not guarantee any volume of work or any exclusivity of supply.

7.29 We do not guarantee to award any Contract as a result of this procurement

7.30 All documents issued or received in relation to this procurement shall be the property of the Contracting Authority. / UKSBS.

7.31 We can amend any part of the procurement documents at any time prior to the latest date / time Bids shall be submitted through Emptoris.

7.32 If you are a Consortium you must provide details of the Consortiums structure.

7.33 Bidders will be expected to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or your Bid will be rejected.

7.34 Bidders should note the Government's transparency agenda requires your Bid and any Contract entered into to be published on a designated, publicly searchable web site. By submitting a response to this ITQ Bidders are agreeing that their Bid and Contract may be made public

7.35 Your bid will be valid for 60 days or your Bid will be rejected.

7.36 Bidders may only amend the contract terms during the clarification period only, only if you can demonstrate there is a legal or statutory reason why you cannot accept them. If you request changes to the Contract terms without such grounds and the Contracting Authority fail to accept your legal or statutory reason is reasonably justified we may reject your Bid.

7.37 We will let you know the outcome of your Bid evaluation and where requested will provide a written debrief of the relative strengths and weaknesses of your Bid.

7.38 If you fail mandatory pass / fail criteria we will reject your Bid.

7.39 Bidders are required to use IE8, IE9, Chrome or Firefox in order to access the functionality of the Emptoris e-sourcing tool.

7.40 Bidders should note that if they are successful with their proposal the Contracting Authority reserves the right to ask additional compliancy checks prior to the award of any Contract. In the event of a Bidder failing to meet one of the compliancy checks the Contracting Authority may decline to proceed with the award of the Contract to the successful Bidder.

7.41 All timescales are set using a 24 hour clock and are based on British Summer Time or Greenwich Mean Time, depending on which applies at the point when Date and Time Bids shall be submitted through Emptoris.

7.42 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, the Contracting Authority 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 the Contracting Authority during this Procurement. The information will not be disclosed outside Government. Bidders taking part in this ITQ consent to these terms as part of the competition process.

7.43 The Government introduced its new Government Security Classifications (GSC) classification scheme on the 2nd April 2014 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. The link below to the Gov.uk website provides information on the new GSC:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-security-classifications

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to amend any security related term or condition of the draft contract accompanying this ITQ to reflect any changes introduced by the GSC. In particular where this ITQ 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.

USEFUL INFORMATION LINKS

- Emptoris Training Guide
- Emptoris e-sourcing tool
- Contracts Finder
- Bribery Act introduction
- Freedom of information Act